Higher education has changed drastically over the past few decades. Therefore, design considerations for higher education environments require designers to examine the ideological shifts in the academic community. The most effective teaching and learning spaces of the future will be designed around approaches to pedagogy which incorporate collaboration amongst students and faculty in a setting that is both high-tech and high-touch (Neary et al., 2010, p. 24; Gensler, 2012). Each space should be designed to allow for flexibility in individual and collective use.

Traditional classroom models support an environment of one-way communication, where the teacher provides information to the students through a lecture format (Gensler, 2012). These roles have shifted over time to allow the students to have a proactive role in their education (University of Michigan, 2011). Today, students have grown up using technology to augment their in-class activities and have driven the trend of online learning (Gensler, 2012). Because of the variety of needs students bring to their learning environment, the higher education design needs to provide adaptable and flexible spaces for all activities and all users (Warger, & Dobbin, 2009, p. 6). Key strategies for achieving flexibility are through environmental features that can support mobility, including wireless technology and the use of multifunctional furniture pieces (Pinder et al., 2009, p. 7). Learning spaces should allow the users to reconfigure for a variety of classroom and interactive arrangements (MacPhee, 2012). Traditional learning environments no longer fulfill the needs of contemporary educational methods. As a result, innovative solutions need to enhance the overall student experience.

In order to facilitate the shift that is occurring in today's college and universities, innovative concepts need to be implemented such as collaborative features, flexible, multi-functional spaces, and technological advances. This higher education space will allow students and faculty to have greater control over their education and more functional, inviting spaces to learn independently and cooperatively.
Plan Annotations

1. Visitor information posted and easily accessible from the entrance
2. U & LS- Accessible Elevator
3. LS & U- ADAAG Compliant Restrooms
4. U & F- Seating in Dining/Coffee Shop area allows for eating, studying, or socializing, with all wheelchair accessible tables
5. E- Existing wood and brick walls honored and featured in design
6. U- Counter height at 34” A.F.F. to meet ADAAG
7. U & F- Flexible furniture can be reconfigured to different arrangements and is wheelchair accessible
8. F- Interactive touch screen televisions to engage students and visitors
9. LS- Acoustical panels to reduce excess sound in two-story space
10. U & F- Mobile seating in Multi-Functional Space can be rearranged for class discussions, speakers, and campus events, also wheelchair accessible, and can replace node chair easily
11. F- Multi-Media projection system in all classrooms facilitates learning from a variety of sources
12. F- Storage Room holds extra tables and chairs for rearranging multipurpose spaces
13. LS & U- Multiple accessible exits to meet International Building Codes and ADAAG
14. LS- Southern windows allow natural light and views from first and second floor spaces
15. LS- Clerestory windows allow classrooms to receive natural light
16. LS- Skylight above stairs adds to natural light
17. F & S- Individual study rooms provide quiet space to study or complete online class work
18. LS- Circulation provides appropriate means of egress for users and access to other parts of the building
19. S- Second floor maximized to take full advantage of 20’ ceiling with future spaces needed considered
20. U & LS- Floor material transitions define spaces and circulation to support intuitive wayfinding

Design Criteria

S- Sustainability and Respect to Historical Setting
U- Universal Design and Inclusivity
L- Life Safety, Health, and Welfare
F- Flexible and Multi-Use Features

First Floor Plan 1/24” Scale

Second Floor Plan 1/24” Scale

Dining Area

Lounge Elevation 1/24” Scale

Dining Elevation 1/24” Scale