

A Coworking Project in the Campus Library: Supporting and Modeling Entrepreneurial Activity in the Academic Library

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Advances in technology, changes in demographics, and the increasingly global nature of the economy indicate that many jobs lost during the recent global recession will not be returning. Regardless of their major field of study, college students would benefit greatly from becoming more entrepreneurial in their thinking, yet opportunities for developing entrepreneurial behaviors on campus, especially for non-business majors, are few. This article describes a coworking project, from creation to follow-up survey, which aimed to create a space within the campus academic library to encourage student, faculty, and entrepreneur collaboration and interaction while demonstrating the economic value of the library.

KEYWORDS *collaboration, library buildings and space, marketing, coworking*

INTRODUCTION

Public libraries have long provided services and support for job seekers and career changers, whether by providing computer skills courses, through specific career centers within the library, or by simply providing access to the Internet for completing online employment applications. Advances in technology along with changes in demographics and the increasingly global nature of the economy indicate that many jobs lost during the most recent recession will not be returning; instead, the workplace is undergoing fundamental shifts, with self-employment, entrepreneurship, and contract work

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rapidly becoming the norm. Thus, promoting and encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship, and small business growth will be important to the recession's recovery. Some academic libraries have begun to see the potential for using their resources, often in partnership with economic development organizations or government agencies, to promote their services to entrepreneurs (Leavitt, Hamilton-Pennell, and Fails, 211) and to attract regional economic growth (Martin, 241). The aim of this coworking project was to invite local independent entrepreneurs, contract workers, and self-employed members of the community to use the academic library as a coworking space. By encouraging these members of the "creative class" to interact and collaborate in the library, we would demonstrate the value of entrepreneurship to our local economy, model entrepreneurial behavior for our students, and show how the library can be a place of value for one's lifetime.

BACKGROUND

The global economy remains bogged down in the midst of the weakest economic recovery in the post-World War II era. Although this financial crisis originated in the United States, it quickly spread globally due to the interconnectedness of financial markets, and resulted in recessions in almost all advanced countries. Most of these recessions were accompanied by credit crunches, house price busts, and outright financial crises (Claessens, Kose, and Terrones 2010). In its annual Global Employment Trends report, the International Labor Organization (ILO) forecasts that jobless numbers around the world will rise by 5.1 million in 2013 to 202 million people, topping 2009's record of 198 million (International Labour Organization, 10). While official unemployment stands at 7.8% in the United States and 11.8% in the Euro zone, even these high figures are misleading as they do not take into account the millions of workers who have stopped looking for work, discouraged by long-term unemployment and bleak job prospects.

In the United States, the recession's effects were widespread across the country, but some areas were particularly devastated, including the Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario California Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), where this coworking project took place. The construction industry, the main industry in Riverside and San Bernardino County lost 25.4% of its employment in 2009, and traffic to the county's employment resource centers increased by over 400% between 2009 and 2010. In January of 2010, the unemployment rate was a staggering 14.9%, up 120% from 2008 (Voice of California), and remains at 10.5% in 2013. A recent study commissioned by the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership revealed that the creative economy is now a major, significant contributor to the health of the overall regional economy, second only to agribusiness and hospitality (Wheeler's Market Intelligence, 3). For the study, creative disciplines were defined as: advertising, marketing,

and digital media; architecture and design; literary and publishing arts; media, film and television; museums and cultural institutions; performing arts and music; and visual arts. Of all employees in our region, the study found that roughly 7% work in creative occupations. In addition, a substantial group, comprised of more than ten thousand individuals, exists within the regional creative economy that is self-employed or non-employer sole practitioners. Even more impressive was the finding that the creative economy's workers' earnings exceeded the average regional worker by 30%. But, the Coachella Valley has negligible academic research and development capacity, placing it at competitive disadvantage in an area that has the potential to be a key economic engine for the regional economy (Advameg, Inc.). In addition, the number of new patents awarded per capita is considerably lower in the Coachella Valley than in comparable communities. Among other conclusions drawn from the report was that a major university presence is needed in the area to provide creative economy-related curricula and programs critical to future success in areas such as digital media, design, architecture, and other creative disciplines.

It was in this environment that the idea for an academic library coworking space, PDC Coworking, was conceived in 2011, and implemented during the following academic year. Coworking spaces are defined as work communities where independent entrepreneurs, freelancers, and professionals with workplace flexibility—those self-employed members of the creative class—are able to come together and work side by side, either independently or collaboratively as desired. Coworking spaces were originally formed as an alternative to working from a home office, where it is too easy to become isolated, or to the neighborhood coffee shop, where it is too easy to become distracted. Academic coworking refers to coworking spaces which operate on or in conjunction with colleges or universities. They should not be confused with academic co-working, a common term which has been used to refer to co-workers at a college or university who share a single job, typically a lecturer's position.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recession's Effect on Higher Education

During the Great Recession and its aftermath, educational attainment has proven to be one of the most effective hedges against unemployment. Those with less schooling were hit particularly hard by the economic downturn, with nearly four out of five jobs lost during the recession held by those with no formal education beyond high school. Workers who had completed a four-year college degree or higher were largely protected against job losses, and some high-education fields even saw job gains (Carnevale, Jayasundera, and Cheah, 10). Even now, four years into the economic

recovery, the U.S. unemployment rate for civilians twenty-five years and older without a high school diploma stands at 11.7%; while the unemployment rate for those with a Bachelor's Degree or higher currently stands at 3.9% (United States Department of Labor), while in the European Union the average 2012 unemployment rate for those aged between twenty-five and sixty-four having attained at most a lower secondary education was 16.8%, much higher than the 5.6% rate of unemployment for those that had obtained a tertiary education qualification (Eurostat).

The desire to attend college is then, not surprisingly, increasingly motivated by a desire to better one's career prospects. In 2011 nearly 86% of incoming U.S. college freshmen reported their top reason for going to college was to get a better job; it has been the leading reason to attend college since 2006, while in years prior to that, the survey found students' prime motive for college was to learn more about things that interested them (Berrett, 7). Unfortunately, the cost of higher education has been rising at just the same time that household net worth has been declining. The recession's effect on non-profit higher education has been to drive down endowments and give tax-starved states a reason to cut back their support for higher education, which has put new pressure on colleges and universities to raise their prices. In 2003, only two colleges in the U.S. charged more than \$40,000 a year for tuition, fees, room, and board, but just six years later more than two hundred colleges charged that amount. Not surprisingly, according to a 2011 Pew Research Survey, 75% of Americans now believe that college is too expensive (Mills, 9).

With household net worth declining and unemployment rising, students and families are taking on increasing amounts of debt to finance college educations. With rising debt come rising expectations from students and their families for a return on their investment and increased scrutiny of higher education costs along with calls for reform. One such effort at reform aimed at reining in U.S. Federal student aid debt, was the recent attempt by senators Tom Harkin, a Democrat from Iowa, and Michael Enzi, a Wyoming Republican, to impose a threshold of "gainful employment" on vocational programs in higher education. The gainful employment rule was designed to implement a law, passed decades ago by Congress, requiring that career education programs which receive federal aid actually successfully train students to earn a living. To qualify for federal aid, the law requires that most for-profit vocational degree programs, as well as certificate programs at nonprofit and public institutions, prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation. Under the proposed regulations, a program would be considered to lead to gainful employment if it meets at least one of the following three metrics: at least 35% of former students are repaying their loans (defined as reducing the loan balance by at least \$1); the estimated annual loan payment of a typical graduate does not exceed 30% of his or her discretionary

income; or the estimated annual loan payment of a typical graduate does not exceed 12% of his or her total earnings. While the regulations would apply to occupational training programs at all types of institutions, for-profit programs are more likely to leave their students with unaffordable debts and poor employment prospects (U.S. Department of Education).

The for-profit education corporations and their lobbyists strongly opposed the proposed Gainful Employment rule on the basis that it unfairly and arbitrarily targeted schools and programs which they claim serve a disproportionately larger share of underserved and poor students. A judge agreed that the 35% threshold for share of students repaying their loans was arbitrary, and consequently the entire rule has been postponed indefinitely. Many public and private not-for-profit institutions of higher education and their lobbying organizations have also questioned whether the federal government should use economic returns, or the relationship between student loan debt and post-college earnings, in assessing eligibility for student aid. They too are concerned, in their case, that applying these kinds of tests to vocationally oriented programs may be just the first step, and that the next step might be to examine whether students receiving bachelor's degrees in English or psychology will earn enough money upon graduation to justify their loan burdens. The popular press, and the business press in particular, is already full of a dizzying array of headlines, stories, and lists rating the value of college degrees by major, by granting institution, and by algorithms combining the two.

Growth of Entrepreneurship Education

There is little argument "that all college students could benefit from learning innovative approaches to problem-solving, adapting more readily to change, becoming more self-reliant, and developing creativity; in short, becoming more entrepreneurial in their thinking" (Henry, Hill, and Leitch, 101), and colleges and universities world-wide have responded over the past decade by adding entrepreneurship to their curricula at a rapid pace. Much of the growth in academic entrepreneurship education in the U.S., particularly the movement to institute cross-disciplinary models, can be attributed to the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation's Kauffman Campuses Initiative, which, in 2003, provided \$100 million across eight universities to help make entrepreneurship education accessible to all students, regardless of their field of study (ASHE, 66). According to the Ewing Marion Kauffman report, "More than 2,000 college and universities in the United States, about two-thirds of the total, now offer a course in entrepreneurship, and a smaller but growing number have entire sequences leading to an undergraduate minor, a master's in entrepreneurship, or something similar" (Cone, 1). And while there is a widespread desire on college and university campuses to promote and

develop innovative forms of entrepreneurship education, studies have found that educational practices within the discipline remain fairly traditional. New venture opportunities exist within nearly all academic disciplines, but the majority of entrepreneurship initiatives at U.S. colleges and universities are still offered by business schools and for business students (Levenburg, Lane, and Schwarz, 275). Additionally, the majority of entrepreneurship courses continue to seek learning outcomes that are “knowledge based,” whereas fewer courses focus on practical forms of entrepreneurship education and because most entrepreneurship programs outside the U.S. are modeled on the “best practices” of prestigious business schools in the U.S., this is equally true across the globe (Matlay and Carey, 256). Over half of entrepreneurship education was found to focus on helping students understand the phenomenon rather than preparing them for genuine entrepreneurial activity (Pittaway and Edwards, 786).

Academic Libraries in Transition

During the same time period that entrepreneurship education has been flourishing on college and university campuses, academic libraries have been struggling to reframe their identity for today’s college students who have grown up reading and conducting research online and who often do not understand or value the traditional role of the academic library or librarian. At best, many college students see the library as a place to find a quiet spot to study while they are in school, but rarely as a place they might turn to for reference or research assistance, and certainly not as a place that they might return to later during their lifetime. Not coincidentally, calls for libraries to become more entrepreneurial (Neal, 1) have also been increasing in the literature during the last decade and a half as academic libraries and librarians are dealing with the same factors that have reshaped their larger institutions (Willmott and Wall, 85), namely economic constraints; the increased need to spend or reallocate resources toward technology; cuts to staffing; and the need to prove ROI to students who now view themselves as fee-paying customers. As consumers of higher education, these students have expectations that their university education will prepare them for future careers, and this service expectation is not limited to the classroom, but extends to all areas of campus. Today’s students expect to find multiple services within the library (Li, 373), not just books and computers, but a multitude of social and collaborative spaces, as well as coffee shops and cafes (Cox, 198). Colleges and universities worldwide have responded by providing new Information Commons or Learning Commons facilities in place of their old book-centered libraries. These facilities are designed to promote active learning via their inspirational design, flexible spaces for both formal and informal group work, the newest technology and support, as well as acoustically isolated places for quiet study and reading (Watson, 262).

Coworking Spaces

Coworking spaces provide an alternate workplace for the increasing numbers of telecommuters, freelancers, self-employed, and other non-standard workers who have emerged as a result of recent technological changes and increased contract work and self-employment that resulted during the recession and its aftermath. There is very little peer-reviewed research on coworking, despite the growth in coworking spaces around the globe since 2005 (Hurry, 5). One such qualitative study is Spinuzzi's survey of coworking sites, which sought to define what the proprietors of the coworking sites themselves were attempting to provide, and to compare that to what the people who signed on to use the coworking sites were expecting from the facilities. From this research he defined three basic models of coworking: the "community work space" (409); the "federated work space" (413); and the "unoffice" model (410). Spinuzzi defines the community work space as a place to work in a community, but not a place for conversation, except perhaps in lounge areas or around the water cooler, whereas the federated work space is defined as one designed to foster business relationships and collaboration in formal and informal relationships among the coworkers. And finally, the unoffice model of coworking is one where the primary aim of the coworking space is to promote collaboration, networking and the sharing of ideas, where interaction and conversation is an essential feature. Often, the proprietors of the coworking space will set out to provide a specific type of environment, only to have the coworkers themselves reshape it to fit their own expectations.

Many of the services coworkers seek from their workspace are those that most libraries, even one as small as ours, already provide or can easily accommodate, such as the ability to work alone or in groups as needed, the desire to share knowledge with others, shared desk space, basic office equipment, and an environment conducive to serendipitous discoveries. Benefits reported by coworkers from working alongside others, whether communally or collaboratively, included 71% of coworkers reporting increased creativity since joining a coworking space; 62% said their standard of work had improved; 68% said they were able to focus better; and 64% said they could better complete tasks on time (Foertsch), all of which would be worthy outcomes for college students using the library as well. Independence, openness, and community: for the members of coworking spaces, these are the three most important values that they expect their workspaces to reflect, and many of the other desires that coworkers express for their coworking space are identical to what college students desire from their college libraries, most notably, 24-hour access. Many of the skills that define successful entrepreneurs are those that we librarians also seek to foster in our student researchers, such as self-motivation, creativity, opportunity seeking, and the ability to cope with uncertainty (Holmgren and From, 384). Surveys of active

coworkers show that there is an apparent contradiction between wanting independence and a desire for community, one that coworking spaces must constantly seek to resolve, just as academic libraries must measure the space needs of silent, yet communal study, against the need for collaborative, and perhaps noisy group work space (Gayton, 60).

CASE STUDY

California State University, San Bernardino's (CSUSB) Palm Desert Campus, is a branch campus of CSUSB, created to serve transfer students from the local community college to complete their undergraduate degrees. Additionally the campus offers several masters level programs and one doctoral program. The median age of undergraduate students at the time this project began was twenty-five years, and the average was thirty-three; 80% of the student body works full-time and has little time for extra-curricular activities. Our campus mission statement promises that we will "make productive use of our resources to develop community partnerships and establish the campus as the educational leader of the Coachella Valley while providing students with a repertoire of skills to face the challenges of a dynamic, multicultural, technology-based society," and with the local economy still struggling, the challenges are many.

Many, if not most, of our students have been commuters throughout their college career, and are unfamiliar with the idea of the library as the hub of campus life. The campus library is open thirty-six hours a week and staffed by one full-time solo librarian. Student use of the space fluctuates greatly, with peak usage in the two hours directly preceding evening classes, with many mid-day hours underutilized. Although the physical library collection is small, we have a large and growing collection of online materials, and the library is served with daily courier service for inter-library loan of materials from the main campus. Physically, the library resembles a cross between a computer lab and an art gallery- it is a large open space with high ceilings, large windows, and vibrant artwork, which contains forty-two desktop computers on seven round computer tables which are fixed to the floor and unmovable. Additional desk space is available for laptop use, as well as a scanner, printer, computer projector and screen, and several reading chairs and a coffee machine. Our physical print collection lines one wall and is comprised of approximately two thousand volumes. Most of our students do not recognize the space as a library, due in part to the small physical collection, as well as the fact that the library is named the Information Resource Center. Perhaps because of the environment, student interaction with the librarian is primarily for computer and software-related questions, rather than for reference or research assistance. Group study rooms are not available in the library, but there are tables directly outside the library's doors that can accommodate groups.

The marketing of PDC Coworking was focused first on attracting potential coworkers from the local creative economy. Information was presented about coworking as a concept, and our coworking space in particular, at meetings of the Coachella Valley Economic Development Partnership, the Small Business Development Center, and the Women's Business Center. Additionally, traditional press releases went out to all local media outlets, resulting in several newspaper articles and interviews. PDC Coworking provided programming to attract members, including targeted presentations on using library databases in business planning and research, which were advertised through the Coachella Valley Coworkers Meetup group, developed for this marketing purpose.

Response to the library coworking space from local entrepreneurs was initially very positive, with traditional media and the Meetup group generating the most referrals. Many of the amenities that coworkers are looking for in a coworking space are similar to what libraries already provide or can easily accommodate; however, coworkers expect a level of control over their space that is difficult to provide without also ceding that control to students. This is especially true and problematic when the library or coworking space does not allow for physically segregating communal space from collaborative space. Additionally, as has been reported by many who are using coworking spaces, not just those in libraries, managing private conversations, especially on the telephone, in the midst of a collaborative work area, was a concern for potential coworkers. To make matters worse, despite the excellent Wi-Fi capabilities on campus, cell phone reception within the library is nearly non-existent and private places for conversation are not readily available. From a librarian's perspective, this makes it easy to teach students not to use their cell phones in the library, but managing others who expect it as part of their work environment can pose problems. For these reasons and for purposes of meeting clients, many potential coworkers were more interested in renting very small, private work offices, rather than using collaborative work space. Although potential coworkers expressed an interest in programming and presentations, many would-be entrepreneurs were not open to sharing and collaborating with others, especially early on in the development of a business concept or idea. The idea of working in a college environment did appeal to many potential coworkers, but the reality of our nontraditional students and adjunct faculty, did not match expectations. Location, not surprisingly, is as also as important for coworking spaces as it is for any other kind of business. Unfortunately, although the Palm Desert campus is conveniently located near a major freeway and on the local bus line, it is not near a city center and lacks the vibrancy of a downtown. Because parking is not at a premium in the Coachella Valley and yet charging for parking is required on California State University property, our location on campus turned out to be a handicap, rather than a draw.

TABLE 1 When visiting the library, what level of noise is acceptable to you?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Total (92)
Absolute silence	18	19.6%
Quiet conversation	65	70.7%
Collaborative or noisy	8	8.7%
Other (doesn't matter)	1	1.1%

SURVEY

Methods

At the start of the fall quarter of 2013, after several years of attempting to jump start the coworking project from the entrepreneur side, a survey was designed to determine whether or not there was enough student interest to continue the effort to provide a coworking experience in the academic library. Question 1 asked participants what level of noise was acceptable to them in our one-room library since it is not possible to separate the coworking space from the student study area. Question 2 asked participants their feelings about employment in their prospective field upon graduation. Questions 3 through 5 attempted to elicit feelings toward becoming an entrepreneur, and Question 6 asked participants whether they would be interested in working alongside and learning from an entrepreneur. The survey was made available to transfer students (students transferring onto our campus from the local community college) during their orientation tour of the library. These students represented a cross-section of majors, with psychology, history, and nursing among the most popular majors at our campus. The final question of the survey asked participants to identify whether they were majoring in business or a related subject.

Results and Discussion

One hundred two students came through the library for orientation, and ninety two students began taking the survey. Of these, seventy six completed every question on the survey; 22% of the students who completed the survey identified themselves as majoring in business or a related field.

QUESTION 1: NOISE LEVEL (TABLE 1)

Despite the popularity of the learning commons model of academic library space, which combines an array of services and a variety of study spaces, both communal and social, those models require the ability to acoustically isolate noisy areas from quiet study space. In a small library such as ours, where all services share a small space, we needed to understand what our students expect when they visit the library. Are they looking for quiet study,

TABLE 2 Feelings about employment in prospective field upon graduation

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Total (92)
I'm sure I'll find a job in my field	55	59.8%
With flexibility I'll find something related	23	25.0%
I'm hopeful	5	5.4%
I'm concerned	3	3.3%
Already employed in my field	6	6.5%

or are they interested in a vibrant and collaborative environment? As the results of this survey attest, most students are accepting of a noise level equivalent to quiet conversation in the library space, but very few are accepting of a collaborative or noisy environment, and a substantial number would like to have absolute silence in the library.

QUESTION 2: FEELINGS ABOUT EMPLOYMENT UPON GRADUATION (TABLE 2)

As noted elsewhere (John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, 14), despite the persistent headlines about the dire state of the job market graduates will be entering, U.S. college students remain optimistic about their own ability to find a job in their chosen field, and this was echoed in our survey. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, however, estimates that by the year 2020, about sixty-five million Americans will be freelancers, temps, independent contractors and solo entrepreneurs, making up about 40% of the workforce (Henderson, 65). Many current independent self-employed workers chose this status and are satisfied with their ability to be flexible, to have control over their work, and to be more creative in their work. Others are operating as independent workers out of necessity, and where it may not be their first choice.

QUESTION 3: FEELINGS TOWARD SELF-EMPLOYMENT (TABLE 3)

Many independent entrepreneurs operate as sole proprietorships, whether they have other workers under contract or not, and appear in government statistics as self-employed. Likewise, any contract workers they employ also

TABLE 3 Choose the selection that best describes feelings toward self-employment

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Total (77)
A good option if you can't find employment	42	54.5%
It would be my first choice	15	19.5%
It does not appeal to me at all	17	22.1%
Other (indifferent)	3	3.9%

TABLE 4 Have you ever dreamed of being an entrepreneur?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Total (77)
Yes	31	40.3%
No	46	59.7%

show up in government statistics as self-employed, muddying the distinctions between self-employed, contract worker, entrepreneur, and sole proprietor. Regardless, we found that many of our college students regard self-employment or entrepreneurship as an alternate, or backup, plan if their chosen career does not work out. This is in line with the Heldrich Center survey, which found that when asked to think ahead over the next year, 53% of recent U.S. college graduates characterized the economy as in a “temporary downturn” compared to 45% who felt the economy was experiencing “fundamental and lasting changes” (John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, 14).

Since the beginning of the recession there has been a large jump in preference for job security among graduating college students regardless of demographic groups—men, women, different racial/ethnic groups, and different age groups all emphasized their desire for job security in employment (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 12). Students of the “Millennial Generation,” (those born 1980–2000) are especially focused on ensuring security. “To this generation, the most important attributes to be sought in a job are the opportunity to advance, job security, a high starting salary, and a good benefits package” (John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, 9).

QUESTION 4: DREAMED OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP? (TABLE 4)

Given the definition of an entrepreneur as “someone who organizes and manages an enterprise, especially a business, usually with considerable initiative and risk,” only 40% of our survey participants have dreamed of becoming an entrepreneur. Rejecting entrepreneurial activity in the midst of our current economic climate may seem short-sighted for some of our students, but it is realistic. Students who are already working full-time while

TABLE 5 How likely do you think it is that you will one day start a business?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Total (77)
Very likely	15	19.5%
Possible	24	31.2%
Unlikely	29	37.7%
Impossible	8	10.4%
Other (already have)	1	1.3%

TABLE 6 Given the opportunity to learn from an entrepreneur, would you be interested?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Total (77)
Yes	58	75.3%
No	19	24.7%

in college, and who expect to carry record student loan debt in addition to other consumer debt when they graduate, do not have the time or the luxury of thinking creatively about the job market, nor do they have the capital, either emotionally or financially, to undertake potentially risky opportunities.

QUESTION 5: HOW LIKELY IS IT THAT YOU WILL START A BUSINESS? (TABLE 5)

According to a survey commissioned by the Kaufman Foundation in 2010, 55% of students did indicate an interest in someday owning their own business, but only 34% of that group thought it was likely to ever happen (Tomkiewicz, Bass, and Robinson, 917). Similarly, our results indicate that half of our survey respondents are either planning on or dreaming about starting a business, and an additional 37.7% may in fact be interested in starting a business, but do not know where to begin.

QUESTION 6: DESIRE TO LEARN FROM AN ENTREPRENEUR (TABLE 6)

Exposure to entrepreneurial role models has been suggested to lead to increased motivation toward entrepreneurial career intention. Specifically, “through observation of role models, individuals can learn not only of their own possibilities, but also where resources can be obtained, and which factors are likely to lead to success and which to failure” (Bar Nir, Watson, and Hutchins, 272). Although just 40% of our survey respondents admitted to dreaming of being an entrepreneur, and only half of respondents thought it likely or possible that they would one day start a business, 75% of our students indicated an interest in working alongside and learning from an entrepreneur. Do these students recognize the need to develop entrepreneurial skills despite their belief in their own ability to find a job in their field upon graduation, or are they less sure about their prospects than they report?

CONCLUSION

It was hoped that providing entrepreneurial role models within an academic library coworking space would provide students with guidance and specific information about how to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities, as well

as local business contacts, but meeting the expectations of the potential coworkers within our limited and somewhat inflexible space proved difficult. At the beginning of this project, we did not explicitly define the parameters of the PDC Coworking Space, in the hope that it would grow and develop organically according to the coworkers' needs. With the results of our student survey, we learned that our students value the communal nature of serious quiet study in the company of others, but are not interested in their library becoming a social place open to noisy collaboration. Therefore, it is clear that if we pursue this project, we will need to explicitly define the coworking area within our library according to the "Community Work Space" model described by Spinuzzi (409), as a work space that allows for dedicated time to concentrate and accomplish tasks within a community, rather than as a place that encourages discussion and interaction between coworkers. Other functions, such as facilitating relationships and referrals among the coworkers, and between the coworkers and our students, will need to take place outside the library, perhaps in our building's lobby area.

Although it seemed as if this project would be relatively easy to launch, it proved to require a great deal of time to deal with the basic issues of parking permits, Wi-Fi and printing access for the non-student coworkers. In addition, opportunities for networking and promoting the PDC Coworking space to local entrepreneurs necessarily took place outside of normal library hours, and for a library staffed by one person, this soon became unsustainable. As many academic librarians who are charged with marketing library services discover (Polger and Okamoto, 246), multiple responsibilities, a lack of funding, and limited time and resources, undermined my initial efforts to focus on the level of promotion and marketing needed to sustain this project. The results of this survey will allow me to better articulate student interest in the coworking idea to campus administration, and to advocate for future library space planning and staffing needs in order to continue this project.

As academic librarians, we need to be entrepreneurial in our thinking as we continue to imagine new ways to arm our students with the knowledge and skills necessary to find good, reliable information not only to complete class assignments, but to understand how the choices they make while in college will impact their future lives. Creating an academic library coworking space is one idea that seems to have great potential for providing students with the opportunity to meet and interact with local entrepreneurs while making productive use of campus resources to develop community partnerships, and providing students with a repertoire of skills to face the challenges of a dynamic, multicultural, technology-based society. Whatever their career choice or college major, students will benefit from developing critical thinking skills, being adaptable to change, becoming more self-reliant, and developing creativity, whether we refer to these qualities as entrepreneurial skills or something else. Changes in the worldwide economy are likely to continue contributing to an uncertain job market, and the probability is high that

today's college graduates will end up with a portfolio of jobs over a lifetime, whether as employees or as self-employed entrepreneurs, or a combination of both.

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