



Hub Life

Insights That Shape Campus Spaces

You've got the guy with the headphones thinking he's lip syncing, but actually whisper-singing out of key. Or the two girls pounding back coffee, quizzing each other cram-session style for their exam. How about the dude, head down on his laptop, snoring and drooling, after camping out and cozying up for 24 hours and counting.

This is the hub life.

Where there is a hub, there is a conglomeration of school-going people studying, chit-chatting, web surfing and mingling. A hub is the place for it all.

Hub spaces are created, indoor environments. They are crafted carefully through design and planning and come in many forms: cafe, library, studio, or lounge to name a few.

But what makes one hub buzz with activity while another is as dead as a ghost town? What are the necessities and amenities of a hub? Ultimately, what makes a hub hubbable?

To answer this, Herman Miller picked the brains of higher education facility planners, architects, and designers in February 2011. A survey was distributed, aimed to gain a better understanding of the design and planning involved in hubs. Most questions were asked open-endedly, allowing participants to respond how they saw fit, often resulting in more than one qualitative answer. This is a collection of the survey questions and responses.

1. What is the typical percent allocation of space for hub zones in each of these building types on a college campus?

Academic	11-20% (38% of participants agreed)
Student	21-30% (31%)
Libraries	21-30% (31%)
Residence Halls	21-30% (41%)
Administration	0 – 10% (49%)
Other	11-20% (36%)

2. What types of learning, working, and socializing needs are driving the need for hub zones?

Collaboration/group work	72% of participants agreed
Computer use/internet access	31%
Interaction/socializing	15%

3. What requirements do hub zone spaces typically have for design and layout?

Technologically capable (WiFi and electric power)	49% of participants agreed
Comfortable (including soft and lounge seating)	36%
Flexible (including furniture)	33%

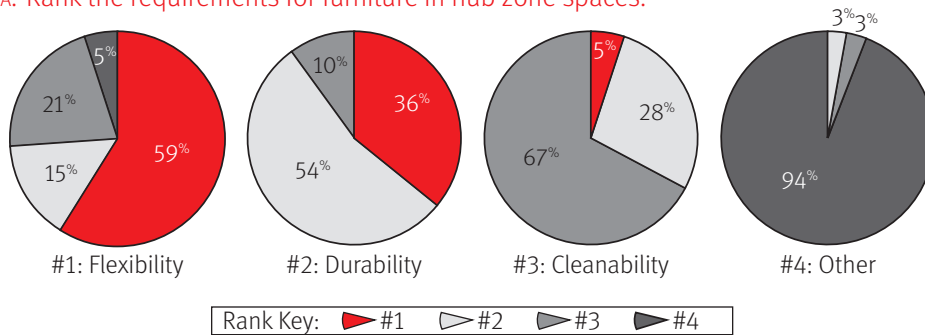
4. What types of activities are hub zone spaces typically designed to support?

Collaboration/group work	44% of participants agreed
Individual work	36%
Interactions/socializing	36%
Computer/technology access	33%
Meeting space	26%

5. Is there a number of people you plan for in a typical hub zone?

0-10	41% of participants agreed
11-20	13%
21-30	5%
Don't have a number in mind	41%

6A. Rank the requirements for furniture in hub zone spaces.



All these hub insights give Herman Miller an idea of how hubs are designed. But what do the students think?

Herman Miller’s second annual Student Video Contest kicked off January 2011. The question posed this year: Where’s Your Hub? For three months the videos from students all over the country came flooding in. After much difficult debate and seven honorably mentioned students, three lucky winners surfaced.

6B. Were there other furniture requirements for hub zones that were not listed in the previous question?

Access to power/technologically capable	27% of participants agreed
Aesthetics	18%
Adjustable furniture or modules	14%
Comfort	9%

7. What types of technological devices are being used, installed, and/or tested on your campus or the campuses you’re designing for?

Wifi or wireless connection	49% of participants agreed
Laptops	26%
Television	23%
Plug-in connections	18%
Cell phones	10%
Smart boards	10%

8. What design trends are you seeing in these hub zones?

Flexibility (of furniture and whiteboards)	28% of participants agreed
Multiple seating types	19%
Multi-media plug-in capabilities	17%
Comfort	11%

9. What new approaches for hub zones are you trying on your campus or the campuses you’re working with?

Mixture of private and collaborative spaces	21% of participants agreed
Improved flexibility of furniture	15%
Increased square footage	15%
Variety in hub designs	15%

10. What terms do you use to refer to hub zone spaces?

“Touch-Down Spaces”	19% of participants agreed
“Collaborative Areas”	19%
“Flexible/Flex Spaces”	10%
“Study Hubs/Nodes”	10%
“Team/Teaming Areas”	10%

In first place, [Fiona Green](#) from University of Ottawa wowed Herman Miller with her beats and rhythms, exhibiting the energetic movement of the people in her hub. [Keaton Davis](#) of Trinity University and [Jesse Hendrickson](#) of University of Michigan rhymed their way into second and third place this year. All three received cash prizes for their efforts.

Their videos, along with all the submissions, uncovered some common themes. Hubs can be found anywhere on campus. Wherever the hub, students want the physical surrounding of their hubs to be comfortable. That includes comfortable furniture as well as acoustical comfort. Hubs were physical places in all their examples except for one.

All three students’ videos will be recognized at the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) annual international conference July 2011. This venue provides another way to share the results from the video contest, which has proven to be an engaging way to capture student insights. Their views are sure to help campus leadership and facility planners think about the changing needs of students and how higher education facilities can respond to them.