STUDENT HOUSING SY<mark>MPOSIUM</mark> 2<mark>01</mark>3

BOOK **NO. 1** 

# WHAN STUDENES VAN

1 De

**Campus Living:** A Student Perspective

## PREFACE



## STUDENT HOUSING **SYMPOSIUM**

Over the past ten years we have seen a rather dynamic change in how students of all ages engage with the world around them. Social interaction and opportunities for learning and mentoring occur in a much different way and in more diverse environments than perhaps ever before in our history. The college and university campus environment bears witness to this fact. Although it may be easy to point to evolving technologies as a catalyst for change, the truth is that the way in which the design community thinks about spaces that foster interaction, support individualism, create privacy, and aligns with the overall academic mission of the university, is often disconnected.

Designers and knowledge leaders within Little believe that perhaps the greatest opportunity to successfully merge these vital elements of campus life lies in the creation of innovative on-campus student housing. As the one place on campus where live, sleep, learn, study, play and socialization potentially overlap on a daily basis, the "residence hall" affords us the opportunity to define "what students want and need" simply by going to the source and listening to the student. Thus, the creation of the 2013 Student Housing Symposium. The purpose of the Symposium was to identify those factors that drive successful campus housing from the student's perspective, through the exploration of ideas that will lead us to the creation of truly innovative student housing design for the future.

## PROCESS

We felt that the best way to engage students in this process was to su plement our pre-existing survey data by conducting a collaborative wo shop between Little's design team members and an appropriate cr section of students. On February 1, 2013 we conducted two worksho one in the Durham office on the American Tobacco campus, and one our Charlotte office. Diversity among participants was critical to the p cess. In total there were 62 students, ranging from freshmen to senio representing 12 Universities from across North Carolina, including n graduate students who helped organize data and document activit and three high school students.

The Symposium was organized around breakout sessions that creat lively dialogue, brainstorming, sketching and hypothesizing. To keep s dents moving and to mix groups throughout the day, we established in vidual breakout spaces for each topic so that we could set up the ro before hand, establish facilitators for each topic, and document the sults as quickly and efficiently as possible as we rotated teams from ro to room. Breakout Sessions were organized around three primary top

Our "next step" is to create a booklet each year as we continue to develop, define, and test the theories developed by the students. The next version will focus on what we hear as we share "what students want" with Housing Officers and University administrators from across the nation, and how we put the theories into practice at the project design level. We have already begun to take a deeper dive into three key topics that emerged, but were not fully vetted during the creation of 2013 workbook.

- 1) How changing dynamics and demographics of the student population effects residence-life communities
- 2) How location of campus housing affects student choice and aligns with off-campus alternatives
- 3) Opportunities to infuse key concepts into our current array of renovation and adaptive re-use design

Stay tuned..

up-	Live & Sleep
ork-	"My room"
oss	Unit typologies
ops;	Grooming
e in	
ro-	Chill
ors,	Common amenities
ine	Shared neighborhood opportunities
ies,	
	Campus Connections
	Location + proximity + walkability + sustainability
ted	Aesthetics
stu-	Outdoor space
ndi-	
om	Although the workshop was organized around these topics, our goal was
re-	to identify common themes emerging from the cross-pollination of the
om	breakout sessions. These common themes emerged as the chapters for
ics.	the workbook.



## **MY ROOM** FLEXIBILITY TO PERSONALIZE MY SPACE

With changing expectations of a new generation, we begin our exploration with the most fundamental building block of the student housing experience. During the symposium we asked the students a variety of questions pertaining to their dorm room experiences. There was a broad consensus that traditional dorm furniture frequently impedes their optimal use of the space.

Their responses generated ideas ranging from a multi-purpose wall where a bed, desk and storage can be easily reconfigured to moveable partitions that could help define living and sleeping spaces and provide privacy between roommates. What we learned is that the efficiency of the room can be greatly improved without increasing floor area.













#### PRIVACY

Moveable divider walls can create semi-private zones

#### INDIVIDUALITY

The ability to personalize the room is important

The desire for color was a recurrent theme

#### FLEXIBILITY

- The ability to reconfigure the room layout is important
- The furniture should be moveable and adaptable to various tasks
- A multi-purpose and shared work surface can replace a traditional desk
- A 'study wall' could be reconfigured for specific technology needs



#### CONVENIENCE

A sink should be placed inside the room specific needs

#### STORAGE

- A 'storage wall' could be reconfigured to meet the student's specific needs
- A 'moveable closet' could be used to further define the space

 $\bigcirc$ 



## **OUR NEIGHBORHOOD** MIX IT UP

If you had the choice, would you choose to live in a neighborhood where every street and every house is identical? Or would you prefer a diverse and vibrant neighborhood?

The students see no reason why their dorms cannot be the latter. They overwhelmingly preferred diversity over monotony. They suggested offering different unit types, mixing age and class levels, promoting cultural diversity, and introducing complementary non-residential uses.

#### **DIVERSITY IN STUDENT POPULATION**

- Students of different ages and class levels could benefit the neighborhood
- Faculty members could be part of that mix (as in Residential Colleges)
- The character of the neighborhood should be shaped by cultural diversity

#### **DIVERSITY OF SPACES**

Multiple students could occupy the same building program, types, and amenities



#### **DIVERSITY IN UNIT TYPOLOGIES** Multiple room layouts should be offered within the same building







As we spoke with students, we began to realize that the corridor is so much more than an architectural element for circulation, organization and efficiency. For underclassmen, the corridor becomes a conduit for social interaction and a place where new friendships are forged. Students shared numerous memories about a space less about linear movement and more about stitching two sides of a long hall together. Was there an opportunity for this potentially sterile element to be celebrated? Could the corridor actually provide the genesis for new architectural ideas?









## HOW WE STUDY LEARNING HAPPENS EVERYWHERE

Over the course of a day, students find opportunities to study in various locations throughout campus. We wanted to understand the characteristics of what makes a good study spot. We learned it should be bright and comfortable. It should be fairly quiet, yet visually connected to the more active spaces. Larger group study areas should be complemented by cozier individual study nooks. A student that chooses to study outside of his or her room doesn't want to feel isolated.



#### **GROUP STUDY** Is becoming more prevalent throughout the campus

#### VISUALLY CONNECTED Students like to be engaged with their surroundings, even when studying alone

#### INDIVIDUAL

Small individual study nooks located off circulation paths can be useful as an alternative to studying in the room

#### FORMAL /INFORMAL

A mix of settings is necessary to accommodate different study objectives and/or student preferences



#### EVERYWHERE

Wireless technology and mobile communication enables students to study anywhere at any time



















# CHILL SPACE WE UNWIND

A sense of community is what students seek when they arrive on campus and it is what will keep them there for the course of their studies. We defined the community as a relatively small group (16-32 students) that can take ownership of common areas, such as kitchens or lounges.

In order to be activated, gathering areas should be located along the horizontal and vertical circulation paths, have access to light and views, and connect various communities to each other.



'New Suite' Perspective

VERTICAL CONNECTIONS Community lounges could be located near vertical circulation elements, and connect floors to

each other



CORRIDOR



LIGHT/ VIEWS/ VENTILATION



#### CRACK OPEN THE CORRIDOR

Provide views and light to transform the circulation areas into community spaces









#### LEVELS OF INTIMACY AND TRANSPARENCY

As in a home, the various activities envisioned in the community areas require differing amounts of transparency

Chill Space links multiple floors





- 1\_SLEEP/CHANGE
- 2\_GROOM
- 3\_PRIVATE STUDY
- 4\_LIVE, EAT, PLAY, COLLABORATE



When is a building too big? What makes a space feel cold? How do we make communal bathrooms less impersonal?

We showed the students photographs of various academic and residential environments. Their reactions to the images consistently revealed their preferences for well-proportioned, light-filled spaces full of warm materials.



#### MATERIALS

Materials, color and lighting contribute to creating spaces that fuel creativity

#### SCALE

Taller buildings create challenges in relating to the human scale









# BLURRING THE THRESHOLD

The interaction between the indoors and the outdoors is inherent to the concept of a campus, and should be fully developed. Within student housing projects, increased daylight, ventilation and views can greatly enhance the quality of a student's residential life experience.

Students expressed that public green areas on college campuses, although plentiful, are often underutilized. For many, exterior rooms, patios and roof terraces have the potential to be their most valued 'community' space.





#### **ACTIVE USES**

Campus outdoor spaces are highly valued yet often underutilized as they often lack purpose

#### WELL DEFINED SPACES

Exterior rooms with specific uses in mind (outdoor eating for example)

#### LAYERED APPROACH

Allow indoor spaces to spill into outdoor areas, creating many layers between indoor and outdoor

#### VISUALLY CONNECTED

Creating indoor/outdoor visual connections enhances the sense of community and makes for good architecture











QUALITY OF SPACE Natural light is of utmost importance when deciding where to go for daily activities LIGHT DISTRIBUTION Find ways to equally share daylight while preserving privacy







### FINDING COMMON THEMES

In focusing on the key topics that emerged from our 2013 Student Housing Symposium, we noted some important themes that emerged again and again in our discussions with the students. Here is a more comprehensive list of "what students want and need".

#### FLEXIBILITY WITHIN MY ROOM

- 1. Ability to reconfigure the room layout is important.
- 2. Half of students study in their rooms, half would rather study elsewhere. Perhaps desks are not necessary in some of the bedrooms to allow for greater flexibility.
- 3. Students prefer built-in furniture that defines the space (ex: along a wall), but with the ability to reconfigure. Students like the idea of a mobile bed with a cushion seat that could rest below the desk.
- 4. Most students use their laptops or ipads more than T.V.s. but would ideally prefer a "study" wall that can be re-configured for technology
- 5. In general, rooms should embrace the growing use of technology and provide students with faster connectivity.
- There seems to be a consensus around the need for desk space 6. with a comfortable chair. Abandon the idea of a traditional "desk" and replace it with the idea of a work surface.
- 7. Storage is generally lacking, inadequate, or not flexible. Students actually preferred built-in closets over wardrobes.
- 8. Customizing space should include the ability to create a private zone in rooms with multiple inhabitants.
- 9. In general students felt that a window, some storage, and a sink in "my room" were the **only** fixed requirements. Sinks should be assessable outside of the bathroom.
- 10. In apartment style housing students felt that personalizing the living space was difficult due to lack of ownership.
- 11. "I hate traditional "dorm looking" furniture."
- 12. "I would like to be able to paint one wall in my room." Students like color not grey, tan, or white all the time.
- 14. "I do not like seeing my roommates face when I wake up."
- 15. Students like the idea of a divider wall (translucent) along the bed.
- 16. Students prefer a larger bed
- 17. Students are interested in adaptability of their space, either over the course of a day or from semester to semester (rooms with components that can be configured in multiple ways).

- 18. A "murphy bed" type concept is a viable flexibility option.
- 19. Students like a loft, but not the bunk beds.
- 20. We need to think about how we can open up rooms to more community space and consider ways to create less permeable walls between rooms.
- 21. Higher ceilings could allow for much more flexibility. Could this be done volumetrically without increasing cost, i.e., trade off in square footage vs. volume?

#### VARIETY WITHIN MY DORM

- 1. Just as "one size may not fit all", there is no one design that fits everv situation.
- 2. Offer more unit type diversity per building.
- 3. Consider offering a more diverse mix of age/class-level housing ranging from sophomores to seniors within the residence hall.
- 4. We developed the term "neighborhood" to include the entire residence life building or small multiple buildings = 150 (min.) to 500 (max.) students.
- 5. Many students actually love having a roommate, which is considered a part of the collegiate experience, at least as freshmen.
- 6. Some students believe that it is a mistake to "force" today's apartment style designs (referred to as commercial housing) on the college campuses and that the collegiate residence life experience should be cherished as a unique academic atmosphere.

#### DF-INSTITUTIONALIZING COMMON AREAS

- 1. Students say that materials, color, and lack of natural light can "institutionalize" the residence hall faster than anything. In addition, several students mentioned a desire for spaces that fuel creativity and correlated that with these types of material/color/and lighting enhancements.
- 2. Use warmer colors (bright in some areas and muted in others), a range of textures, and soft lines. Allow students the ability to paint a wall to personalize.

- 3. Spaces with dim lighting and a cozy feel are desired for the evening 6. Flexible furniture options ranging from small group tables to lounge since most of the time spent in the dorm buildings occurs when the seating are critical in order for students to utilize the space as their needs change over the course of a day. sun is not up.
- 4 Students like the idea of wood floors.
- 5. Students responded in a generally negative way towards "hard" materials such as concrete and steel. They see them as "cold".
- 6. Off-campus housing feels less institutional.
- 7. Through the desire to build "permanent" structures some universities build over-priced, well-built jail cells.
- 8. Students talked about the old "gang" shower as promoting an institutional mindset. Students prefer private bathrooms but are not opposed to community restrooms as long as they are clean. convenient, adequately sized, and used by no more than 8-16 students.
- 9. Provide storage or "cubbies" in community baths.
- 10. Bathrooms are another opportunity for socialization and casual conversation. Too much isolation defeats this opportunity.
- 11. Why not have natural light in the restroom? Also, ventilation is lacking. Why not music?
- 12. The more utilitarian areas (trash dumpsters, mechanical yards) should be planned better.

#### HOW I STUDY

Today's students, as natives of the digital information age are: 1) technology learners, 2) more collaborative 3) very intuitive problem solvers 4) good at multi-tasking.

The collegiate environment, as do library and workplace environments, needs to be designed for better collaboration spaces in conjunction with individual "search and study" spaces. In attempting to define the type, number and location of such spaces on the campus, we discovered the following:

- 1. Small individual study "nooks" should be scattered throughout. Students float seamlessly between socializing and studying, and want the location of their study spaces to be central yet audibly separated. Visual connectivity can instead be used for feelings of integration instead of isolation.
- 2. Students want comfortable seating that is playful, whimsical and relaxed.
- 3. Students seek out spaces that are full of natural light.
- 4 Small study areas adjacent to, or incorporated into, the stair/ elevator areas are nice because you can see activity and meet friends there.
- The importance of group study and collaboration is growing in all 5. aspects of learning and should be considered within the residence hall.

- 7. Most students still go to the library for serious study, however many campuses are incorporating better study environments within the classroom environment, which are used often between classes.
- 8. There is a 50/50 split in students who do the majority of their study in their rooms, and those who "escape" and go elsewhere.
- 9. Outdoor space, including ground level and balconies, are desired study areas.

#### **HOW I UNWIND**

- 1. The learning spaces noted above also dovetail into this idea of "chill out".
- 2. Chill Space: Students want multiple options. The chill space can provide an opportunity each year for a new cohort of students to change and take ownership of the communal areas, perhaps by choosing the arrangement or selection of furniture and activities.
- 3. Kitchens to serve the community are preferred over those that serve the entire building because there is more ownership, cleanliness, and scheduling is less of a conflict. A cleaning service is nice. A place for a group of say 8 students to eat (table) as well as a place to socialize (soft seating) is preferred.
- 4 This community lounge should be located in primary vertical circulation zones, so that students can see people coming and going and perhaps enhance connectivity to multiple floors. Instead of one large, open space, though, students are attracted to a layering of space with differing levels of intimacy and transparency.
- 5 Double height spaces enable "room to breathe" that is not felt in dorm rooms, but divisions in the types of space encourage multiple types of activities to thrive at the same time.
  - 6. Laundry should not be an afterthought, but rather a place for social interaction. Again: a study area would be nice adjacent to laundry.
  - 7. Flexible space for games, TV, a small coffee' shop, casual "zones" should be part of the neighborhood commons. Several upperclassmen expressed a desire for a mixed use building, as might be experience in an urban center.
  - 8. Larger dining areas should be housed elsewhere as students like getting away from "home" (escaping as some students call it) but close by.
  - 9. Gaming areas traditionally include pool tables, ping pong, t.y.'s but should be rethought (and in some cases expanded) as to how often they are used and by whom. The general consensus is that freshmen and sophomores use such spaces the most to meet people and hang out with friends.

- 10. Group study areas are needed, and in some cases within the residence hall. Slightly larger "group study" areas could be incorporated into shared space and should be extremely flexible.
- 11. Neighborhood space could also include "community" wall for writing/posting and mailboxes.
- 12. Traditional fitness areas did not seem to be a high priority unless the residence is remote. Group-based casual fitness (i.e. Frisbee, vollevball, racquetball, etc.) was attractive to students as essential parts of a community environment.
- 13. Students tend to go off campus to 1) get away 2) drink/party 3) coffee breaks/study 4) entertainment/eat.
- 14. The chill spaces should provide as much variety as possible. Some students don't feel safe walking across campus to reach amenities and like the idea of having choices in their communities.

#### NATURAL LIGHT

- 1. When asked about sustainability students seemed to migrate (unprompted) to natural day-lighting, views, and ventilation...
- 2. In every space we discussed with the students, from their room to study areas, natural light came up as extremely important.
- Quality of light is as important as quantity. 3.
- Glare and heat gain were often cited as being problematic. 4.
- 5. Views out are very important.
- 6. Students would like for each roommate or each room to have some form of equity in terms of window placement.
- 7. Ventilation: the ability to open windows is desired, but they understand the HVAC control issues that plague maintenance staff Cross ventilation is desired: Ceiling fans were also mentioned as desirable.

#### OUTDOOR CONNECTIONS

- 1. For many students outdoor space is their most valued "community" space.
- 2. Include outdoor spaces in your building Program.
- 3. Students define outdoor space as either passive or active.
- The more active areas (ex: playing fields) can be slightly more 4. remote (peripheral).
- 5. Well-defined outdoor space is much more usable than space that is too large or too small.
- 6. Include some built in outdoor benches, strategically placed, some in shade and some in sunlight that can be used by individuals or small group study. Power connections would be nice.

- 7. Students expressed a strong desire for programmed outdoor space in close proximity to their dorm room because of the connection to nature and the inherent ambient noise. "Working green spaces" include easy accessibility from dorm rooms, strong internet connectivity, courtyard/canopy/screened porch options to reduce glare. Porches off of a dorm building also provide the possibility of power sources.
- 8. Small amphitheaters define space and are used as study areas.... and could be used as a "community theatre" or "movies on the lawn" or concert.
- 9. Don't forget about the "in-between" spaces, between buildings.
- Some active zones (ex: vollevball, Frisbee) adjacent to housing 10. enhance the collegiate experience.
- 11. Trees are a must, especially the old growth oaks that "speak of traditional campus", and also helps define space.
- 12. Students like watching and observing, but not the feeling of being watched.
- 13. Visibility into the residence hall community spaces from the exterior is nice.
- 14. Although students understand the logistics of providing balconies, they would love to have a "common" balcony adjacent to community areas.
- 15. Students love the idea of rooftop gardens or green roofs. They are going to access the roofs anyway, so we may as well design them safe and secure.
- 16. An outdoor place to eat is desired. Also, students love the idea of arilling and picnic tables.
- 17. Views out of the room onto nice outdoor space gives a sense of peace and tranquility.

#### AESTHETICS

- 1. Students are less interested in the "style" of the dorm and more interested in how they can imagine living in interesting and exciting ways. They are open to new form and arrangements, particularly as they include outside space and green areas.
- 2. The students are drawn to buildings that were more open, transparent and inviting.
- 3. Students are more interested in imagining activities and experiences over architectural style and facades.

#### We would like to thank the following schools for their participation:

**Campbell University Charlotte Latin School** Davidson University Johnson and Wales University Meredith College

North Carolina Central University North Carolina State University Queens University

#### Thanks to the following students and staff members for participating in the Symposium:

Ryan Acks Aimee Agnew Nick Alito Adam Anzivino Oscar Arcevut Marsha Benson Emily Berg Ashley Boone Ashley Branch Darian Brown **Rachel Brown** Steven Casey Matt Clifford **Chantel Coltrane** Jordan Cone Rachel Creekmur Evan Danchenka

Dasha Davis Devin Davis Raven Dawkins Matthew Dix Donny Edwards Jill Fallon Sarah Fisher Brian Gaudio Matt Gauthier Ryan Glynn Steve Goodson Gideon Gourley Rvan Gutschick Austin Hamilton Blake Harrison Zach Hoffman Joshua Holmes

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill University of North Carolina at Charlotte

University of North Carolina at Greensboro Wake Forest University Winston Salem State University

Yiran Hu Andrew Imboden Brian Jones Lella Kenworthy Josh Kieb Katy Langy Jarvis Lucas Mike McLaughlin Victoria Melvin James Minton Paul Navarro Zach Niemiec Tyler Parker Will Philemon Victoria Pike Caleb Plunkey Nicholas Powell

Natalie Robinson Eric Sauda Matt Simpson **Taylor Smith Casey Smithling** Hampton Stall Sean Steinbugler William Stewart Martha Stone Nicholas Strickland Nathaniel Webster Kelsey Wiggs **Bailey Wiley** Zoe Williams John Willis Matthew Wingard



www.littleonline.com