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# Huron University College Learning Behaviors and Learning Spaces - Faculty Survey Results

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# Huron University College

## Learning Behaviors and Learning Spaces Survey

### Faculty Survey Results – June 2014

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#### I. Introduction

**Method:** The Learning Behaviors and Learning Spaces (LBLS) survey was conducted between March 10 and March 24, 2014 at Huron University College (HUC), sponsored by the Huron University College Library (HUCL). The survey was emailed to all faculty teaching at Huron during the winter 2014 term with an invitation to participate as a means of supporting planning activities for the proposed Learning Commons.

**Population:** 35 faculty responded to the survey. 35% identified as Associate Professor, 28% as Lecturer, 25% as Assistant Professor, 8% as Professor and 5% as Other. 74% of respondents teach full-time while 25% teach part time.

**The Survey Instrument:** The LBLS survey included questions about twelve learning behaviors identified through the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) as an important part of student success. Faculty were asked, for a series of 10 learning behaviors: 'How important is it to you that your students engage in this learning behavior' using a scale of: Not important, Somewhat Important, Important, or Very Important.

Faculty who identified a learning behavior as either Important or Very Important were further asked to indicate how well HUC provides spaces that foster this behavior using a scale of: Uncertain or do not know, Not very well, Adequately, or Very well.

Faculty who identified space at HUC as being provided Adequately or Very Well were further asked to identify specific on-campus spaces that foster this learning behavior, choosing from a prepared list. This list consciously excluded classroom and lab space. The list included:

- Residence halls
- Dining hall
- Student union (SAC)
- Common spaces in academic buildings
- Recreational facilities
- Outdoor spaces
- Huron University College Library
- Other libraries at Western University
- Computing lab

For a full account of the faculty data collected through the LBLS survey please see Appendix 1.

## II. Analysis:

The following analysis includes comparison of faculty data with student data collected through a related (i.e. parallel) survey.

### a. Learning Behaviors

Although the top three learning behaviors identified by faculty differ from those identified by students, they do have in common a recognition that students learn in different ways; learning is both an individual pursuit and a group activity. The learning behaviors valued by faculty speak strongly to the need for collaborative learning space where spontaneous conversation and dialogue can take place. Students also felt a need to provide more of this type of space at HUC.

The top three learning behaviors identified by faculty through the LBLS survey are:

#### 1. Students work alone to understand class material, complete assignments. (LB2)

Out of the twelve learning behaviors listed, faculty overwhelmingly recognized students working alone, as individuals, to understand class material and to complete class assignments as key to student success. 96% of faculty identified this learning behavior as either Very Important (68%) or Important (28%).

This learning behavior also topped the list in the student survey with 91% of students identifying working alone as either Very Important (58%) or Important (33%). Faculty and students seem to agree that students require time and space to work on their own as a fundamental part of their learning journey.

#### 2. Students have serious conversations with students different from selves re: religion, politics. (LB8)

#### 3. Students have serious conversations with students different from selves re: race, ethnicity. (LB9)

The next two learning behaviors identified by faculty as important contributors to student learning relate to students having serious conversations with other students who are different from themselves in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, personal values, race or ethnicity. These learning behaviors were ranked as either Very Important or Important by 80% (LB8) and 77% (LB9) of faculty respondents. Student respondents ranked these learning behaviors in fifth (LB8 50%) and sixth position (LB9 48%) on the student survey.

The lowest scoring learning behavior for faculty was learning behavior twelve: 'Students participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together'. 34% of faculty identified this learning behavior as Very Important (25%) or Important (9%). However, 'Students participate in a learning community...' moves in to the top five learning behaviors for faculty when ranking behaviors by the category 'Very Important' alone. Participating in part of a learning community was ranked low in the student survey, coming in as one of the bottom three learning behaviors.

A full ranking of learning behaviors, using the cumulative total for learning behaviors identified as Very Important or Important:

1. Students work alone to understand class material, complete assignments. (LB2)
2. Students have serious conversations with students different from selves re: religion, politics. (LB8)
3. Students have serious conversations with students different from selves re: race, ethnicity. (LB9)
4. Students discuss ideas from readings or classes with others. (LB4)  
Students discuss ideas from readings/class with faculty outside of class. (LB5)
5. Students work with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments. (LB1)
6. Students pursue independent study or self-designed major. (LB10)
7. Students 'work along' to understand class material and complete assignments. (LB3)  
Students work with faculty on activities other than coursework. (LB6)  
Students work on a research project with a faculty member. (LB7)  
Students have a culminating senior experience. (LB11)
8. Students participate in a learning community. (LB12)

The top five learning behaviors identified by faculty as Very Important and the ranked list of learning behaviors identified as either Very Important OR Important generally overlap:

LB ranked by highest score for 'Very Important'	LB ranked by highest cumulative score 'Very Important OR Important'
1 Students work alone (LB2)	1 Students work alone (LB2)
2 Students have serious convos (race, ethn) (LB9)	2 Students have serious convos (rel, pol) LB8
3 Students have serious convos (rel, pol) (LB8)	3 Students have serious convos (race, ethn) LB9
4 Students discuss readings outside class (LB4)	4 Students discuss readings outside class (LB4) Students discuss readings with faculty (LB5)
5 Students work with classmates (LB1) Students participate in learning comm. (LB12)	5 Students work with classmates (LB1)
6 Students pursue independent study (LB10)	6 Students pursue independent study (LB10)
7 Students discuss readings with faculty (LB5) Students have culminating sr exp (LB11)	7 Students 'work along' (LB3) Students work w faculty outside coursework (LB6) Students work on res proj w faculty (LB7) Students have culminating sr exp (LB11)
8 Students work w faculty outside coursework (LB6)	8 Students participate in learning comm. (LB12)
9 Students 'work along' (LB3)	
10 Students work on res proj w faculty (LB7)	

As described above, one major difference between these two lists is that the learning behavior 'Students participate in a learning community...' jumps from last on the list that ranks learning

behaviors by cumulative score for Very Important or Important to fifth on the list when learning behaviors are ranked by score for Very important alone.

#### b. Learning Spaces

In the LBLS survey faculty were asked to identify, for those learning behaviors that are Very Important or Important, how well HUC does in providing on-campus space to foster this learning behavior: Very Well, Adequately, Not Very Well or Uncertain. Faculty were then asked to identify specific on-campus learning spaces that foster this learning behavior, selecting from a list of ten possible spaces (excluding classrooms and/or labs). The following analysis considers responses provided on learning spaces for the top five learning behaviors identified through the survey (using the cumulative score of Very Important and Important).

##### 1. Students work alone to understand class material, complete assignments. (LB2)

HUC does:

Very well – 15%

Adequate – 63%

Not very well – 6%

Uncertain – 15%

Most popular space associated with this LB: Huron University College Library - 100%

##### 2. Students have serious conversations with students different from selves re: religion, politics. (LB8)

HUC does:

Very well – 11%

Adequate – 26%

Not very well – 34%

Uncertain – 26%

Most popular space associated with this LB: Residence halls – 100%

##### 3. Students have serous conversations with students different from selves re: race, ethnicity. (LB9)

HUC does:

Very well – 4%

Adequate – 16%

Not very well – 45%

Uncertain – 33%

Most popular space associated with this LB: Residence halls – 100%

##### 4. Students discuss ideas from readings or classes with others. (LB4)

HUC does:

Very well – 14%

Adequate – 28%

Not very well – 33%

Uncertain – 23%

Most popular space associated with this LB: Huron University College Library & Other libraries at Western – 75%

Students discuss ideas from readings/class with faculty outside of class. (LB5)

HUC does:

Very well – 28%

Adequate – 57%

Not very well – 14%

Uncertain – 0%

Most popular space associated with this LB: Other (Faculty offices) – 88%

5. Students work with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments. (LB1)

HUC does:

Very well – 20%

Adequate – 30%

Not very well – 20%

Uncertain – 30%

Most popular space associated with this LB: Huron University College Library – 100%

In the above list of top five learning behaviors, HUC is identified in three out of six cases as the most popular space on campus for fostering each learning behavior. In those learning behavior categories where it does not rank first, it appears in the top four. This is out of a list of ten possible learning spaces. As with the student survey, this reflects the range of different uses faculty feel students should make of library space.

The above data indicates faculty feel there is room for improvement when it comes to learning space at HUC. For example, the learning behaviors most valued by faculty tend to place an emphasis on conversation and dialogue. More specifically, faculty identified conversations occurring among students that provide an opportunity to explore differences as an important learning behavior; the space they identify as most supportive of these types of conversations, residence halls, speaks to the often spontaneous nature of these kinds of interactions. Between 34% and 45% of faculty responded 'Not very well' when asked how well HUC does in providing space for students to have meaningful conversations outside of the classroom. Students also suggested that suitable space for learning with peers is less than desirable at HUC, with space available for discussing readings with others outside of class and space for working with classmates on class assignments receiving high 'Not very well' rankings (41% and 34%

respectively). The following comments from faculty reflect the need for more collaborative space at HUC:

*“We desperately need comfortable spaces for social interactions among students and faculty that happen accidentally and naturally...”*

*“It does strike me that at Huron – as at most places – there aren’t great spaces for fostering collaborative work. Social spaces are too noisy, the library is too quiet. So where are they supposed to go?”*

### III. Next Steps

The LBLS survey has identified LB that are important to faculty at HUC and the spaces they feel students currently use to support learning outside of the classroom. Further, faculty have identified how well they feel space provided by HUC supports desired learning behaviors. As with the student survey results, it would be useful to understand how faculty define ‘adequate’ space with a view to creating more spaces outside of the classroom that support learning ‘very well’ at HUC. To this end, focus groups will be held with faculty in the fall/winter to probe in this area.

#### IV. Appendix - Results Summary

The following provides a summary of data collected for each learning behavior studied through the LBLS survey.

LB1. Students work with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments.

Over half (56%) of faculty identified this learning behavior as either Very Important (25%) or Important (31%) to student success. 42% of faculty indicated this learning behavior was Somewhat Important (34%) or Not Important (8%).

Of those faculty who identified working with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments as Very Important or Important, 20% indicated that HUC does Very Well in providing space for this purpose while 30% felt space provided was Adequate. 20% responded Not very well. 30% were Uncertain.

Huron University College Library was identified as the most popular space for students to work with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments. The top five spaces identified were:

1. Huron University College Library – 100%
2. Other libraries at Western & SAC – 70%
3. Dining hall – 60%
4. Computing lab & Common spaces in academic buildings - 50%
5. Residence halls – 40%

LB2. Students work alone, as individuals, to understand class material and to complete class assignments.

96% of faculty identified this learning behavior as either Very Important (68%) or Important (28%) to student success. 2% of faculty identified this learning behavior as Somewhat Important, with 0% selecting Not Important.

Of those faculty who identified working alone, as individuals, to understand class material and to complete class assignments as Very Important or Important, 15% indicated that HUC does Very Well in providing space for this purpose while 63% felt space provided was Adequate. 6% of faculty responded Not very well, 15% were Uncertain.

Huron University College Library was identified as the most popular space on campus for students to work alone, as individuals, to understand class material and to complete class assignments. The top five spaces identified were:

1. Huron University College Library – 100%
2. Other libraries at Western – 84%
3. Computing lab – 53%
4. Common spaces in academic buildings & Outdoor spaces – 38%
5. Dining hall & Residence halls & SAC – 34%



LB3. Students, while working alone to understand class material and to complete class assignments, do this in proximity to other students working in the same way (“working along”).

40% of faculty identified this learning behavior as either Very Important (11%) or Important (29%) to student success. 58% identified this learning behavior as either Somewhat Important (47%) or Not Important (11%).

Of those faculty who identified ‘working along’ as Very Important or Important, 30% indicated that HUC does Very Well in providing space for this purpose while 38% felt space provided was Adequate. 23% responded Not very well, 7% were Uncertain.

Huron University College Library was identified as the most popular space on campus for students to work alone to understand class material to complete assignments in proximity to other students working in the same way. The top five spaces identified were:

1. Huron University College Library – 87%
2. Other libraries at Western – 75%
3. Dining hall – 50%
4. Common spaces in academic buildings & Computing lab & Residence halls & SAC – 37%
5. Outdoor spaces – 25%

LB4. Students discuss ideas from readings or classes with others (students, family members, co-workers, etc) outside of class.

63% of faculty identified this learning behavior as either Very Important (30%) or Important (33%). 36% of faculty identified this learning behavior as Somewhat Important (36%) with 0% selecting Not Important.

Of those faculty who identified discussing ideas from readings or classes with others as Very Important or Important, 14% of faculty indicated that HUC does Very Well in providing space for this purpose while 28% felt space provided was Adequate. 33% of faculty responded Not very well, 23% were Uncertain.

Huron University College Library was identified as the most popular space on campus for students to discuss readings or classes with others. The top five spaces identified were:

1. Huron University College Library & Other libraries at Western – 75%
2. Common spaces in academic buildings & Outdoor spaces & Residence halls & SAC – 62%
3. Dining hall – 50%
4. Computing lab & Recreational facilities – 12%

LB5. Students discuss ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class.

63% of faculty identified this learning behavior as either Very Important (15%) or Important (48%) while 36% identified this learning behavior as Somewhat Important (33%) or Not Important (3%).

Of those faculty who identified discussing ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class as Very Important or Important, 28% indicated that HUC does Very Well in providing space for this purpose while 57% felt space was Adequate. 14% of faculty responded Not very well.

Faculty offices (identified under 'Other') was identified as the most popular space on campus for students to discuss readings or classes with faculty members outside of class (88%). The top five spaces identified for this learning behavior were:

1. Other (faculty offices) - 88%
2. Commons spaces in academic buildings – 41%
3. Outdoor spaces – 29%
4. Dining hall & Huron University College Library – 11%
5. Computing lab & Other libraries at Western & SAC – 5%

LB6. Students work with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities).

40% of faculty identified this learning behavior as either Very Important (12%) or Important (28%). 58% of faculty identified this learning behavior as either Somewhat Important (40%) or Not Important (18%).

Of those faculty who identified working with faculty members on activities other than coursework as either Very Important or Important, 7% indicated HUC does Very Well in providing space for this purpose while 38% felt space provided was Adequate. 53% responded Not very well.

Common spaces in academic buildings was identified as the most popular space on campus for students to work with faculty members on activities other than coursework (80%). The top five spaces identified for this learning behavior were:

1. Common spaces in academic buildings – 83%
2. Outdoor spaces & Other (classrooms) – 33%
3. Dining hall & Huron University College Library & Other libraries at Western – 16%

LB7. Students work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements.

40% of faculty identified this learning behavior as Important, with 0% of faculty selecting Very Important. 58% of faculty identified this LB as either Somewhat Important (37%) or Not Important (21%).

Of those faculty who identified working on a research project with a faculty member outside of a course or program as Very Important or Important, 0% indicated that HUC does Very Well in providing space for this purpose while 30% felt space provided was Adequate. 61% responded Not very well, 7% were Uncertain.

Other (Faculty Offices) were identified as the most popular space on campus for students to work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements (66%). The top spaces identified for this learning behavior were:

1. Other (faculty offices) - 66%
2. Common spaces in academic buildings & Computing lab & Huron University College Library – 33%

LB8. Students have serious conversations with other students who are very different from themselves in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions or personal values.

80% of faculty identified this learning behavior as either Very Important (43%) or Important (37%). 18% identified this learning behavior as Somewhat Important (15%) or Not Important (3%).

Of those faculty who identified having serious conversations with other students who are different from themselves (etc) as either Very Important or Important, 11% indicated that HUC does very well in providing space for this purpose, while 26% felt space provided was Adequate. 34% responded Not very well, 26% were Uncertain.

Residence halls were identified as the most popular spaces on campus for students to have serious conversations with other students who are very different from themselves (100%). The top five spaces identified for this learning behavior were:

1. Residence halls – 100%
2. Dining hall – 88%
3. Common spaces in academic buildings & HUCL & Other libraries at Western & SAC – 77%
4. Computing lab & Recreational facilities – 33%
5. Other (chapel) – 22%

LB9. Students have serious conversations with other students different from themselves in race or ethnicity.

77% of faculty identified this learning behavior as either Very Important (45%) or Important (32%). 22% of faculty identified this learning behavior as Somewhat Important (19%) or Not Important (3%).

Of those faculty who identified having serious conversations with other students different from themselves in race or ethnicity as Very Important or Important, 4% indicated that HUC does Very Well in providing space for this purpose, while 16% felt space provided was Adequate. 45% responded Not very well, 33% were Uncertain.

Residence halls were identified as the most popular space on campus for students to have serious conversations with other students different from themselves in race or ethnicity (100%). The top five spaces identified for this learning behavior were:

1. Residence halls – 100%
2. Common spaces in academic buildings & Dining hall & HUCL & Other libraries at Western & SAC – 80%
3. Outdoor spaces & Recreational facilities – 40%
4. Computing lab – 20%

LB10. Students pursue independent study or a self-designed major.

45% of faculty identified this learning behavior as Very Important (16%) or Important (29%). 53% of faculty identified this learning behavior as Somewhat Important (41%) or Not Important (12%).

Of those faculty who identified pursuing an independent study or self-designed major as very important or important, 21% indicated that HUC does Very Well in providing space for this purpose, while 28% felt space provided was Adequate. 28% responded Not very well, 21% were Uncertain.

Huron University College Library was identified as the most popular space on campus for students to pursue independent study or a self-designed major. The top five spaces identified for this learning behavior were:

1. Huron University College Library – 100%
2. Other libraries at Western – 87%
3. Computing lab – 50%
4. Dining hall & Other (Archives) – 25%
5. Common spaces in academic buildings & Outdoor spaces & Residence halls & SAC – 12%

LB11. Students have a culminating senior experience (comprehensive exam, capstone course, thesis, project).

40% of faculty identified this learning behavior as Very Important (15%) or Important (25%). 59% of faculty identified this learning behavior as either Somewhat Important (31%) or Not Important (28%).

Of those faculty who identified having a culminating senior experience as Very Important or Important, 7% indicated that HUC does Very Well in providing space for this purpose, while 30% felt space was Adequate. 46% responded Not very well, 15% were Uncertain.

Huron University College Library was identified as the most popular space on campus for students to work on a culminating senior experience (comprehensive exam, capstone course, thesis, project). The top five spaces identified for this learning behavior are:

1. Common spaces in academic buildings & Huron University College Library – 80%
2. Other libraries at Western – 60%
3. SAC – 40%
4. Computing lab & Residence halls – 20%

LB12. Students participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together.

34% of faculty identified this learning behavior as Very Important (25%) or Important (9%). 65% of faculty identified this learning behavior as either Somewhat Important (37%) or Not Important (28%).

Of those faculty who identified participating in a learning community as Very Important or Important, 27% indicated that HUC does Very Well in providing space for this purpose, while 36% felt space was Adequate. 27% responded Not very well, 9% were Uncertain.

Huron University College Library was identified as the most popular space on campus for students to participate in a learning community. The top five spaces identified for this learning behavior are:

1. Huron University College Library – 85%
2. Other libraries at Western – 71%
3. Common spaces in academic buildings & Outdoor spaces – 57%
4. Dining hall & Residence halls – 42%
5. Computing lab – 28%