

# LEARNING SPACES: THE VU EXPERIENCE

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# VU CONTEXT

- Information Commons to Learning Commons
- Evolutionary model
  - City Flinders (2006)
  - St Albans (2007)
  - Werribee (2007)
- Footscray Park (2010)
- Sunshine Hospital TTRF (2010?)
- Footscray Nicholson (2010?)

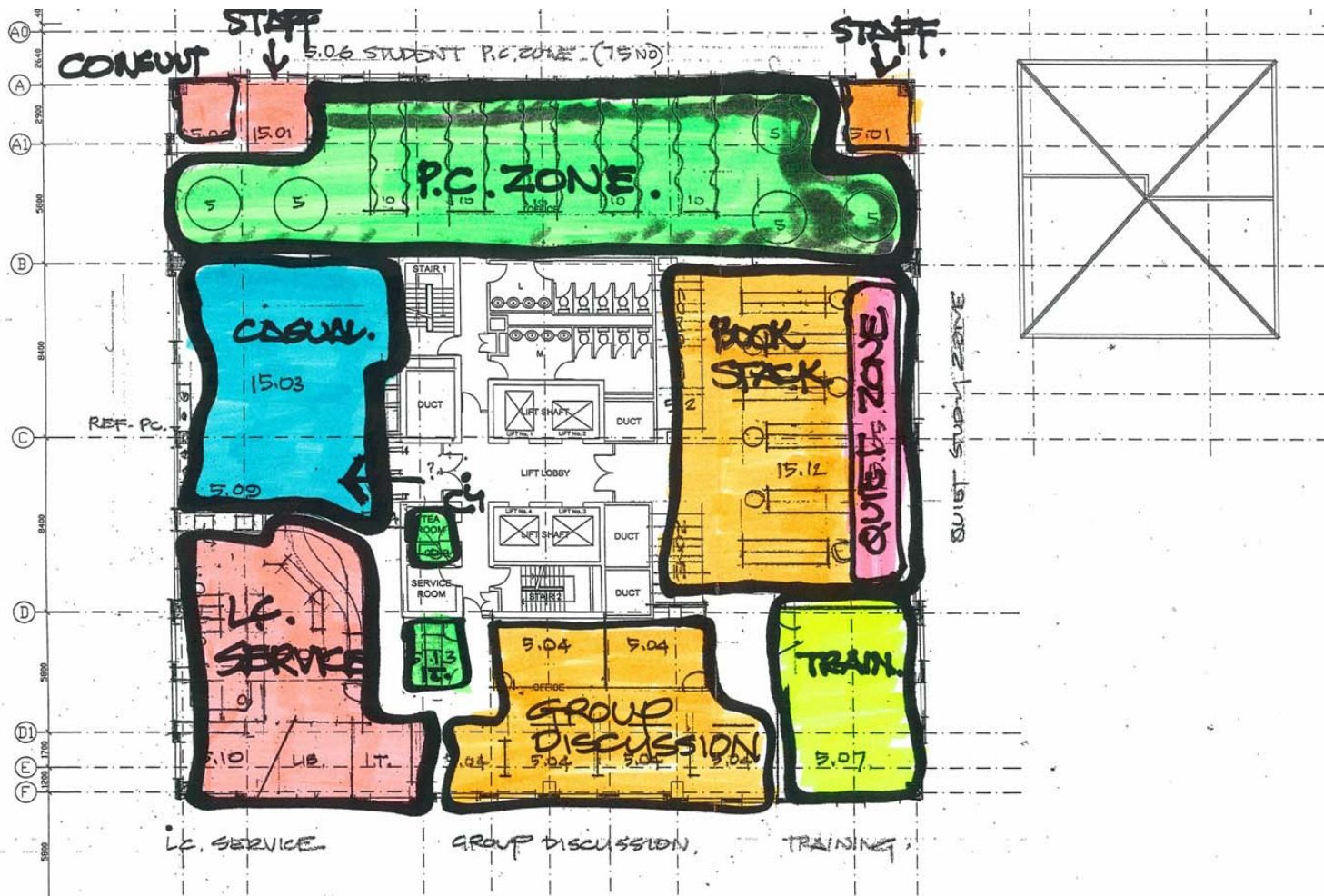


# LEARNING COMMONS PRINCIPLES

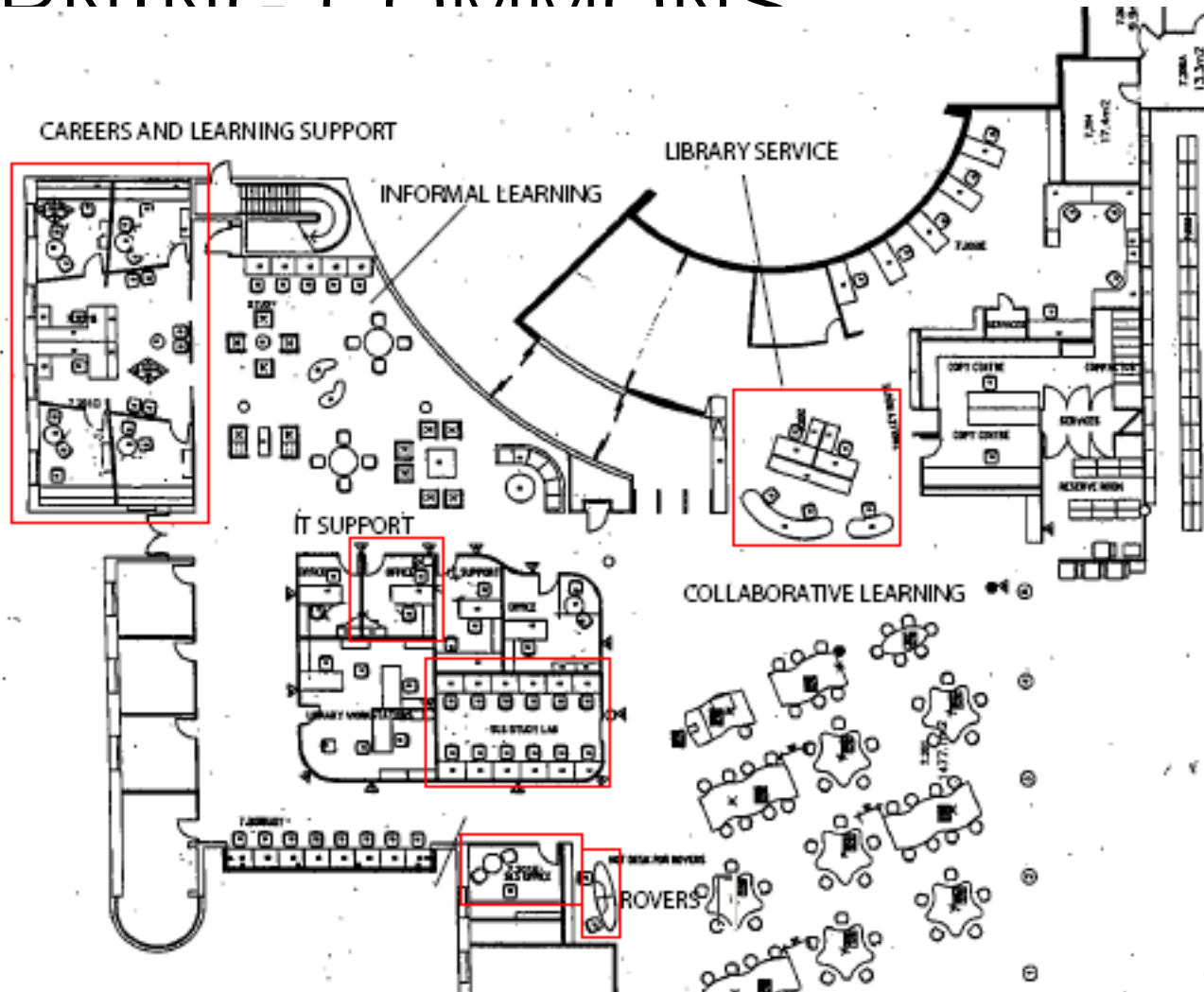
- Learning oriented – *active, independent and collaborative learners*
- Learning centered – *focused on student needs*
- University wide – *cross University approach to learner autonomy*
- Flexible – *respond to changing resource and support needs*
- Collaborative – *joint service delivery among different learning support services*
- Community building – *physical and virtual hub for students & staff*



# CITY FLINDERS LEARNING COMMONS



# ST ALBANS LEARNING COMMONS



# LEARNING SPACES IN THE COMMONS

- Flexible learning spaces to support different learning styles
- “One-stop” access to integrated learning support services
- Provision of technology to support learning
- Fostering the growth of community



# VU PARTNERS IN THE LEARNING COMMONS

- Learning Support Services
- Library
- IT
- Careers



# VU SERVICE MODEL

<p><b>Tier 3</b> Individual Consultations Scheduled workshops</p>	<p>Reference and liaison librarians Learning support staff Careers staff</p>
<p><b>Tier 2</b> On call support Online Triage Ad hoc workshops Drop-in study lab</p>	<p>IT support staff Virtual team Paraprofessional library staff Learning support staff Careers staff</p>
<p><b>Tier 1</b> Phone Online Peer support</p>	<p>Clerical support staff Virtual team Student Rovers</p>
<p>Embedded support in curriculum</p>	

# STUDENT ROVERS



# ROVERS AS LEARNING EXEMPLARS

- Basic queries - core facilities, information resources, software & hardware
- Help clarify and articulate basic issues for their learning
- Options for further information and referrals
- Mentors for 'communities of learning' and culture of learning



# EVALUATION

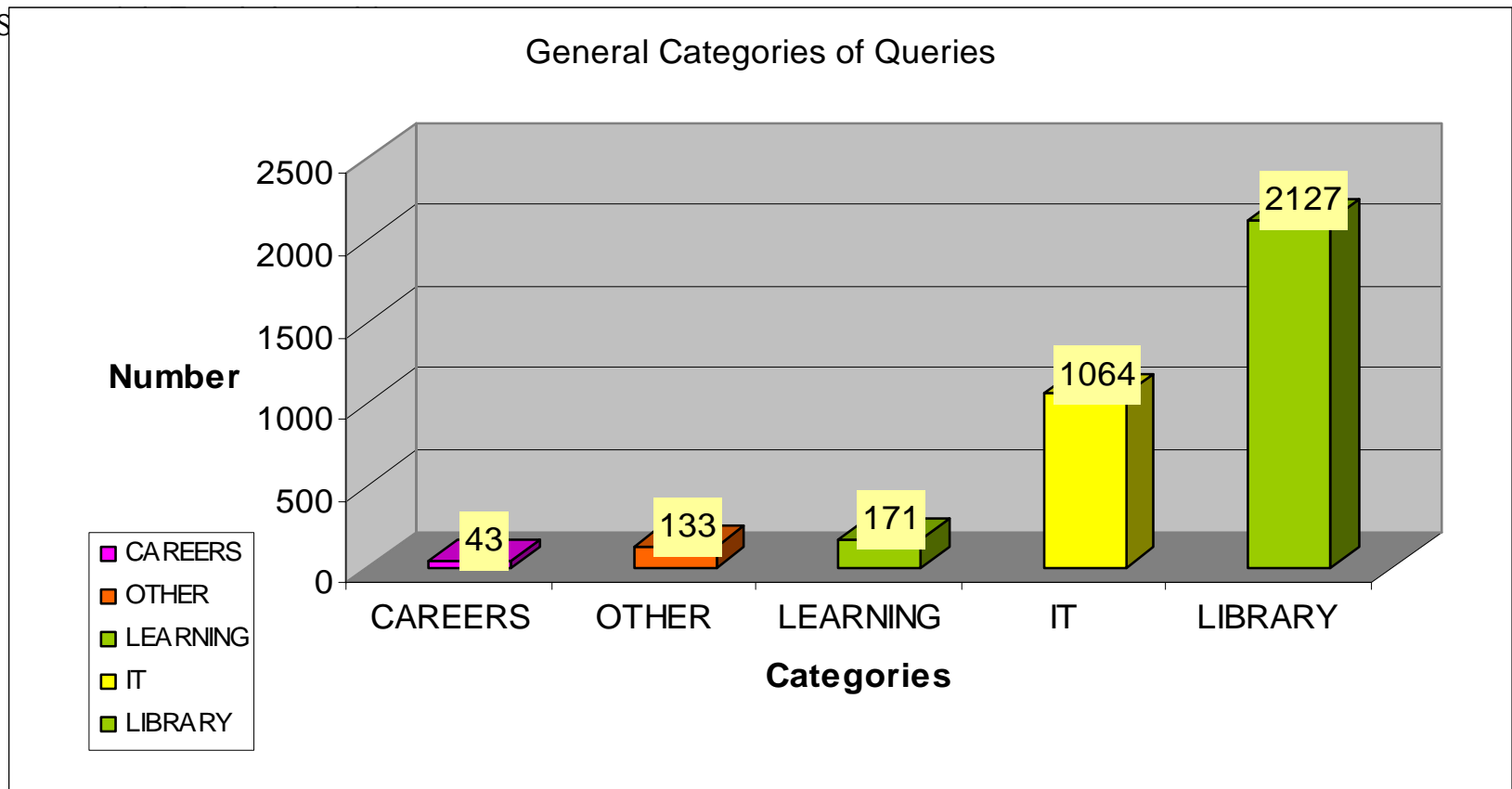
- Problematic
- Limited work
- More than popularity

# CONTEXTUAL QUANTITATIVE DATA

- Door count, occupancy and usage statistics
- Educational support service statistics
- Annual Library Client Survey satisfaction measures
- Student Rover Service statistics

# ROVER ACTIVITY CITY FLINDERS LEARNING COMMONS

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# QUALITATIVE EVALUATION METHODS

- Qualitative comments from the Library Client Survey
- Student and Staff focus groups
- Student diaries (mapping diaries)
- Rover reflective practice: End of Shift Reports and debriefing sessions

# STUDENT DIARIES

**DAY 4 - MAPPING DIARY**

DATE: 20/5/08

Time of ARRIVAL: 15:30 pm

Time of DEPARTURE: 18:00 pm

LOCATION  
(SEE MAP) CODE

RECORD ALL ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN IN THE  
LEARNING COMMONS

Time  
taken

REFLECTIONS (why did I do this activity and with whom)

- ② Met a couple of classmates discussed our "Sap" assignment.
- ④ Checked my emails and had a chat with friends
- ⑧ Sought help from Library staff regarding 'Sap' software

Library is a convenient place to meet my classmates in a proper discussion room.

I was on internet in library.

IT staff is available in the library most of the time.

# PRELIMINARY EVALUATION RESULTS

- Increase in facility usage and student satisfaction
- Strong demand for increased resources – more space and computers
- Evidence of the Learning Commons encouraging collaborative learning
- Evidence of the Commons acting as a community social space

# COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

*Yeah group assignment, then we definitely have to work in groups and then by doing so we do the interaction straight away in front of the computer ... we talk, that's it. [St Albans]*

*And there's a lot of uni work where it is on group work or most of the assignments ... it's much better to work within a group to get ideas....[St Albans]*

*Gives us that opportunity to be able to learn, to work with other people because there [may be] that reality when we go into the workplace. [City Flinders]*



# SOCIAL DIMENSION OF LEARNING

*I think it's different for each person. I know if I sit there and try and ... just sit there and write just non-stop I'll just burn out and lose interest so what I'll do is I'll type up a paragraph, check MSN, just have a chat to some people and then back to - - - (again) - - -[St Albans]*

*In here I guess you get more motivated because you see others studying but when you're at home you get to do some other stuff that's not study related.....[St Albans]*



# ROVER REFLECTIONS

*We had a few students come over for a chat, we had 4 students who wanted to just sit and chat to us about their assignments and tests that they have in the next few weeks. Because we have already done those subjects we gave them a few tips on how to overcome the hardship throughout the term.*

*I had a strange query about how one particular lecturer is using Turnitin and it caught me off guard, so I'll look into this further and report back.*



# ROVER REFLECTIONS

*... At the end of that day shift when I was in the train what I ... realised was that at that moment not only professional help took place but a social network between a Rover and a student, a social network between a student and the learning commons, and finally, in a broader sense a network between a learner and VU took place in a positive way.*

*I taught a student how to use Microsoft PowerPoint ... He thanked me so much and he wished that I was there for him earlier. I replied the other things we do. He was surprised, since it is his first year at Victoria university.*



# LESSONS LEARNT

- Improved usage and satisfaction statistics
- Planning to balance quiet and noisy spaces
- Use of technology for both private and study purposes
- Observing other students' study practices assists learning outcomes
- Need increased awareness of assistance available - improve profile of each service and coordination between services
- Collaborative learning within the Rovers team and their mentoring role.

# NEXT?

- Australian Learning & Teaching Council (ALTC) grants
- ‘A comprehensive learning space evaluation model’ – with Swinburne as lead and UQ and VU as partners
- “Spaces for knowledge generation: a framework for designing student learning environments for the future” – La Trobe as lead with VU on reference group

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- Adrian Gallagher, Manager, Learning Commons
- Dr Amanda Pearce, Associate Director, Learning Support

# ROVER VIDEO THANK YOU QUESTIONS

