

Case Study for University of Minnesota Space Plan Initiatives
Humphrey School of Public Affairs
Project location: Suite 130

The Humphrey School of Public Affairs has experienced significant growth in student enrollment over the past five years, resulting in a shortage of work space across all levels, faculty, staff and student. Having worked with Innovative Office Solutions on smaller room renovation projects the Humphrey School approached Innovative Office Solutions to work on a new project – working with the School on redesigning the twenty-five year old first floor office space to better accommodate today’s growth and the change in how the space is currently used. It was also important to take into consideration workspace trends.

At the same time that the Humphrey School experienced growth and change, the University began facing serious budget shortfalls due to a changing economic environment. The University created five “pillar projects” charged with finding University-wide financial savings in respective arenas across the University. One of the pillar projects is in the area of space utilization. Brian Swanson, University Budget Officer, is chair of this pillar project. Brian is a former student of the Humphrey School and heard that the School was going to be looking at significant change to existing space. Brian joined the Humphrey project as advisor, and to seek to provide the University with an example of new ways of working, while providing greater capacity in the space.

Timing was a critical component with a 4 ½ month window in which to complete the project from planning to the installation and move in. The Humphrey School leadership and staff, together with Innovative Office Solutions created and implemented the project summarized in this case study.

Core Project Staff:

University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Affairs:

Sherry Holmen, Facilities and events Director
Margaret Oltmans, Conference Center Director
William Bear, IT Director
Margaret Chutich, Assistant Dean
Dean J. Brian Atwood
Associate Dean Greg Lindsey

University of Minnesota Budget Officer and chair of Facilities Pillar Project:

Brian Swanson

Innovative Office Solutions

Pam Sebesta – Project Consultant
Rachel Larsen – Project Designer supported by Trendway Designer/Space Planner,
Elizabeth Wiel

The Key Issues With Existing Space:

- The Existing floor plan comprised entirely of 66” high panel walls in fixed cube format with no sight lines and the inability to add more stations or people.
- Unable to accommodate staff fluctuations in each area, especially in regards to Research and Teaching Assistants.
- Under utilization of space due to inflexible assigned space with partial usage.
- Poor access to network wiring and power for laptops
- Lack of collaborative spaces

- Difficult to locate people
- Lack of natural light distribution



Existing space

Space Objective:

Create modern flexible space to accommodate staff and work fluctuations. Provide up to date technology, distribute use of natural light, and facilitate way finding.

Flexible Space Plan Solutions

Responding to the need for functional space for more people, the new space plan provides an increase in work space.

Traditional and Flexible

- Full time staff and flex workstations letting in more light and providing more privacy. Providing mobile flexibility of desk tops, filing and some mobile walls.
- Research assistant stations are shared spaces with mobile walls, individual locking storage and flexible technology access.
- The re-design created an 18% increase in capacity, from 34 to 40 actual workspaces.

Collaborative work areas

- In keeping with new workspace trends, 3 collaborative work areas were created.
- Provides the option to work wireless, with power access.
- Provides 16 total seats with mobile white boards

Technology Enhancements

- Improved accessibility for laptops. Added power and network at desk level to allowing students to bring laptops.
- The addition of power outlets in collaborative areas for laptop users.

Cost Reduction Opportunities

- The space comprising the existing reception area was newer product from 2007 and was incorporated into the new plan.
- Many workstation worktops had recently been replaced with freestanding movable desktops and mobile files. These were incorporated in the redesign.
- Created centralized storage reducing the amount of storage needed within each station



Changed height and type of walls to: Let in more natural light, facilitate way finding and locating people.



Collaborative space: seats with tablet arms, mobile white board surfaces and electrical access



RA spaces with mobile desks and screens to accommodate a variety of project work styles. Files with separately locking drawers for shared stations.



Staff workstations and flex workstations for TA's or staff with movable center walls, mobile desks and storage to accommodate different types of work needs.



Centralized work areas with copier/printer/scanners and an informal meeting space.



Centralized locking storage spaces for group storage or individually locking drawers for assigned storage.

Staff Participation – feed back process

Having the input of the individuals utilizing the space was a critical component to the re-design. There was a preliminary meeting with all of the individuals invited to attend. An overview of the project was presented and packets were handed out for them to discuss within their centers/groups. Then individual center meetings were scheduled. In the smaller group meetings the discussions involved multiple topics including:

- Discuss space types – configurations, mobility, % use, shared space
- Discussed how to accommodate the effects of additional grants funding more positions.
- Available types and sizes of meeting space
- Storage space – community, personal
- Adjacency requirements between individuals, groups and centers.

- Needs for confidentiality, types of privacy
- Physical space suggestions: lighting, sound, natural light
- Technology needs of each person, center and the School as a whole.

During this process each center was asked to also prioritize the importance of these points to assist with the feasibility to incorporate them into the overall design.

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For more information contact:

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