FLEXSPACE: THE FLEXIBLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS EXCHANGE COLLABORATIVE

FOCUS ON EFFICIENCY

FLEXspace – The Flexible Learning Environments eXchange is a repository of detailed learning space examples and resources that brings campus planners, learning space design teams, facilities and technology specialists, faculty members, and researchers together to connect, collaborate and create a shared body of knowledge in one central location.

A top priority for many academic institutions is to reimagine physical spaces to support evolving user needs, yet many campuses lack institutional structures that are sufficiently adaptive, flexible and team-based to remain innovative and responsive. Typically, a space planning team is more akin to a "team of rivals," where classroom technologists, instructional designers, AV integrators, architects and designers, facilities directors, librarians, faculty, researchers, and students may struggle to understand the language and priorities coming from different team members.

Realizing the need to streamline planning, the California State University Chancellor's Office and the California Community College's Foothill-DeAnza Community College District partnered with the State University of New York (SUNY) system in 2013 to expand upon the SUNY Innovative Instruction Space Repository initiative to develop an open library of learning environment designs and resources called FLEXspace (Flexible Learning Environments eXchange).

FLEXspace is a free "one-stop" hub for best practices, detailed examples and a community of higher education stakeholder groups to help campuses improve communication as they plan, design, build and assess learning spaces; FLEXspace may be thought of as a B2B open educational resource that helps campuses improve quality and save time, money and effort.

The FLEXspace collection contains images, videos, floorplans, and detailed specifications describing facilities and furnishings, technologies, and learning activities supported in each space which facilitates collaboration between facilities, IT, and academic technology departments on California campuses and beyond. In addition to offering a unique pathway to share space examples, the new FLEXspace 2.0 platform introduces features that will grow both the community and the collection. The Toolkit is where members share assessment tools and protocols, planning guides, research findings, and user support resources. Idea boards allow members to collaborate within and across teams and institutions, creating shared pin boards to collectively discuss projects, examples and resources found in FLEXspace.

MILESTONES

- FLEXspace is launched as the Innovative Instruction Space Repository by the SUNY Provost Faculty Advisory Council on Teaching and Technology. SUNY presents the prototype at the CCUMC Conference.

Sum 2012

- The FLEXspace Team is established, including representatives from SUNY, California State University System, Foothill-DeAnza Community College, Iowa State University, University of Florida, Consortium of Colleges and University Media Centers, ELI, and Society for College and University Planning.

- The first project update webinar is held to discuss division of labor for FLEXspace production migration to the Artstor platform.

- The FLEXspace website and listserv are established. Demo of the prototype and a listening tour is conducted through multiple conference presentations and meetings conferences, concluding at the Sloan C/MERLOT Emerging Technologies Conference and discussion of the creation of a provisional governance structure and tasks necessary to move the initiative into production version 1.0.

Spr 2013

- The FLEXspace team compiles feedback and forms an advisory board and business plan. More than 50 volunteer academics, researchers and industry thought leaders from across the country and different higher education segments volunteer to shape the taxonomy (attributes fields) from the perspective of three main stakeholder groups: faculty and academic staff (pedagogy), AV and IT integrators (technology), and facilities planners/architects (space).

Sum 2013

- FLEXspace team and EDUCAUSE discussion plans for future synergy between the Learning Spaces Rating System and FLEXspace.

Each member institution has its own page listing all of its FLEXspace members as well as all spaces and resources contributed by that campus, providing campuses the ability to create their own "who's who" directory of spaces, resources and contacts. Community forums allow collaboration and discussion within and across institutions to share questions and answers and get input from the global FLEXspace community.

FLEXspace has been a topic of the CCC, CSU, and UC intersegmental collaboration committee in academic technologies, which has been underway for a year. Others have joined this collaboration, including Penn State University, Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching (MERLOT), EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI), Society for Campus and University Planning, the Consortium of College and University Media Centers (CCUMC), UBTech, AVIXA, the Learning Space Collaboratory, ISTE Learning Spaces Network, the Co-Action Learning Lab, The Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access, and others. The FLEXspace team also continues to collaborate with the EDUCAUSE Learning Spaces Rating System (LSRS) to encourage integration of these two useful tools as part of an integrated planning process.

QUANTIFICATION AND RESULTS

The community and collection of learning space examples and resources continues to grow. FLEXspace has more than 3,600 registered members from approximately 1,200 institutions across 57 countries, a team of global experts, and an emerging research and evaluation group from industry and academia.

FLEXspace members from around the world have contributed and shared more than 400 rich examples of formal and informal learning environments, ranging from multimedia studios, makerspaces, computer labs and huddle spaces to large exhibit spaces, simulation labs and renovated lecture halls – including spaces from higher education and the K12 pipeline.

Thanks to generous involvement from the growing number of members, researchers, industry sponsors and institutional partners, the portal has gone through multiple design cycles and continues with iterative design improvements to optimize its usability and value. The portal interface, taxonomies, features and user support continue to evolve to reflect industry trends and respond to the needs of users and the research community.

FLEXspace is fast becoming the one-stop learning space hub for research, planning tools and guidance, design examples, and implementation support.

FLEXspace is more frequently highlighted in published articles (e.g., *Campus Technology*, *EDUCAUSE Review* and *ECAR Data Bytes*), conference presentations and webinars (e.g., The Future Trends Forum). It is recommended as a key resource in learning space design handbooks and reference lists (e.g., Learning Spaces Rating Systems Handbook, The UK Higher Ed Learning Space Toolkit)

MILESTONES

Fall 2013
- FLEXspace Team presents to the American Institute of Architects Committee on Education annual meeting.
- Progress on the FLEXspace beta rollout is demonstrated at the CCUMC and EDUCAUSE national conferences.
- Limited staff are dedicated to the project, and a pilot version is created, tested and revised.

Spr 2014
- FLEXspace version 1.0 beta is produced on the Artstor platform and released to higher education users.
- A joint press release between SUNY and CSU System provosts encourages all campuses to begin contributing to the collection.
- FLEXspace and the Learning Space Rating System are featured in *Campus Technology*.

Sum & Fall 2014
- FLEXspace announces inaugural corporate sponsor, Herman Miller.
- FLEXspace is featured in *Dean and Provost* magazine.
- Listening tour continues.
- The number of spaces and registered users continues to grow.

Jan 2015
- FLEXspace is featured in *EDUCAUSE Review*.

May 2015
- New FLEXspace.org project website is launched.

Oct 2016
- FLEXspace receives the Campus Technology Innovators Award.

Mar 2017
- The FLEXspace team engages a user experience design consulting team to conduct user research and design FLEXspace 2.0, a custom mobile-friendly and user-centric interface.
- New users continue to register for FLEXspace accounts in the original portal, but space contributions slow.

Sum 2017
- FLEXspace is a program sponsor of the UBTech conference, where the new FLEXspace 2.0 design prototype is shared with users, institutional partners and industry sponsors to promote adoption and seek further funding support.

IMPACT AND BENEFITS

- The expanded mobile-friendly platform allows users to take virtual field trips to view peer institution solutions, create a digital portfolio to document and showcase innovative designs, share best practices and lessons learned, collaborate with partners, and connect with an ever-expanding worldwide community of colleagues and experts. The ability to share sample classroom designs and develop reliable facility plans cost-effectively can produce efficient campus innovations.

- Some campuses are starting to leverage FLEXspace as a cost-effective way to create an end-user facing classroom directory to document all spaces rather than build their own, which could help support faculty using the spaces and help prioritize improvement projects.

LESSONS LEARNED

1 There are obvious benefits that campuses receive from open access to freely browse the FLEXspace collection; however, campuses are slower to contribute spaces, perhaps perceiving this as "extra work" beyond their capacity, or failing to see immediate value and return on effort. Besides sharing "for the greater community good," many campuses would like assistance and/or a clear incentive for contributing. Newly released features address these concerns — templates for contributing spaces and toolkit resources allow users to add collaborators who can co-edit contributions and distribute the effort among a team that may include facilities and technology specialists, faculty, student workers and even industry partners. With curated galleries, the FLEXspace team can showcase campuses, highlighting them as innovators and thought leaders to acknowledge and incentivize contributions. The FLEXspace team also provides user outreach, coaching and technical assistance to campuses through webinars, demonstrations, videos and tutorials to educate campuses and assist them in leveraging the FLEXspace platform.

2 Sharing oversight and involvement by individuals who represent a breadth of roles, institutions, university segments and systems, as well as architects and industry partners has been critical in the successful design, evolution, adoption and funding of the FLEXspace initiative.

3 User-experience research and listening tours are essential to constantly refine the design and prioritize the development roadmap to ensure FLEXspace is meeting the needs and priorities of various types of institutions and stakeholder groups.

MILESTONES

Sum 2017 Continued
- A FLEXspace workshop is held at the International Forum for Active Learning Classrooms followed by a session at EDUCAUSE.
- The listening tour continues along with concept value testing of the new prototype, and the FLEXspace Team seeks a new hosting and web development provider.

Fall 2017
- The FLEXspace Team identifies a web development and hosting solution and overhauls the new prototype.
- The current collection and member databases are frozen in order to migrate existing records and member accounts away from the Artstor platform to the new custom portal.

Spr 2018
- The "view only" interface based on the new FLEXspace 2.0 design is open to view existing records as phased development of new features progresses.

Sum 2018
- FLEXspace is a program sponsor of the UBTech conference and launches the Create a Space template and the new user registration portal, enabling members to join and contribute spaces to the collection.
- The International Society for Technology in Education Learning Spaces Network joins as an official FLEXspace partner.
- Listening tour continues at various conferences.

Fall 2018 – Spr 2019
- Members of the FLEXspace and LSRS teams co-present a full-day workshop at EDUCAUSE on integrated campus planning using FLEXspace 2.0 and the LSRS version 2.
- Penn State joins SUNY, CSU and Foothill DeAnza District with system-level support.
- Phased development continues on the remaining features that enable further contributions and collaboration.
- New Toolkit, Galleries and Member Directory features are launched at the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiatives conference.

MAKERSPACES AT CAL STATE

Makerspaces are taking hold across several CSU campuses.

VIEW GALLERY

♡ 5
BUILD IT MAKERSPACE @SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
San Diego State University

♡ 5
INNOVATION / MAKERSPACE CENTER
California State University Fullerton

♡ 3
CHICO STATE MAKERSPACE
California State University Chico

SPACES IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Detailed examples of innovative spaces!

VIEW GALLERY

♡ 2
IDEA GARDEN
Indiana University/Purdue University at Indianapolis

♡ 9
SOL MESSINGER ACTIVE LEARNING CLASSROOM
State University of New York at Buffalo

♡ 6
ACTIVE LEARNING HALL
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

FEATURED PARTNERS

See how our partners are inspiring spaces around the world.

VIEW GALLERY

♡ 0
HISTORIC RENOVATION AT FLORIDA STATE
Herman Miller

♡ 7
LEARNING STUDIO
Computer Comforts
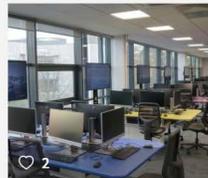
♡ 2
UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE, SCOTLAND: ACTIVE LEARNING CLASSROOM
Wolfvision

Curated galleries showcase innovative campus spaces.

Browse or add your own examples

- Convenient Template
- Case study layout
- Captioned photos
- Details and descriptions
- Stories of design rationale and post-occupancy use
- 'Add collaborators' so you can co-edit details.
- Keep private and publish when ready

Tags for Facilities, AV, EdTech, Pedagogy, and Brands

Resources might include:
- Faculty training & support
- Planning guides
- Research findings, protocols
- Presentations, videos

RESOURCES
My-presentation-deck.pdf
My-document-deck.doc
My-spreadsheet-deck.xlsx
My-slide-deck.ppt
My-Video-deck.mov
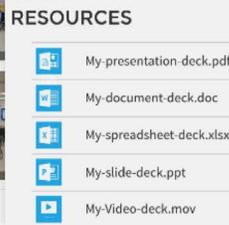
Templates help to easily contribute designs and resources.

FLEXSPACE PROJECT TEAM

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

Lisa A. Stephens
SUNY senior strategist,
Academic Innovation

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

Gerry Hanley
assistant vice chancellor,
Academic Technology Services

FOOTHILL-DE ANZA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Joseph Moreau
vice chancellor,
Technology

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, INNOVATIVE LEARNING TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE

Mary-Ellen Kreher
director,
Course Design and Development

Ellen Osmundson
ILTI project coordinator

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

Rebecca Frazee
faculty,
Learning Design and Technology
Program, School of Journalism and
Media Studies

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Kyle Bowen
director,
Teaching and Learning with Technology

EDUCAUSE

Malcolm Brown
director of Learning Initiatives

FURTHER REFERENCES

FLEXspace website:
flexspace.org