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Proposal to update the faculty and staff lounge

by the Sarah Graves and Margaret Clifford of the Forestry Graduate Student Organization and members of the Wildlife Graduate Student Association

We present a proposal to update the faculty and staff lounge and addition of a workspace for off-campus students. The first part of this proposal concerns the faculty and staff lounge (room 377). The second part concerns the extension storage closet on the 3rd floor (room 337).

Renovation of the 3rd floor lounge

The faculty and staff lounge on the third floor of Newins-Ziegler Hall (room 377) is a frequently used space, but is in need of a renovation. Many of the elements of the lounge are old and unusable. Minor improvements to the lounge will provide a high-quality space comparable to the other community spaces of SFRC and WEC.

We are grateful this areas exists. The success of the first week of our graduate student coffee breaks and the results from our polling indicate the desire for graduate students to have a comfortable and convenient communal space. We hope these modifications improve this lounge for a space that is more professional, and inviting, and most importantly, increases the sense of community among members of this department.

Need

The spaces serves SFRC faculty and staff as well as graduate students in SFRC and WEC. We polled SFRC graduate students to understand the desire for a communal space to be used by graduate students. The overwhelming response was that students wanted a place to take a break for coffee, eat, or meet with peers. Furthermore, many SFRC and WEC students do not have office space in Newins-Ziegler Hall but are often in the building for meetings or classes. A communal area for downtime is helpful for these students.

After some minor cleaning, adjustments to the layout, and initiation of regularly-hosted coffee breaks by FGSO, we have noticed the increased use of the space. This suggests minor upgrades to existing items will be just as welcomed and lead to a space that serves the members of the SFRC and WEC departments.

Limitation

The lounge is located across the hall from the primary conference room in the building. As such, the lounge is a primary room for informal meetings before and after meetings and seminars. However, the current state of the lounge is inadequate for hosting invited guests or colleagues from other departments because it is outdated and uninviting. Furthermore, the

kitchenette layout and appliances make much of the space not accessible; there is no mechanism to communicate announcements and encourage discussions, and the space is cluttered by tables and chairs that are inappropriate for the small space.

Proposed solution

We have identified three main ways in which this space can be renovated, listed by priority:

- (1) renovating the kitchenette,
- (2) adding items on the wall to increase communication and facilitate discussions,
- (3) upgrading the table and chairs and removing the bookcase

(1) Remodeling the kitchenette.

Problem- Kitchenette Functionality and Appearance: We feel this space is unsuitable in the following ways:

- Nearly half of the area is unusable because it is blocked by the trash can and refrigerator
- The power supply is used completely by the fridge and microwave. Both of these appliances require a lot of power, therefore they are the only things that can be plugged into the 2 available outlets. Using other items such as a coffee maker, toaster, or tea kettle while these items are plugged in overloads the outlets.
- The breaker on the outlet for the refrigerator has gone out three times in the past 6 months, leaving only 1 usable outlet and extension cords run along the floor.
- There is little counter space. Appliances are stacked on each other and on the trash can.
- The cabinets are old, moldy, and falling apart.

Recommended Solutions: Although specifics for remodeling the kitchenette are outside of our expertise, the main changes that would greatly improve the functionality of this space include:

- Replacing with refrigerator with a smaller model that takes up less spaces and uses less power. A mini fridge could fit under countertops providing more surface space for appliances.
- Extending countertops and cabinets along the east-side wall by the door
- Adding outlets along the countertop to accommodate the current appliances. A good model of this is the WEC lounge where there are various outlets extending along the wall.
- Removal of the large trash can
- Update the current cabinets

Examples of items to renovate

The images below are examples of the types of modifications we propose for the lounge.

left: open design kitchenette with mini fridge located under the counter. Specifics of this element includes:

- cupboard space is minimal. Currently, most of the cupboards are filled with unused kitchen materials. Therefore, the area does not need as much storage space as it currently has.
- smaller refrigerator that is placed under the cabinet. This design increases access to all usable counter space, which is currently very limited because the refrigerator is blocking nearly half the counter space.

right upper: corner counter top which would extent the counter space along the east wall of the lounge

right lower: Cabinets with lighting and power strip



(2) Adding wall-mounted items and lighting.

Problem: In this common area, there is no way to communicate announcements and foster discussions of idea. Furthermore, the aesthetics of the space are sloppy.

- Communication of announcements and events is done by taping flyers to the doors and walls, which is not acceptable by the physical plant because of the damage tape does to paint.
- FSGO meetings require bringing in a whiteboard from a student's lab.
- The poster of current graduate students and faculty in the first floor office area is outdated and not located in a communal area.
- The posters in the lounge are mounted with thumb tacks
- The room has no windows and the fluorescent lighting is uninviting and harsh. Many graduate students work in offices without windows and are constantly under fluorescent lights. While there is no way to provide natural lighting in the lounge, non-fluorescent lighting is a reasonable substitution.
- Despite replacing the batteries, the clock is broken and doesn't keep the correct time

Proposed solution:

- Adding a wall-mounted white board. A white board in this lounge will facilitate groups of students working in this space. A board can also be used to add photos of current graduate students, to replace the outdated poster in the main office area of the ground floor. Additionally, the board can be used to post graduate student publications or awards.
- Framing the posters. The posters in the lounge are beautiful and make the space more appealing. However, they are currently mounted with thumb tacks, which looks sloppy and unprofessional. Framing these posters is a cheap option to increase the look of the existing artwork.
- Adding table or floor lamps.
- Replacing the wall clock

Example of items to add

left: large wall-mounted white board

right: simple floor lamp



(3) Upgrading the table and chairs

Problem: table and chairs do not fit in the space

The table is unstable and squeaks when in use. The chairs are dirty and broken, and are not aesthetically or functionally compatible with the table. Because of the style of table and chairs, the space is not being efficiently used.

Proposed solution: Upgrading the table and chairs that better fit the space. Specifically, the space will benefit from furniture with the following characteristics:

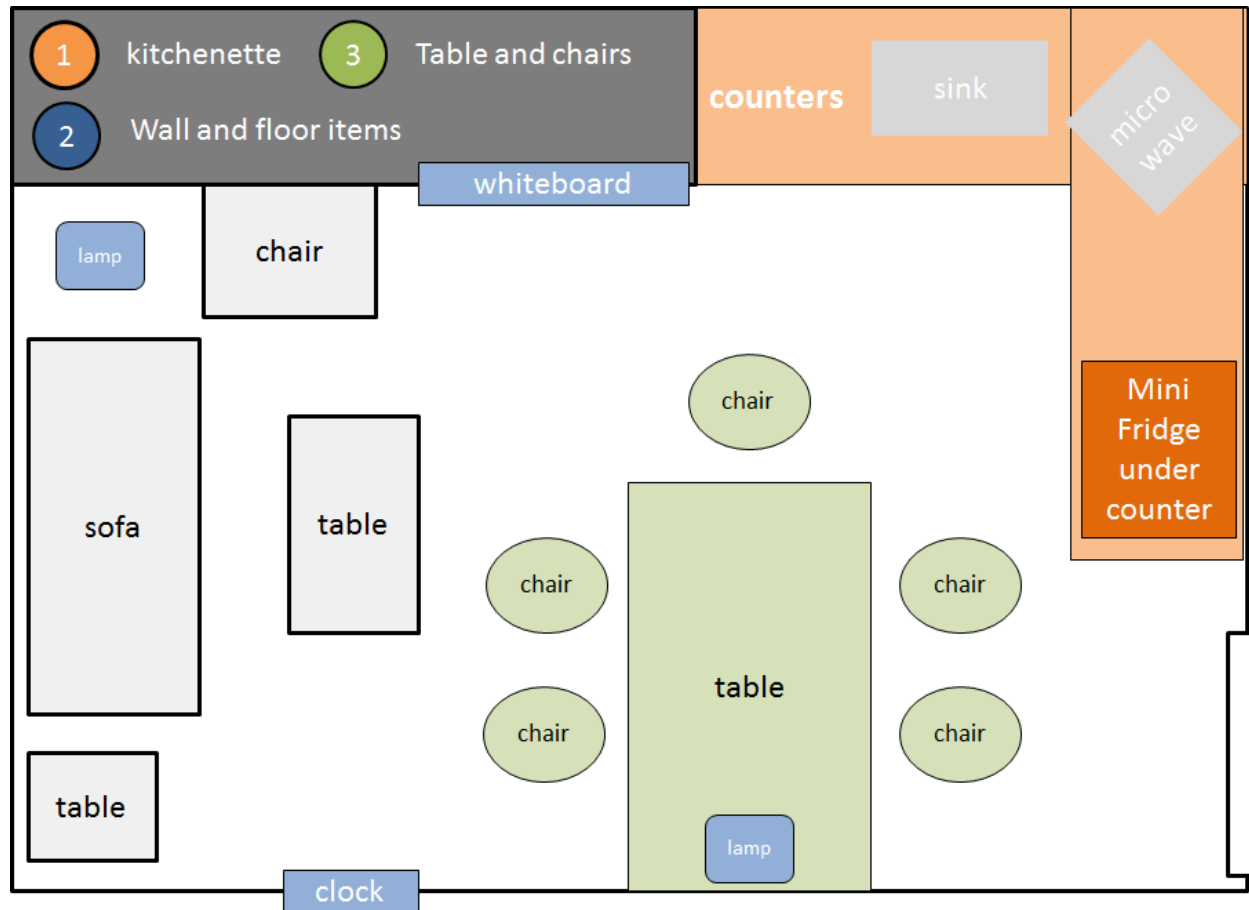
- Table with a stand in the center that allows chairs to fit around all sides
- Less bulky chairs which allows more chairs to be included around the table.

Example of table and chairs



Summary of proposed changes and estimated budget

Lounge layout



Estimated budget for lounge remodel

This budget only includes purchases of items and does not include costs associated with labor and materials for renovating the kitchenette.

Category	Item	Estimated cost
(1) Kitchenette	Mini fridge	200
(2) Wall and floor items	Wall-mounted white board	100
	Floor lamps	70
	Clock	30
	Frames for current posters	100
(3) Furniture upgrades	Office table and chairs (6)	300

	Total	700
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Moving extension closet and establishing off-campus student work station

Sean - could you take the lead on this section?

Need.

There are many SFRC students who are based in other campus locations, but are frequently in NZ hall for classes or meetings. SOMETHING HERE ABOUT WHY A COMPUTER OR WORK AREA IS NEEDED.

Limitation

While the lounge offers a space for these students to go between meetings in SFRC, there is not a computer available to access email or print, daily activities that are necessary for graduate students.

Solution

Create a small workstation in an existing room on the 3rd floor of NZ Hall with a computer and printer connected to the UF network.

Specifics of the plan can go here...