

Guidelines for the Use of The Faculty Lounge in Lemieux Library and McGoldrick Learning Commons

*John Popko, University Librarian, October 13, 2010
Approved by Academic Assembly, November 1, 2010*

Context

Late in the construction phase of Lemieux Library and McGoldrick Learning Commons, the university designated the proposed reading room on the 6th Floor, northeast corner, to be an SU Faculty Lounge. Quoting from the Provost's communication of April 21, 2010, to the faculty on this development:

"Since my arrival at Seattle University in 2008, I have heard from many of you regarding the need and value of a dedicated space on campus for faculty to visit with colleagues and undertake the informal collaboration that often leads to new ideas, interdisciplinary research and teaching partnerships. This September...the university will dedicate a new reading room/lounge to the exclusive use of our faculty... This space will serve as a quiet faculty retreat for individual reading, writing and study, and also offer spaces where faculty may engage in small group discussion and collaboration."

Library construction was largely complete and furnishings for the space had already been programmed and purchased at the time of the decision for a faculty space. It is not possible to enclose the space with locked doors due to fire code regulations (the hallway must have access to the emergency exit on the north side of the building, which is within the lounge area). At this time there are no amenities (such as kitchen-like facilities) nor are staff available to provide support, security, or services. The space is not a full-fledged "faculty club" as we might wish for, but is a lounge and reading room within a large and open facility.

Because of these conditions, the attitudes and behaviors of the entire university community are crucial to the successful launch of this space. Students love the new facility and fill it early and often, laying claim to favorite corners, rooms, and pieces of furniture. In order firmly to assert the faculty's exclusive use of this space, faculty must claim, and own, their lounge by using it regularly. Faculty should respectfully redirect students to find another place to work. To assist in reinforcing this as a special faculty space, the library administration has posted additional temporary signage in the hallway leading to the Faculty Lounge. This signage clarifies that SU faculty are the intended audience for this room and refers students, staff, and visitors to use other parts of the facility for their reading, study, and group work. Such actions might not be sufficient to protect the space for exclusive faculty use, but are surely necessary if we are to achieve that end.

To further lay claim to the space, to encourage its use, and to manage the expectations of its users, I propose that the Library Administration and Academic Assembly agree on guidelines and practices for the inaugural year of operation of the new Faculty Lounge. I further propose that these same parties commit to undertake a joint review of the success of such guidelines in early May 2011, with the intent of adjusting the guidelines, if needed, for the subsequent academic year, 2011/12. The following points are offered as preliminary guidelines and practices.

Elements of Practices and Behaviors for the Inaugural Year of The Faculty Lounge, 2010/11

1. The Faculty Lounge is open and accessible all hours that the Library and Learning Commons is publicly open. The lounge is available to currently contracted SU faculty, SU emeritus and emerita faculty, administrators, and Directors of Academic programs or initiatives throughout the University.
2. The room seats more than 40 and is large enough that it can accommodate multiple simultaneous activities. Users should honor of the differing aims and preferences of their colleagues and strike a respectful balance that supports private study and small-group work, and both academic and social interactions.
3. Visiting faculty from other institutions, special academic or professional guests brought to campus for speaking, curricular, or collegial purposes, may use the lounge when accompanied or hosted by an SU faculty member.
4. SU faculty will respectfully redirect student users to find another place in the building to work.
5. SU faculty will not bring students into the lounge nor meet them there for advising, consultation, or teaching. There are many small group meeting rooms throughout the library for class teaching and library staff can assist in locating facilities for seminar or student meetings.
6. Impromptu or scheduled small-group meetings between faculty or department gatherings are encouraged in order to establish a practice of frequent and diverse use of the space.
7. Small-group gatherings are best limited to approximately six people so that the remainder of the space may still be used simultaneously and productively by faculty engaged in quiet work.
8. Small groups of faculty who gather for specific productive purposes will bring their own supplies that might be needed to conduct such work. The library does not offer supplies or staff support for such purposes.
9. At this time, there is no convenient and secure method for scheduling or booking a portion of the room for an intentional group gathering nor for alerting other users of such an intended use. The library will investigate such a capability.
10. Although kitchen-like facilities are not currently available in The Faculty Lounge, the library has adopted a liberal food and beverage policy that allows faculty to bring such items into the lounge. The library will investigate to what extent the space might be retro-fitted to provide some food and beverage amenities with a reasonable level of security.
11. Faculty will make use of trash and recycling containers within the space to clean up after themselves and to maintain an orderly and attractive environment.
12. Scheduling the entire Faculty Lounge for a single event, with or without catering or other services, must be approved and coordinated through the Office of the Provost or the Office of the University Librarian.
13. Faculty are encouraged to report their experiences in using the space and their preferences for adjustments to these guidelines to the University Librarian, John Popko (JPopko@seattleu.edu) and/or the President of the Academic Assembly, Karen Feldt (feldtk@seattleu.edu).

*** **