

TECHNOLOGY PROJECT REQUEST FORM

DESCRIPTION OF REQUEST

Description of Requested Function(s)

IT Request Summary: Create a technology-rich service center to support the academic research needs of Fitchburg State College students.

The proposed *information commons* would be much more than a computer lab for students to work in. Imagine a one-stop-support center for students who are engaged in: research and information use, collaboration with groups, the creation of multimedia projects for class, peer tutor conferencing, or registering their laptop for use on campus.

The vision combines various services currently provided by the reference librarians, IT help desk staff and their student assistants, and student support services. Thus, not only does this proposal address the physical location, but also potential service models to be included. Our underlying question is: *How can we work together to best provide excellent student technology and academic support services?*

Business Group(s) or Area(s) Affected

Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library

The library is a natural leader in this process. We are focusing our reference and instruction services on an information literacy model that is supported not only by the American Library Association, but by NEASC standards for accreditation. Information literacy includes: the ability to research information responsibly, process the information critically and express what is learned in a research paper or creative project. Our students use standard Office software such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint. They may also use emerging technologies to complete creative projects such as interviews, websites or image catalogs. When we provide reference services on the first floor of the library, we answer questions related to research and technology. The librarians are no longer anchored to the desk. We move throughout the space offering assistance with project creation, technology troubleshooting and research skills.

The library staff provides reference and instruction services to our students in a variety of contexts. In our work with students, both in and outside of the classroom, we have witnessed a shift in the way students are using information technology resources. Gone are the days where students research in the library, work on papers and presentations in a computer lab, and find private space to work in groups. If you sit on the first floor of the library, or in the computer labs, you see our students doing it all in one location. Students turn to support where they can find it. In the course of completing a single project, they do not distinguish which type of institutional support they need: research, writing styles or technology troubleshooting.

The College curriculum also encourages project based learning. Each of these needs requires a different space need. With project based learning students work in groups. Which may require technology. These projects require spaces where many people to congregate, have room to spread, easy access to technology, and easy to find support. Our student learning spaces should reflect their work by providing them with all the tools, space and assistance they will need.

Currently the first floor of the library models an information commons. Students use the 18 computers for their research, email, or project creation. The tables are used by groups of students for tutoring or group projects. The sofas and chairs create a comfortable space for students to sit and relax or work as a group. The reference desk is a service point for students and also a place where librarians collaborate with other departments to provide student

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services.

IT Support and Services:

The IT Help Desk supports students technology troubleshoot, software applications, blackboard, and accessibility. The physical service point is located in Conlon, across campus from the busy general computer labs and activities. To further meet the academic technology needs, first, IT needs to have a consistent presence in the spaces in which students are working. A successful information commons model includes multimedia support for class projects in addition to training and troubleshooting at the point of need.

Additional Partners Identified:

Services like the Tutor Center, Expanding Horizons, the Writing Center, Disability Services, Academic Advising, and Career Services provide their own training and workshops to support our students academic careers. These services can incorporated into an information commons.

Benefits that will be Achieved

Creating an Information Commons answers the question: *How can we work together to best provide excellent student technology and academic support services?*
We will be creating an one-stop-support center to achieve this. Staff will manage a collaborative space in order to meet the current and anticipate the future needs of our students. As a result, students will increase their information and technology competencies. These are important skills for the 21st century workforce.

Requested Completion Date:

Business Reason for this Project

Stay in Business (MANDATORY) Improve Quality of Service Return on Investment

I request that the Technology department undertake this project.

Signature:
Sara Marks and Debbie Verhoff Date:

Project Initiator