

Date: November 15, 2017

To: Dr. Stacey Stuewe

Professor of English

Tarrant County College

From: April Carr

Lyndsey Hanner

Nuralya Zaharudin

Subject: Recommendation Report for requesting additional private study rooms at TCC Northeast Campus

Attached is our recommendation report to request additional private study rooms at TCC Northeast campus. We have completed the tasks we devised in our proposal.

We conducted both primary and secondary research into the feasibility of additional room in the library. We were able to interview April Martinez, Assistant Director of Library Services, received comparative model data from Heather Scalf at UTA library, and a product quote from David with Nook. It would also be appropriate to say that the students of TCC Northeast campus were also a great help to us and willingly participated in our survey to determine usage on our own campus.

What we found is that many students who use the library five existing private study rooms have many times been unable to use them due to their constant state of occupation. Many students were unable to wait for a room or had to wait long periods of time. We also found that the cost of adding the rooms to the existing structure was comparable to buying private study pods, but April Martinez said that space to accommodate additional study rooms was possibly one of the more crucial factors.

We recommend that if the administration of Tarrant County College find the economic reality of adding the rooms acceptable that the library increase the number of rooms

***A Request for Additional Private Study Rooms at Tarrant
County College Northeast Campus: A Recommendation
Report***

Prepared for: Stacey Stuewe, Professor of English

Prepared by: April Carr

Lyndsey Hanner

Nuralya Zaharudin

November 15, 2017

Abstract

***“A Request for Additional Private Study Rooms at Tarrant County College
Northeast Campus: A Recommendation Report”***

Prepared by: April Carr

Lyndsey Hanner

Nuralya Zaharudin

In October 2017, Dr. Stacey Stuewe gave the assignment to write a Recommendation Report to groups in our class. Our group eventually settled on requesting additional private study rooms in our campus library. Our group need to determine the feasibility of such a request. We started by surveying students to find out if the lack of vacant existing private study rooms ever posed a problem for them, if they would increase the library usage, and if it was economically feasibility. We found many students didn't even know they existed and many of the students that wanted to use the rooms, but were unable to because they were occupied nearly constantly.

Keywords: library, studying, students, private study rooms, study groups, library renovation

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Executive Summary

Dr. Stacey Stuewe assigned a recommendation report to groups in our class. She encouraged us to research a real problem that we had experienced firsthand on campus.

While the Tarrant County College Northeast campus library currently houses five private study rooms on the lower level, these rooms are very often completely full leaving many students to abandon the rooms altogether, or when that isn't an option, waiting for long periods of time for one to come available.

We found that of the students we surveyed, the majority use the library's private study rooms, have had to wait for long periods of time, and said that increased availability of these rooms would lead to their increased use of the library. We did research building costs, but we found that with negligible construction knowledge and experience we were unable to do little more than collect some general figures. We also found that these rooms are in demand on not just our campus, but also at college campuses all over the country.

Our campus does not have a reservation system in place, because it is difficult to enforce and causes an undue amount of stress for library staff. We conclude that the addition of more private study rooms would better serve the needs of students, like ourselves, at Tarrant County College Northeast campus.

Introduction

In October of 2017, our professor, Stacey Stuewe, assigned a recommendation report to groups on our class with the instruction to consider a problem that we had experienced on campus.

Our group discussed the problem of private study rooms in our campus library. There didn't seem to be enough, even though there are five, because they were always full, and someone always seemed to be waiting. The wait times were also very long. We knew that there was an electrical upgrade renovation scheduled to start in November of 2017, but there also seemed to be some talk of a future renovation to the library. We decided to research the feasibility of adding additional private study rooms to our library should a future renovation get the green light.

To better understand what we were asking for, we devised five tasks to answer the following questions:

1. Were these rooms actually in demand on our campus?
2. Is it economically feasible?
3. Is there a legitimate benefit to studying in a quiet space?
4. What are the actual usage statistics in a comparative model?
5. What is the library administrations thoughts and attitudes toward the project?

If there was no demand, or if the space had no legitimate benefit for students, building additional study rooms would be an unnecessary expenditure of the college's resources.

Research Methods:

In order to evaluate the feasibility of additional private study rooms, we divided the project into five tasks.

Task 1: Surveying the students

Since our report is about private study rooms in the library, it would be appropriate if we conducted a survey towards the students in the library. We came up with four yes/no questions. The questions are: “Do you use the private study rooms in the library on campus? Have you ever waited for a room or not had one available?, Do you think you would benefit from a greater number rooms?, Would more rooms increase your library usage?”

We went to the library after class and asked a few students that were downstairs near the study rooms. We had to keep in mind that we need to gather 100 responses. It took us a few days to gather 100 people to take our survey. We not only asked students that were in the library, but we also asked our classmates to take the survey. Two of the group members went to the student center and asked a few people over there.

Task 2: Research building costs.

In order to support our position that Tarrant County College should acquire additional private study rooms, we could not overlook the necessity in considering the economic feasibility. Though we cannot make the determination as to whether or not it is financially possible, we can present estimated costs for acquiring these spaces. We did not ask contractors to give us a professional estimate because such a request is usually accompanied with an expectation of work to be had. We did not feel that it was fair to give any contractor that expectation and conducted our research online using various websites and online calculators. These rooms need several

things in order to be efficient study rooms. In addition to needing walls, ceilings, and doors, these rooms need furniture, some type of large screen or monitor, and white boards. In order to be as detailed as possible, we researched the costs of these things individually and compiled the numbers to give our best attempt at estimating the cost of building and furnishing a private study room. We assumed that we would be able to estimate the cost of building this room by compiling a complete list of estimated costs of each component of construction, but quickly learned, after reviewing a list of costs published by the State of Michigan, that assumption was incorrect since we have minimal knowledge of construction. Thus, we focused on the average cost of an office *build-out*.¹

During our research process April Carr conducted an interview with April Martinez during which she mentioned that portable rooms were an option that had been discussed as a possible solution. Keeping that in mind, we emailed several companies and explained our needs. One company was very helpful in supplying us with figures for their product.

Task 3: Benefits/uses of study rooms

Researching about benefits/uses of study rooms was a very difficult task. Two of the group members went to the library to look around and observe how other people utilize their time in the study rooms. We sat down and came up with a pro and con list of study rooms. Coming up with the benefits of the study rooms are quite simple but the difficult part would be finding sources to backup our claims. It was hard for some of us to find articles or journals about the benefits of a

¹ The definition of *build-out* as given by Austin Tenant Advisor's website. "The definition of an office build-out is basically when a landlord's contractor or your contractor do construction on an office space to install walls, carpet, paint, sinks, hvac, ceiling, lighting, plumbing, bathrooms, etc."

private room because not a lot of people conduct studies on them. In the end, one of the group members found a few sources that would be helpful for this task.

Along with observing people in the study rooms, one of the group members went to a coffee shops and observed people while they were studying. She noticed that the noise level was loud and that people can easily get distracted. The people studying would constantly look at their surroundings or engage in a conversation with someone.

Task 4: Research Actual Usage of Study Rooms

This task was a little more difficult than some of the others because Tarrant County College (TCC) doesn't actually use a reservation system for these rooms. The way it works is first come, first serve. They are technically called Private Group Study Rooms, but if there are no groups waiting, then one person may be allowed to use them. Although, if one person is using the room while a group of students show up, then they are asked to leave. Since TCC does not have any way to record the number of students, we found out that the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) keeps track of these kinds of records. Once we found out that they logged the usage of their study rooms, our group immediately started emailing with the Assistant Director of the Library. She led us to a woman named Heather Scalf who provided the number for the last three semesters. We then took these numbers and compiled them into a bar graph that is easily understood.

Task 5: Conduct an interview

While discussing how to do the research for this report, we had several questions that we could not answer without asking a library representative. We had heard that there was a further renovation planned for the library, but could not find a proposed time that it should begin. We

knew that there was a minor renovation to upgrade the library's electrical service and reorganize its collection, but we wanted to know if there were even more renovations in the works and if those renovations would include more private study rooms. We also asked about the usage of the current rooms, and if there would ever be a reservation system put into place.

Results

Task 1: Survey the students

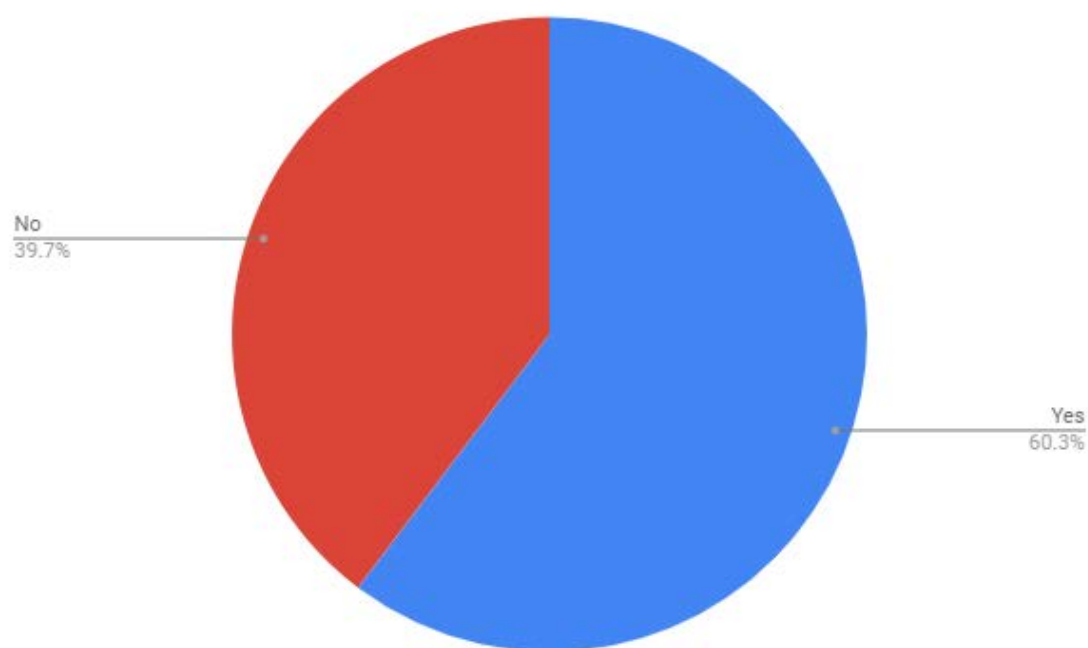


Figure 1

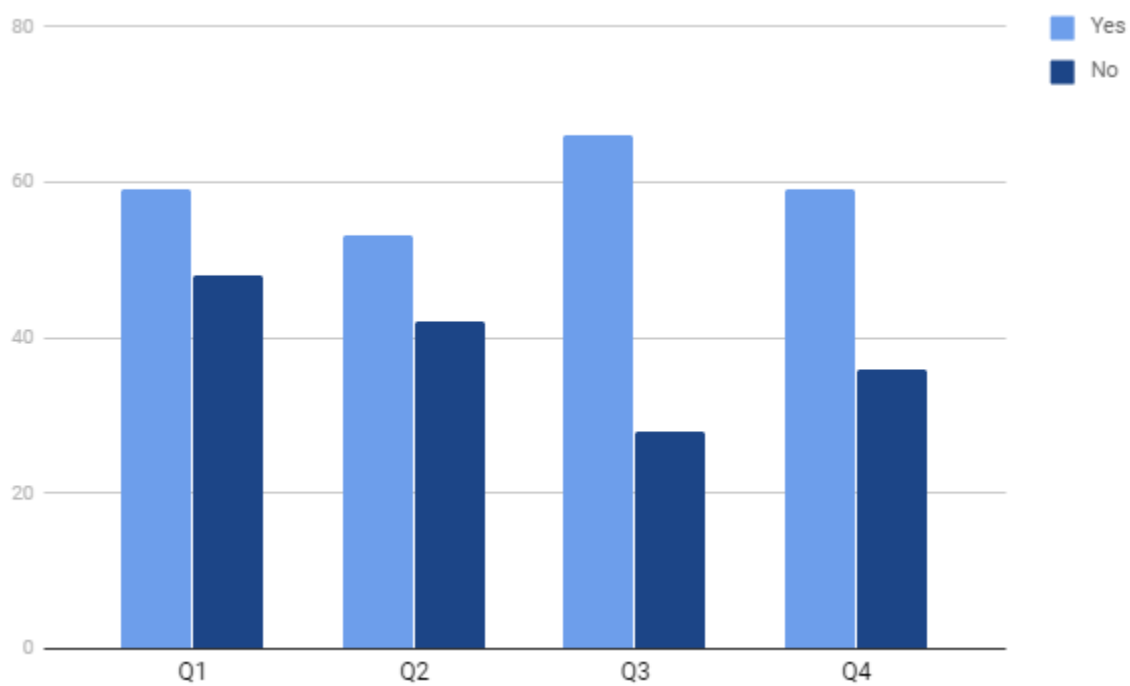


Figure 2

During the time of our research, we went around campus and asked 100 students to take our survey. We've asked four yes/ no questions and have gotten back very wonderful responses. According to the results of the survey, 60.3% of the students have mostly answered yes to all of the questions. We decided to display our results in a pie and bar graph. The bar graph shows you how many students had answered yes and no to each question. The pie graph indicates the majority of the answers combined.

Q1. Do you use the private study rooms in the library on campus?

When asked this question, we've gotten a lot of pretty straight forward answers but there were a few students that explained how often they go and the times. Some of the students that said yes to using the private rooms would often go during midterms week or finals week. Some even told us that they would use it during the evenings. A few other students explained to us that they would use it either everyday or twice a day.

Q2. Have you ever waited for a room or not had one available?

We have gotten a lot of yes's to this question. The only people that said no were the ones that either don't use the rooms or that would go during the evenings. Students have told us that the wait for the rooms are usually too long. It's very rare to wait for a short time.

Q3. Do you think you would benefit from a greater number rooms?

This question had received the most yes's out of all the questions. A lot of students have been complaining that there needs to be more rooms because of all the group projects that are assigned. Some students were being considerate to other students. One of the students responded, "Yes because it may not benefit me but it'll benefit those who use it."

Q4. Would more rooms increase your library usage?

We've noticed that some of the responses said yes even though they answered no to questions 1 and 2. We believe that if there were a lot of study rooms, it would greatly help encourage others to start using the library more. Students have responded with a lot of yes's and most likely.

Task 2: Research Building Costs

Perillo Construction out of Coral Gables, Florida estimate that the average cost of an office build-out to be between \$40 and \$60 per square foot using average materials. This includes paint, carpet, ceiling tiles, lighting, etc. If the project is completed with better finishes, but not luxury finishes, the cost is closer to \$100 per square foot. This source also states that these figures are greatly influenced by union labor costs, geographical region, and condition of the building that is to be built-out. These numbers are echoed by the website 42 Floors which is owned by Colliers International.

If Northeast campus added five more private study rooms that were ten feet by ten feet, according to these articles, the cost could be \$30,000.

Furniture is another area that is difficult to give definitive numbers for given the vast range of both quality and utilization, but also the sheer number of resources. For this estimate, we chose to use a single source as merely representational. On Wayfair.com a conference table can be thousands of dollars or under \$200. An appropriate chair on the same website would cost between \$50 for a folding chair, and \$100 which seems to be pretty average for an adequate chair. We recognize that it is unlikely that the college would use a company like Wayfair to meet this need, however as a source, it gives us a large number of price points.

Therefore, it could cost the school as little as \$500 for just the table and chairs in each room making the cost for all five rooms \$2,500.

Again, the monitor/television screens that would be helpful to use for presentations and other collaborative work has a vast amount of potential options. A basic thirty inch television which can be connected to a laptop via HDMI cord costs less than a thirty-two inch computer monitor. On BestBuy.com, an Insignia brand thirty-two inch television with HDMI port can be purchased for \$149. As above, we recognize that the school would not use a source like Best Buy for this need.

The total cost of outfitting each of the five rooms with a television is \$745 if they were purchased at Best Buy.

White boards are standard with costs varying only slightly by dealer and quality. A four feet by three feet white board is \$59 on OfficeSupply.com. The cost for five of them is \$295.

As single room, in very loose figures, could cost around \$6,700. Comparatively, David with the Nook team, states that a single Nook unit is \$5,640. This price includes a table, seating for two, acoustic sound proofing, lighting, and electrical outlets. It is entirely open which means that while sound is dampened, it is not eliminated entirely. This is useful for increasing quiet space in the library, but could not eliminate the need for private rooms. However, it is customizable, and the website shows several Nooks attached to each other creating a larger workspace. The other companies we contacted, while having enclosed pods, were not as forthcoming with quotes for their products without the same expectation of sales as a contractor, therefore we were uncomfortable pressing them for their time.

Task 3: Benefits/uses of study rooms

Library study rooms have many benefits and uses to them. According to the survey we've conducted, more than half of the students use the study rooms. While going around campus and asking students to take our survey, they've told us when they use the rooms and what they use it for. Most of the students use the rooms during midterms and finals week. Some of the students go either everyday or whenever they can. There are many reasons why people would use the study rooms.

One of the main reasons people go to study at the library is because they get less distracted compared to studying at home or at a coffee shop. "When someone is distracted-by the TV, for example, when studying- habit learning takes over from declarative learning. Distraction impairs the ability to learn, said Poltrack." (American school board journal pg. 60) Study rooms are the perfect place for less distractions. Study rooms can be used for those that have ADHD or simply for those that find space outside of the rooms distracting. The library has many individual study carrels/ seating but we've noticed that not many of them are being used. We've asked around why they won't use them and some answered saying that they get distracted by their surrounding and others said that they just don't feel comfortable. According to a study by Janet E. Franks and Darla C. Asher, "All four libraries offered individual study carrels or seating. The libraries reported that individual carrels and individual study tables in the open areas of the library were used the least. As one respondent stated, 'They want a room with a door.'" (pg. 327).

Professors give out projects in the middle of the semesters and sometimes towards the end of the semesters. Those are when groups are usually out trying to meet up at nearby coffee shops. Instead of meeting up at coffee shops, where it's usually noisy, meeting up at the library is the

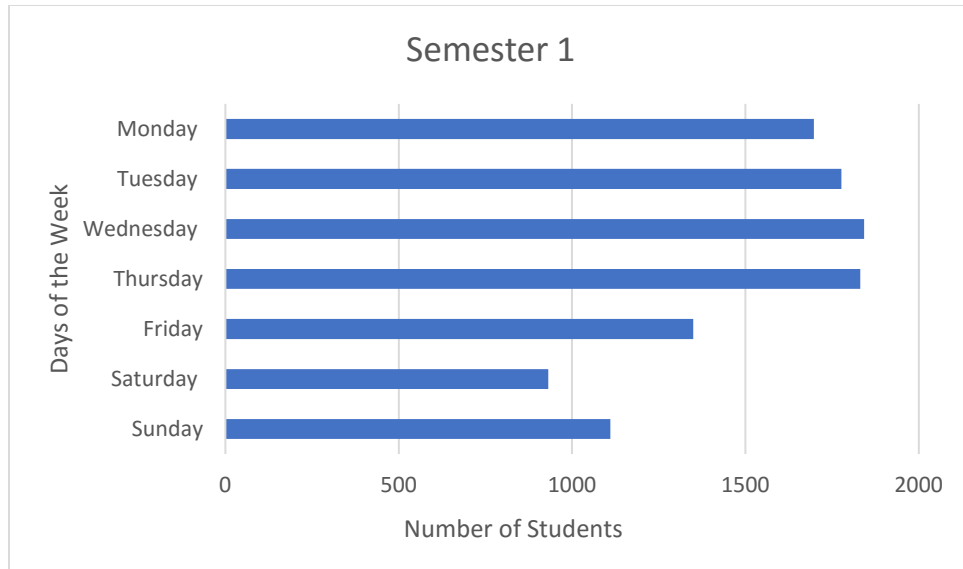
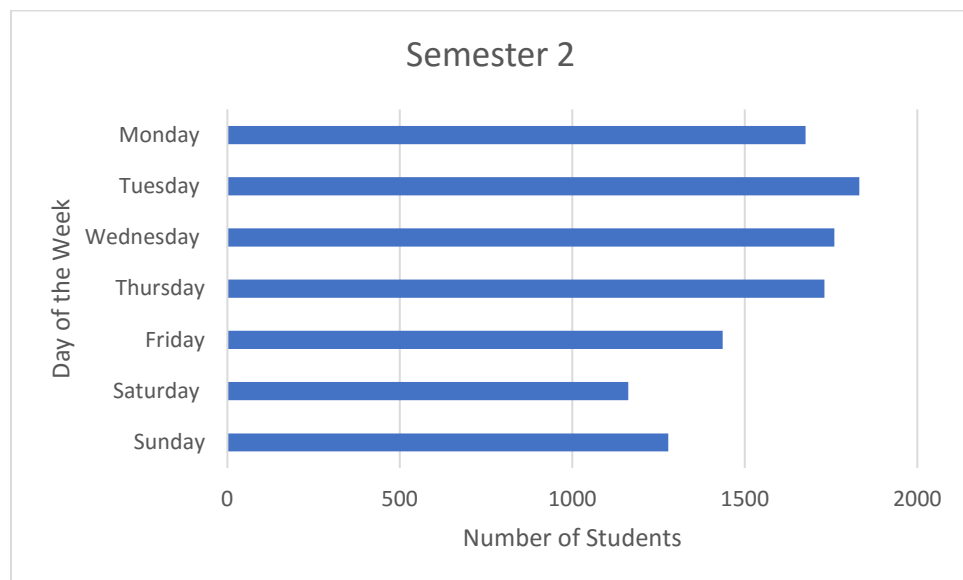
best way to go. When trying to have a group discussion about the project, people around you can get distracted and sometimes the noise levels gets high. Using the study rooms for group work can be very helpful because you don't need to worry about your voice level that much. A positive side to using the libraries study room for group projects is that you're surrounded by many resources that can help you with your project. Meeting at coffee shops can be a wonderful thing but when it comes to needing recourses, it may not be so wonderful. Also, another thing that we've realized is that if you're already on campus, why waste gas and drive to a coffee shop when you can save gas by using the rooms in the library.

As mentioned earlier, study rooms can eliminate any distractions while studying. It can help an individual manage their time and be productive. Studying at home, at a coffee shop, or at any wifi-accessible place can not only distract you but can waste your time. You often find yourself being unproductive or procrastinating while in a loud environment. For example, if you're studying at a coffee shop, you tend to spend time waiting in line to order and perhaps thinking about what to order. Once you've ordered, you finally look for the perfect spot to settle. You think, "I need a spot that has an outlet in case my laptop battery needs to be charged." You go around the shop looking for an available spot but all of them are occupied. Then you finally decide to just settle at any random table, you put your stuff down, take out your laptop, and next thing you know, your name and order is being called out. You get up and grab your drink. By the time you've settled down and is satisfied with everything, you've wasted a chunk of your time. Compared to studying in the rooms at the library, you could've finished whatever needs to be done in the time that you've wasted at the coffee shop.

Task 4: Research Actual Usage

During our research for the actual usage of private study rooms, we discovered that a vast number of students at Tarrant County College use these private study rooms. We found out that Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday are peak days for the private study rooms. This means that there is a greater amount of activity on these days' verses Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. From the time the library opens, to about 4:30, the private study rooms are full. After 4:30, the rooms start to become more available. Then around 6:00 – 7:00 the rooms start to fill again. Usually during these times, we observed students sitting outside waiting for a room to become available. Tarrant County College currently does not use a reservation system, so everything is first come, first serve. There is no way to reserve a room. Friday – Sunday we observed that the rooms are less occupied and more available, but there is still no guarantee you'll get a room. Since TCC does not use a reservation system, we use UTA's Library as a comparative model to show how students used the study rooms.

Below you will find bar graphs that represent the number of students who used the private study rooms from the last three semesters. We used numbers from UTA's OpenRoom software to achieve this analysis.

*Figure 3**Figure 4*

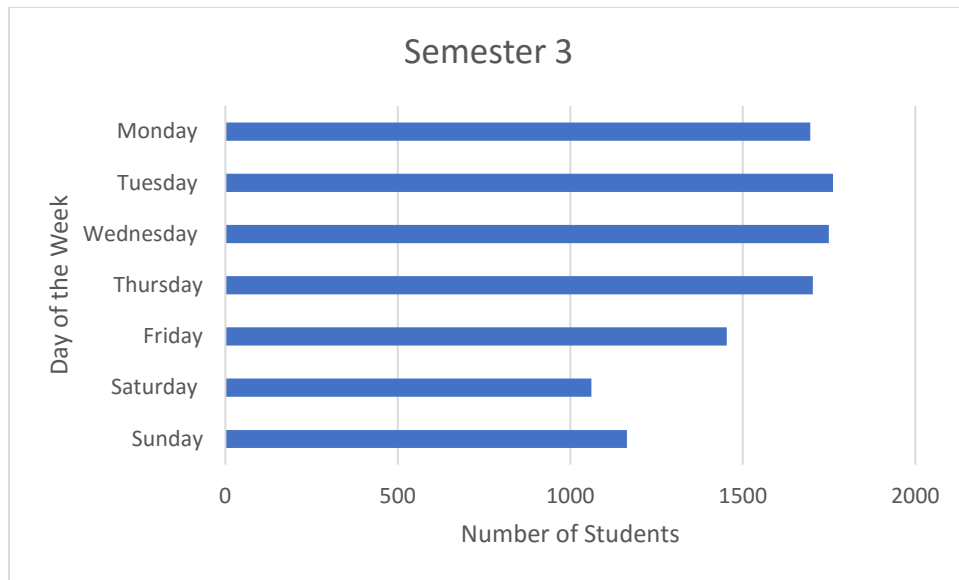


Figure 5

Task 5: Conduct an interview

April Martinez accepted our request for an interview. April Carr met with her in her office in the Northeast campus library. Ms. Martinez gave Ms. Carr a tour of the current library set up. During this tour, Ms. Carr asked if library administration was aware that some students want more private study rooms. Ms. Martinez indicated that they were aware and had discussed several options to bring this about including portable pods. The current renovation, due to begin in November, will see the downstairs collection, with the exception of the law library, moved upstairs and a few of the campus labs moved to the lower level of the library where the existing private study rooms are located. The more extensive renovation may include a small expansion into the area where the old loading docks are located.

When asked if a reservation system would ever be put in place to accommodate more students, Ms. Martinez stated that in her experience at several different libraries, a reservation system is very stressful for staff and is considered a last resort at Northeast campus. She explained this by saying that the demands and behavior of some students, managing a reservation system creates a high degree of strife between those students and library staff.

Conclusions

In this section of our report, we will present our conclusions.

We have concluded that the addition of more private study rooms in our campus's library is to the benefit, of the students of Northeast Campus. We found that we are out of our depth when trying to figure out construction and incidental costs for such a project, but the rest of our results appear clear that there is a student desire, intellectual benefits, and comparative data to support our request.

We have also concluded that Northeast campus librarians not only agree with our conclusion, but also have begun to discuss possible solutions. Our conclusions only serve to support their attitude and thoughts on the future renovation.

Recommendation

We recommend that Tarrant County College include the construction of private study rooms or acquisition of private study pods in a future renovation provided it is economically feasible to do so.

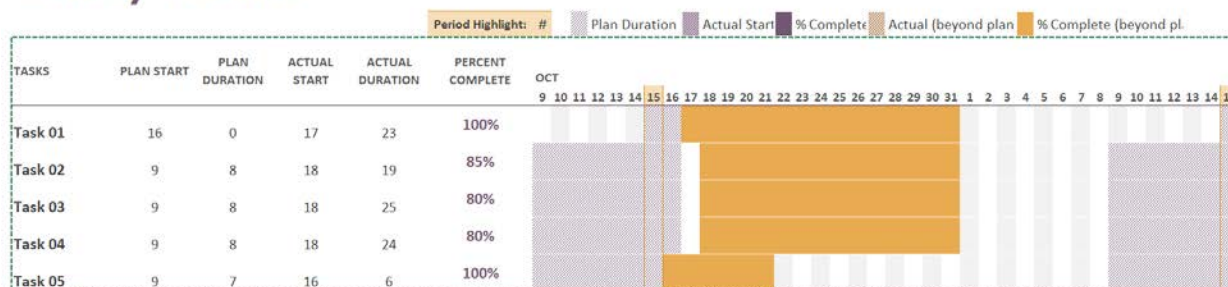
Appendix

Survey questions

1. Do you use the private study rooms in the library on campus?
2. Have you ever waited for a room or not had one available?
3. Do you think you would benefit from a greater number rooms?
4. Would more rooms increase your library usage?

GANTT Chart

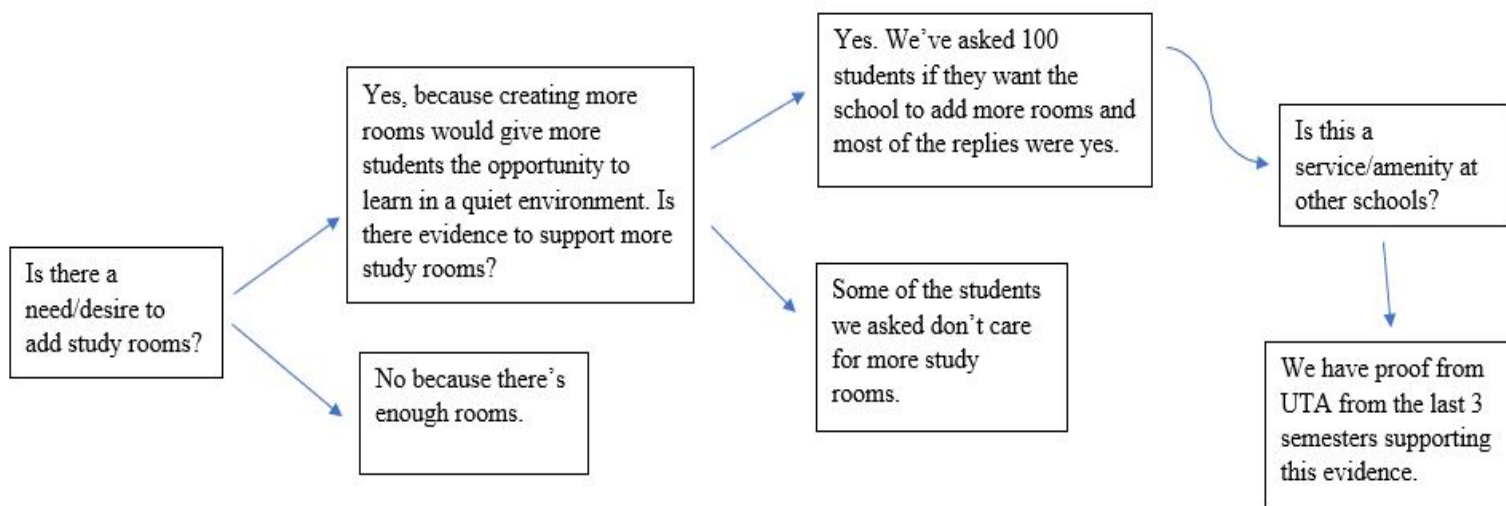
Study rooms

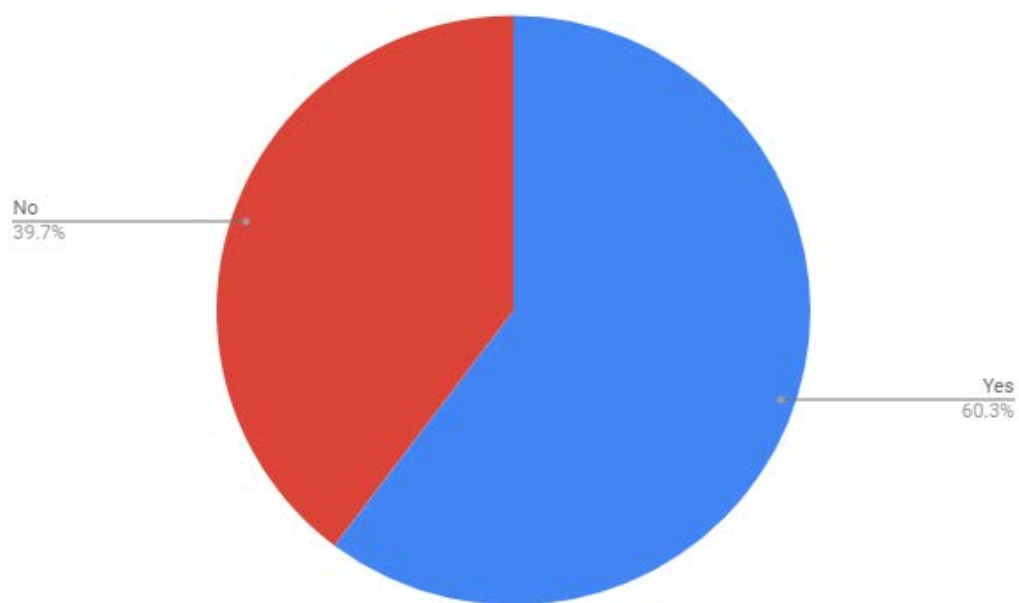
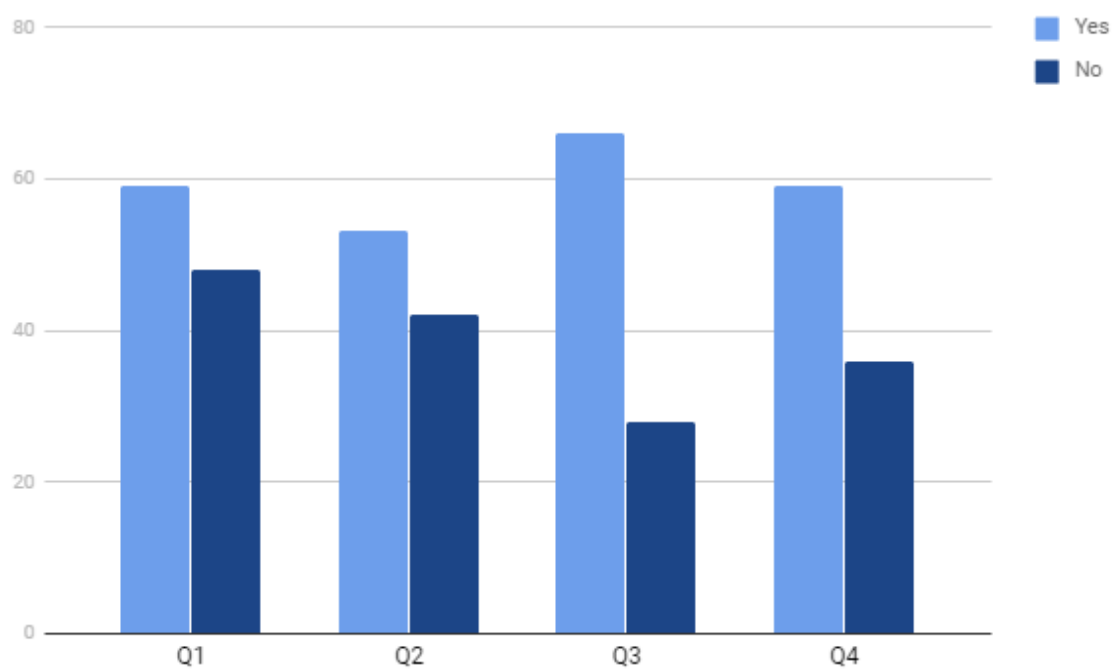


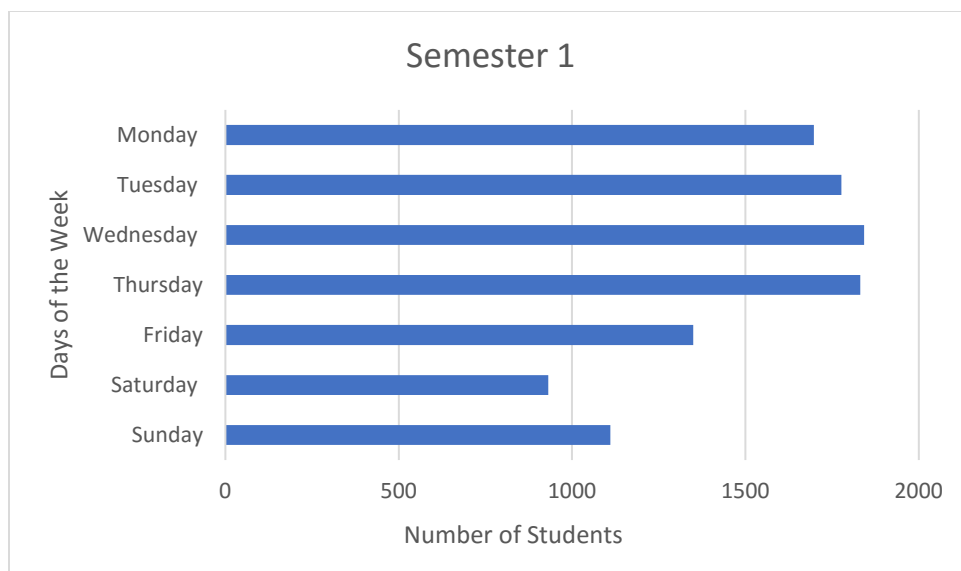
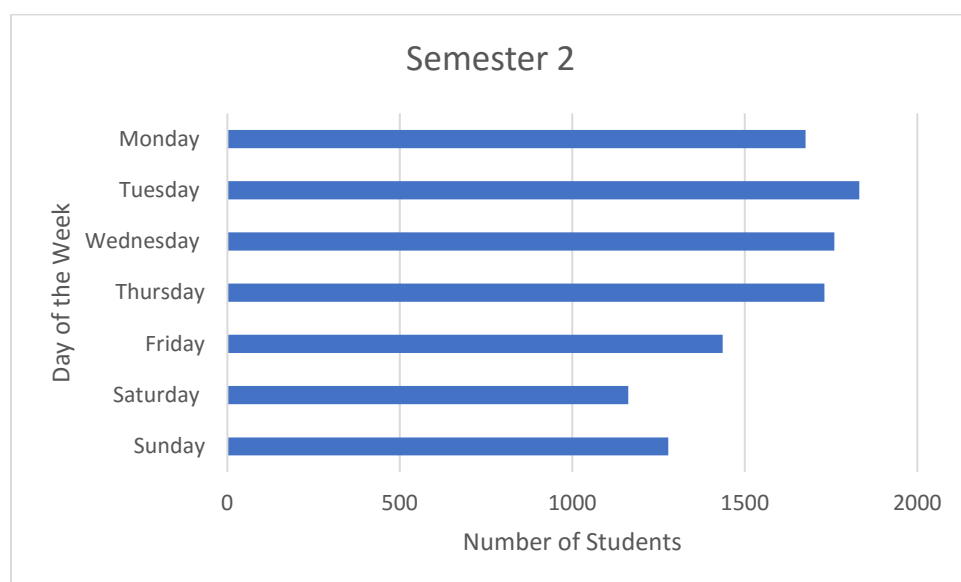
Glossary

Build-out- The definition of *build-out* as given by Austin Tenant Advisor’s website. “The definition of an office build out is basically when a landlord’s contractor or your contractor do construction on an office space to install walls, carpet, paint, sinks, hvac, ceiling, lighting, plumbing, bathrooms, etc.”

Logic box



Illustrations and tables*Figure 1**Figure 2*

*Figure 3**Figure 4*

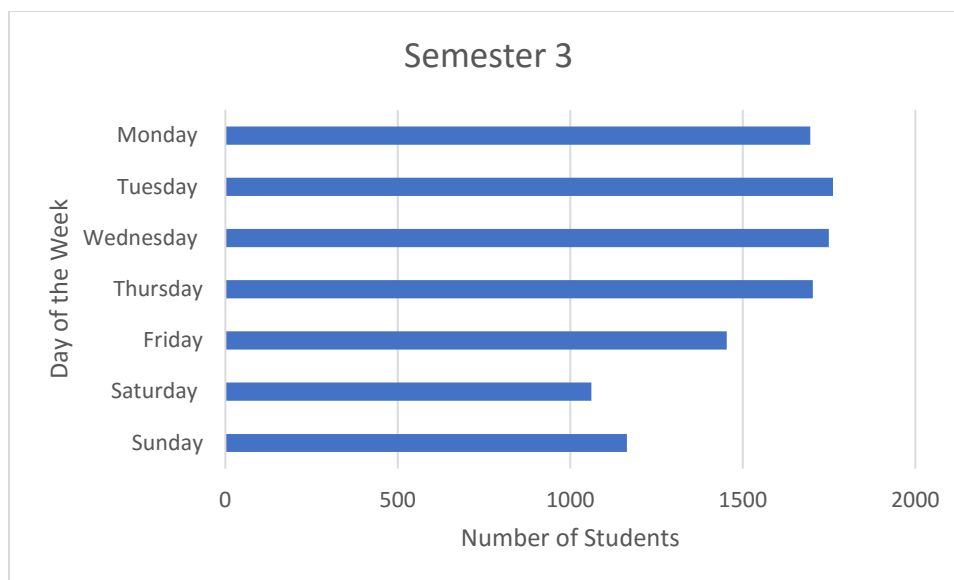


Figure 5

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