

YOUR WORDS HAVE POWER

Members of an interdisciplinary research partnership including an Assistant Professor of Interior Design, three undergraduate interior design students and the Director of the University Writing Commons embarked on a four-month ethnographic interior design study to explore people's preferences and behaviors while working together in collaborative and consultancy settings with a diverse student population at the RIT Writing Commons.

The multifactorial studies included field based observational research, personalized interviews, focus groups, and surveys with strategic questions aimed at deconstructing the process of how people work. The pedagogical goal was to provide a design and research opportunity for students to apply their knowledge from the studio and classroom to a real customer scenario.

The research team programmed for a versatile, adaptive learning environment and specified the FF&E package while working with vendors to value engineer the design to meet budget. Post occupancy surveys and focus groups are planned to validate design conclusions.

"Durability over sustainability"
- Jason Stryker, Senior Manager of Circulation Services and Facilities, The Wallace Center

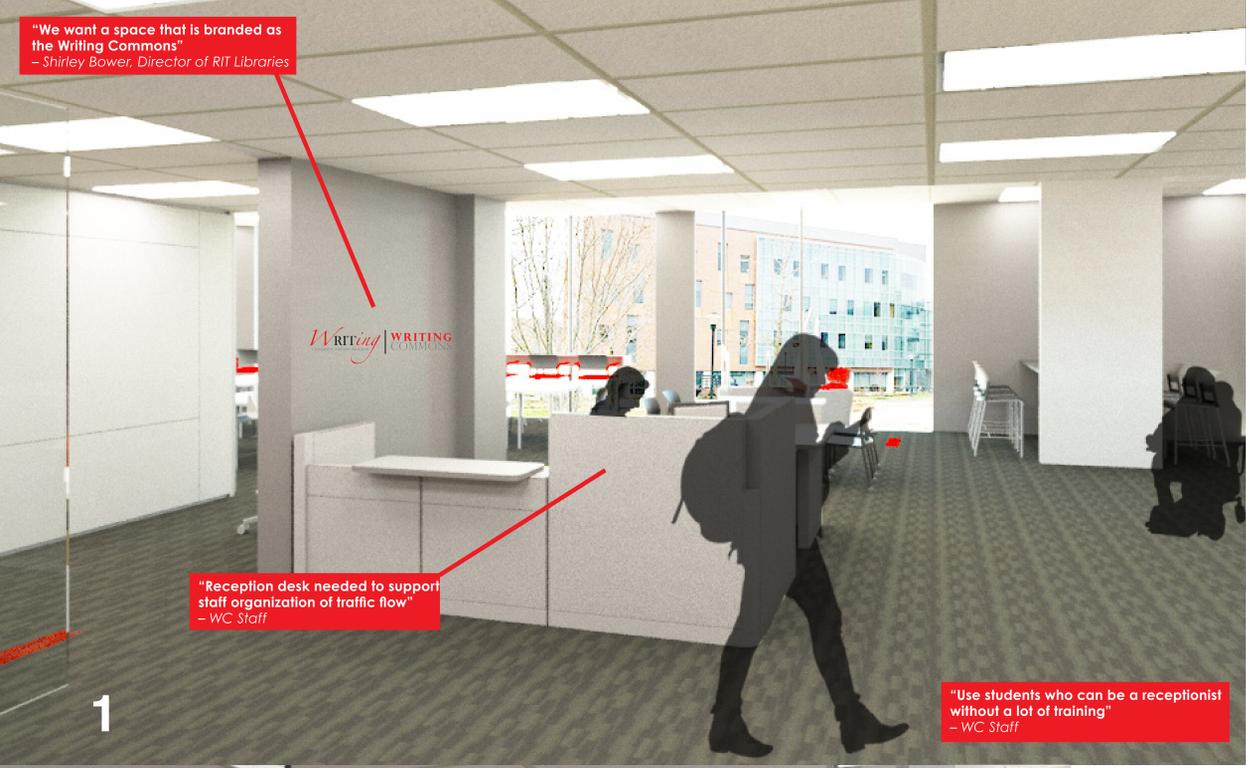


"Keep things mobile"
- Jason Stryker

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"The files need to be locked up but they can't be in my office because the consultants need access to them"
- Rachel Chaffee, Ph.D.

"Not wanting to work in a lounge area, wanting more of an office-style space"
- WC Staff

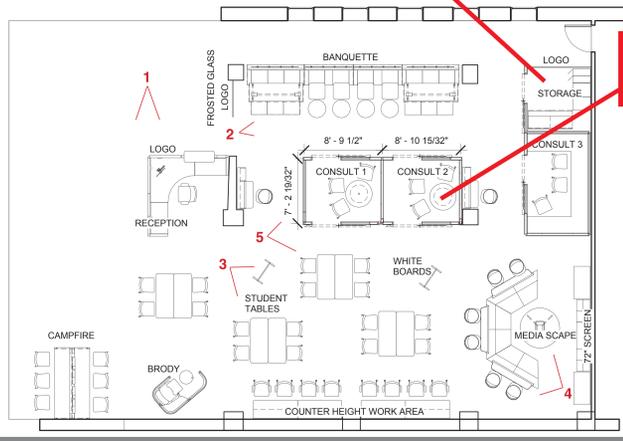
"We want a space that is branded as the Writing Commons"
- Shirley Bower, Director of RIT Libraries



"Reception desk needed to support staff organization of traffic flow"
- WC Staff

1

"Use students who can be a receptionist without a lot of training"
- WC Staff



"Ideal if consultant and student(s) can sit together with the interpreter"
- WC Staff

"Needing a meeting area for large groups"
- WC Staff

4

"An experience designing for real people with real needs" - INDE Team

"Acoustics is a huge issue when consulting with students while other visitors are just there to work"
- WC Staff

"Walkways from Java's would be great if that space was redesigned with a bench seating area or banquet seating and the path was reworked"
- WC Staff



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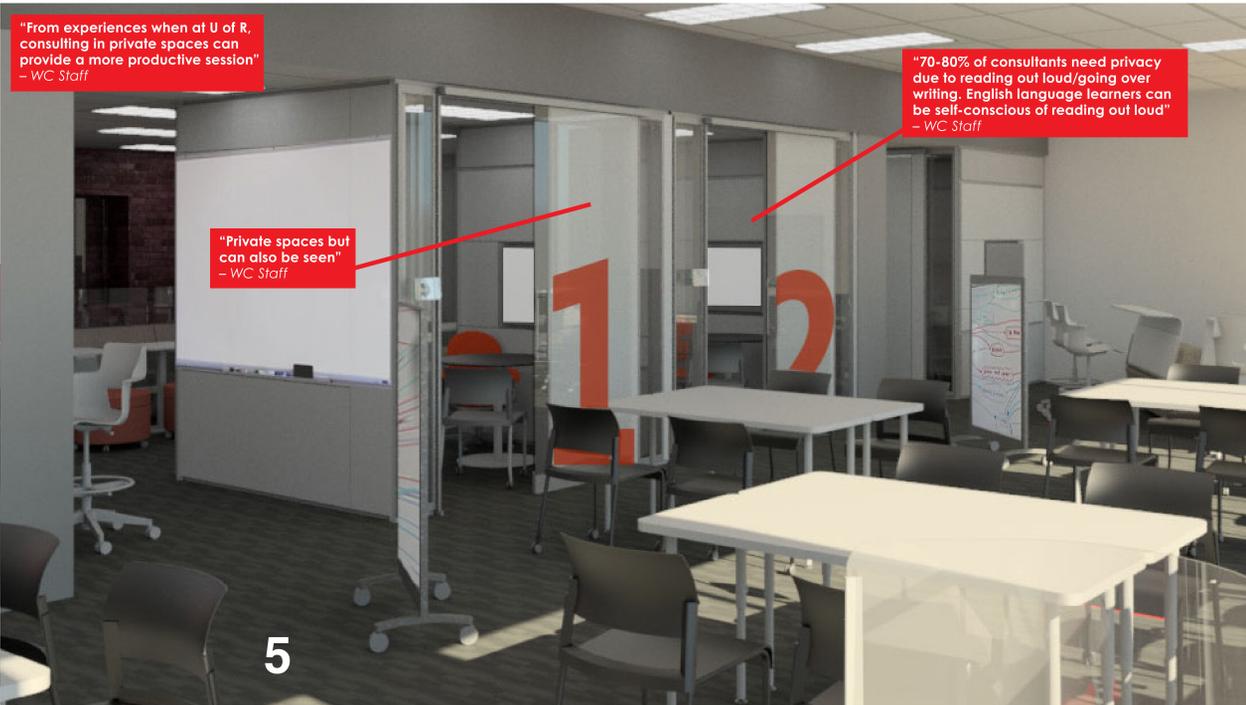


WRITING UNIVERSITY WRITING PROGRAM | WRITING COMMONS

"From experiences when at U of R, consulting in private spaces can provide a more productive session"
- WC Staff

"70-80% of consultants need privacy due to reading out loud/going over writing. English language learners can be self-conscious of reading out loud"
- WC Staff

"Private spaces but can also be seen"
- WC Staff

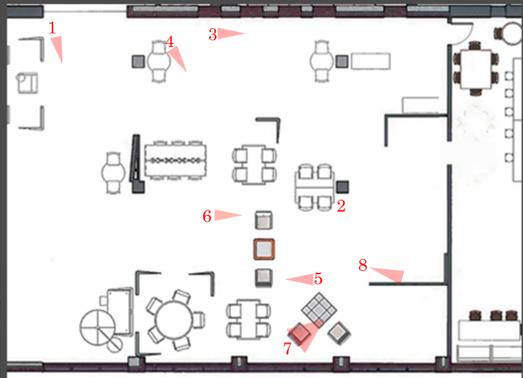


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EXISTING CONDITIONS

WRITING COMMONS

The existing Writing Commons lacked a brand identity in both signage and in interior design. Wayfinding through the space was undefined and appointment check-in obscured by a small kiosk. Mobilization of furnishings added to the feeling of disorganization. A lack of physical and acoustic privacy impacted consultations. The design challenge was to rebrand the space on a budget, using Steelcase products to create a cohesive, yet unique, identity in the library.



"A lot of appointment time is lost when you can't find the student you're supposed to work with"
- WC Staff

"Students are confused when they enter the space because the consultants are way in the back"
- Rachel Chaffee, Ph.D., Writing Commons Director, Associate Director, University Writing Program



1. Entry to Writing Commons
2. Appointment kiosk
3. Egress to Coffee Shop
4. View across public work areas
5. Teaming areas
6. Teaming (Consult Area)
7. Waiting (Consultant Stations)
8. Consultant Station

PROJECT MEMBERS:
Mary Golden, Assistant Professor and Chair Interior Design
Rachel Chaffee, Ph.D., Writing Commons Director
Octavia Spielman, Senior Interior Design Student
Jordanae Smith, Senior Interior Design Student
Siobhain Page, Junior Interior Design Student

WRITING COMMONS PARTICIPANTS:
Shirley Bower, Director of RIT Libraries
Jason Stryker, Senior Manager of Circulation Services and Facilities
Professional Staff
Student Staff

WRITING COMMONS REDESIGN

