

Faculty Interview Study

SEXTON LIBRARY SPACE

ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING

Sexton Library Space Assessment Team:

Linda Bedwell, Coordinator of Assessment

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Background

This Dalhousie Libraries interview study was conducted to gather insight into Sexton faculty's current and future technology needs for teaching and scholarship (software and hardware) that the Libraries could potentially support in a new/renovated space, along with their other library space-related needs and preferences. This study was precipitated by Dal Libraries leadership's perceived potential for new library space on the Sexton Campus. This report is preceded by the [2019 Dal Libraries Survey](#) (Insync) and [LibQual surveys](#) from previous years that indicated significant student dissatisfaction with the library space, along with feedback gathered through Student Input & Feedback Team sessions and Dal Student Union Town Hall comments. All of the gathered data point toward a strong need for a new or re-designed library and study space at the Sexton Campus.

A Sexton Space Assessment Team was assembled in Winter 2019 to plan space assessment studies. Due to timing of recent new construction on the Sexton Campus, as well as the 2019 Dal Libraries Survey, the Coordinator of Assessment suggested a faculty interview study ahead of a student-focused assessment to gather faculty input on space and technology elements that could be considered in re/design planning. This approach, which focuses mainly on technology that can be provided and supported in a learning space, was directly influenced by a space needs assessment workshop that the Coordinator of Assessment attended at the Association of Research Libraries' Library Assessment Conference, led by Joan Lippincott, Associate Executive Director of the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI). Team membership consisted of Sarah Jane Dooley (Reference Coordinator & Liaison Librarian for Engineering), Amanda Sparks (Manager, Library Services, Sexton Library), Elizabeth McElroy (Sexton Library intern), Michelle Paon (Head of the Sexton Design & Technology Library), and Linda Bedwell (Coordinator of Assessment). A number of the Libraries' Academic Technology Services (ATS) staff joined for assistance during the interviews, and Marc Comeau (Director Academic Technology Services) and Mick Bottom (Manager of Services, Support & Training) joined during the data analysis to provide input for technology-related recommendations.

Team members prepared and sent an email invitation to the faculties, and also contacted faculty directly to encourage participation. Fourteen interviews with professors, associate and assistant professors across disciplines of Engineering, Architecture & Planning, and Internetworking were conducted April-July, 2019, using a prepared list of questions (see Appendix A). The interviewers took notes and used an audio recorder (by permission) in order to capture as much data as possible. Ethics approval was not required as this study is for assessment purposes only (see article 2.5 of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans); and participants signed a statement that their responses would be anonymized in results reporting. Notes and recordings were compiled, and response data was entered into Excel spreadsheets for simple coding and then summarized by each question for this report. A draft report was written, which then awaited insight and recommendation suggestions from ATS. The Covid-19 pandemic delayed progress until 2021, resulting in more general technology-related recommendations.

Based on the number of participants, representation and common response themes, the team felt it had adequate participation upon which to base recommendations. With this formal report, it is hoped that findings will be taken into consideration for future re/design planning of the Sexton Library spaces, and in technology acquisitions.

Results Summary

The following are broad, common themes that emerged from the interview data. Recommendations are provided under each question in the Results Analysis section.

Technology/Hardware

Faculty indicated the need for additional computers/laptops and high-performance computing for student-use on Sexton campus. Within a new library space, additional desktop pcs (some high-powered) should be provided and the space should be designed for laptop use (ergonomic desks and chairs, outlets). Virtual Reality (VR) facilities were suggested and Raspberry Pi. Those who suggested new technologies were early-career faculty, looking ahead to future trends. Artificial Intelligence (AI) was also mentioned, indicating a need for further consultation.

Software

Specialized software is often required for courses. Some of these products (e.g., Python, Adobe Suite, Tableau) should be installed on desktop pcs and on laptops that are being loaned.

Support Services

In general, faculty themselves provided support for specialized software. Navigators working in the Sexton Library should have knowledge of any programs installed on desktop and library laptop computers. Based on positive experiences, faculty requested the availability of more support. Issues with audiovisual (AV) support and available hours of Brightspace support were also mentioned. Since this study, a full-time AV position for Sexton Campus has been established, Brightspace support was extended through evenings and weekends during the pandemic (possible extension post-pandemic is funding-dependent), and virtual GIS services were established.

Physical Library Spaces

In general, faculty do not spend time in the current Sexton Library space. A couple of faculty mentioned spending time in the Central Library and suggested that the Sexton Library should emulate that space in terms of open concept, a coffee shop, and quiet spaces to read. They made suggestions on how the space should be better for students, i.e., comfortable for work (wide desks, ergonomic seating). New technologies should be included in the space – VR being the most common suggestion.

Results Analysis

Demographics

Some participant demographic data was gathered to see if there were any commonalities associated with particular responses to questions. For the most part, there didn't appear to be common response themes within the groups. In a couple of instances, however, faculty members within their first eight years of

having been appointed to Dal mentioned similar technologies, and these are detailed in question results below.

Participants consisted of 7 professors, 5 associate professors and 2 assistant professors. Years at Dal ranged from less than 1 year to 39 years. Participants taught up to 4 undergraduate/graduate courses per year.

The breakdown of participants by department is as follows:

Mechanical Engineering – 4
Civil & Resource Engineering – 2
Process Engineering & Applied Science – 2
Planning – 2
Industrial Engineering – 1
Electrical and Computer Engineering – 1
Engineering Math – 1
Architecture – 1

1. Think back to recent assignments you have given your students. What specialized software programs were required to complete these assignments? Are these programs readily available in labs or learning commons on campus? At which locations?

The following is a list of software programs mentioned by respondents. Often, programs that are not available through Dalhousie ITS or the Dal Libraries are purchased by the departments.

Overall, most faculty did not view Brightspace and Microsoft Office Suite as specialized technology. Although some mentioned them, they have been removed from the analysis.

# respondents	Title
1	Adobe Suite
1	Arduino IDE
1	ArcGIS
1	Arena
1	AutoCad
2	Comsol
1	Eagle by Autodesk
1	Factsage
1	Granta
1	HSC (thermodynamics)
1	Hyperworks
1	InDesign
1	KiCAD
1	Labview
1	Maple
1	Mastering Engineering
5	MatLab
1	ORCAD PSPICE
1	Panopto
1	Pollute
1	process flow diagram software
1	R Studio
1	Reference management software
1	Rock Science
1	Slide
3	Solidworks
1	Surpac
1	Ven Sim
1	Visio

Recommendation

- Using the list of assignment-related software programs provided by participants, check current on-campus availability and consider installing open source/Dal-licensed software on Sexton Library computers. Some software on the list is already available. Support for the software must be considered in the decision.

2. What other technologies or hardware were required? Are these readily available in labs or learning commons on campus? At which locations?

# respondents	Item
2	laptop/computers
2	computer lab/high power lab
2	camera/video recording devices
1	3D Printing
1	Projection of live drawing
1	Virtual Reality
1	data acquisition board
1	Raspberry Pi & sensors, motors
1	hardware - resistors, comparisions, generators, multimeters

Respondents from Mechanical Engineering, Process Engineering and Applied Science, Industrial Engineering, and Electrical & Computer Engineering all indicated the need for laptops/computers/high-power computer lab. Both respondents from the School of Planning used video cameras and had some multimedia projects; however, video cameras were departmentally supplied, or students were able to use smart phones.

Other hardware/technologies were suggested, including VR (Civil & Resource Engineering) and Raspberry Pi (Mechanical Engineering). Those who suggested a hardware/technology were in their early years at Dal (8 years or less on faculty).

Recommendations

- Promote the improved AV lending services through the Sexton AV Office.
- Evaluate existing Arduino Kits, update as needed and re-deploy to Sexton.
- Determine a reasonable method for making VR equipment accessible to patrons.
- Provide additional desktop computers in new Sexton Library space (high-performance) and ensure the space provides suitable locations for laptop use (ergonomically appropriate seating, outlets).
- Review current laptop loan data to determine sufficient inventory to support demand.

3. How about support services? Is specialized help for the programs and technologies required for these assignments readily available on campus?

This question was asked to find out if support is provided for the software and hardware technologies provided as answers to questions 1 and 2. For the most part, it appears that faculty members, themselves, provide the support for specific software programs, or, as in the case of Architecture, two student computer-help assistants are paid by the department. Respondents went on to indicate dissatisfaction with Dal tech support, particularly AV. Long wait times (2-3 days) were reported for issues

with data projectors and computer labs and it was noted that AV support was not available in the evenings. There were positive comments about Brightspace support, but that too was not available after hours/on weekends. Since this study, the Libraries have established a full-time AV position on Sexton Campus thanks to supporting funding through the recent Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) reports. Currently, Brightspace support is available evenings and weekends through the Libraries' virtual support room. This additional service was established during the Covid-19 pandemic and is funded until the end of March 2022. Further funding is being sought.

One Planning faculty member mentioned the positive aspect of having the GIS specialist available during the year and wanted this specialist available for a longer period during the course. Since this study, virtual GIS services have been established.

Recommendations

- Track usage statistics of evening and weekend Brightspace Support to demonstrate that continued funding is warranted to continue providing the service during these hours.
- Ensure that Sexton Library navigators are well-versed in software provided on library computers.

4. Now think to the future. What specialized technologies (programs, equipment, support services) do you anticipate will be required for assignments? Are these currently available on campus and at which locations?

# respondents	Specialized Technology
3	Flipped classroom - more resources
3	Virtual Reality
2	Panopto, lecture capture rooms
2	Brightspace - for tests/assignments
1	Brightspace - more immediate support
1	Brightspace - long-term consistent platform
1	Brightspace - linked to Library collections (e.g., e-reserves link)
1	Brightspace - easier grade collection with rubrics
1	Support for web-based software
1	faster computers
1	Trello/task management software
1	Central system for all materials (currently using Google and dropbox)
1	Programming tools
1	GPS-GIS translation
1	Adobe Suite
1	Tableau/data visualization program
1	laser measurement tool

Faculty in Mechanical Engineering, Civil and Resource Engineering, and Industrial Engineering predicted the use of a “flipped classroom” style of teaching for the future, and suggested more resources would be required to support this, including Brightspace features such as online testing and assignments. All those who suggested flipped classrooms and VR were in their early years at Dal (8 years or less). Since this study there are now improved resources for flipped classrooms (blended learning) at <https://www.dal.ca/dept/online-teaching.html>.

Faculty in Civil and Resource Engineering, Industrial Engineering, and the School of Planning thought VR might be helpful for lab simulations. A Planning participant and an Electrical and Computer Engineering participant mentioned Panopto and lecture capture rooms. Since this study, some lecture capture rooms were made available during the Covid-19 pandemic but were not well used.

One Mechanical Engineering faculty member expressed interest in a seamless link between Brightspace and the library website for ease of access to e-reserves.

Planning faculty members wanted software that could translate GPS to GIS, as well as the Adobe Suite access, full access to Tableau (rather than just subscription access), and a laser measuring tool. See the complete list of suggestions above. (Participants tended to focus on wish lists rather than indicating what was already available.)

Recommendations

- Investigate the potential for providing VR facilities in a new Sexton Library space.
- Retain the list of potential future assignment-related technology needs as evidence builds to support acquisition.
- Re-assess the need for lecture capture rooms. Have faculty adjusted and found good setups at home or is there still a need?

5. Now think about your own teaching and scholarship. What specialized technologies do you require currently? Are these readily available on campus? At which locations?

# respondents	Specialized Technology
2	Reference management software - Paper 3, BibTech, Melody
2	iPad/Tablet and PDF app for marking
2	Latex (for journal submissions)
2	Python
1	projectors and screens (maintenance & ability to roll up one screen to use board)
1	Mastering Engineering
1	Solid Works
1	fast computers
1	Panopto
1	Arc GIS
1	Pollute
1	Slide
1	Signal Plot
1	Minitab
1	Rock Science (premium version)
1	Maple (premium version)
1	MatLab (premium version)
1	Matmatica (premium version)
1	AutoCad (premium version)
1	Surpac (premium version)
1	Trello
1	Bibtech format of reference management software
1	Labview
1	ebooks for classes
1	3D Printing for teaching
1	Systat
1	Prism
1	STATA (switching from SAS)
1	Laser measurement tool
1	Noise meter
1	GPS device - bought by professor
1	GIS in library help
1	Cplex
1	R
1	Canadian micro electronics corporation - implement integrated circuits - to simulate circuits. Subscription service.
1	CADENCE KADIC tools
1	ANSYS - HFSS
1	COMSOL
1	XILYX
1	Web publishing in Wordpress
1	In Design - rented monthly - not available to faculty - can't keep up with version for students
1	Adobe - not available - too expensive

This question netted many specific answers, all listed above. Some of the software is already available. Reference management software was mentioned by Mechanical Engineering and Industrial Engineering. These two also suggested Latex (for journal submissions) and Python. Mechanical Engineering and Civil & Resource Engineering suggested tablets and pdf apps for marking papers.

Two Mechanical Engineering faculty responded that there was no need for any specialized technologies in their courses, while two others listed various software currently in use for their courses, such as Solid Works, LabView, and Python.

Civil and Resource Engineering faculty reported using ArcGIS and Pollute, as well as Rock Suite, and a mix of departmentally-purchased and campus available software.

Planning faculty foresaw a need to switch from the currently used SAS software to STATA and had an interest in having a laser measurement tool and noise meter. One Architecture faculty member noted the need for Adobe software at the university-wide level, as well as web-publishing capabilities through Wordpress.

Industrial Engineering faculty listed simulation and optimization software that is not available on campus but only departmentally.

Electrical and Computer Engineering faculty also listed software available only departmentally, and the need for the hardware and tools for software such as Cadence KADIC and COMSOL.

Recommendation

- Using the list of specialized technologies provided by participants, check current on-campus availability, consider adding relevant open-source options for identified needs to Learning Commons desktop images, and conduct further needs-assessment as warranted.
- Consider ways to better promote software that has already been acquired, to ensure faculty members are aware of the full range of resources available to them and their students.

6. In the future, what specialized technologies do you think you will require for your teaching and research? Are these currently available on campus and at which locations?

# respondents	Specialized Technology
3	VR
2	AI technologies
2	video screencasting and online lectures
2	VR not useful, scalable
2	new versions of current software
1	fast computers
1	Solid Works
1	better data archiving
1	Screenflow
1	video editing tech support
1	3D technology
1	data visualization walls might be helpful
1	little funds to do experimental labs
1	data visualization wall unnecessary
1	voice to text, text to voice technologies
1	animation and game design technology
1	analytics
1	machine learning
1	ANSYS - HFSS - allows to simulate the behaviour of electrometric fields
1	hardware for CADENCE KADIC, XILYX, COMSOL
1	lecture recording for MACs
1	Mac compatability
1	MatLab
1	AceNet

Artificial intelligence (AI) and VR were two technologies mentioned by a number of respondents. VR, however received differing views. While faculty from Mechanical Engineering, Planning, and Civil and Resource Engineering saw the future possibilities VR technology had for facilitating teaching, two other Mechanical Engineering faculty saw how VR might have issues with scalability, or not be integral to course learning. (Despite findings for other questions, when it came to this question, the faculty member's number of years at Dal did not seem to factor into the responses.)

Civil and Resource Engineering and Industrial Engineering both mentioned AI, and both answered that updated versions of current software were the obvious technologies on the horizon for the future.

Mechanical Engineering and Architecture mentioned video screencasting and online lectures. See above for a complete list of responses. (Participants tended to focus on wish lists rather than indicating what was already available.)

Recommendations

- See VR recommendation under Question 4.
- Retain the list of potential future technology needs to support teaching and scholarship as evidence builds to support acquisition.
- Conduct further consultation to determine requirements around AI.

7. How often do you visit the Sexton Library and for what purposes? (If never, why not?)

# respondents	Response
3	never
3	rarely
1	once/3-6mos
1	once or twice per term
1	a couple times a term
2	two or three times a month
1	once a week
1	often
5	uses online
2	uses Central Library
2	to sign out books
1	browses stacks
1	to pick up doc del.
1	mostly uses for putting books on reserve
1	doesn't borrow books, buys them
1	hasn't found space in library
2	prefers quiet library space
1	desires a comfortable work space
1	students need space (plus technologies) for group work
1	other institutions downsizing collections to offsite storage to make student space
1	graduate students wouldn't use for quiet space as they have offices

Six of the thirteen faculty who provided a direct answer to this question never or rarely visit the Sexton Library while six indicated they visited at least once or twice per term. Regular users who provided additional comments said they visited to sign out books, pick up Document Delivery items and put items on reserve, indicating that they likely don't use the library as alternate workspace or meeting space. Five of the irregular/non-users mentioned they use the Libraries' online services.

One faculty member from the School of Planning pointed out the need for a comfortable workspace, with wide desks and comfortable, ergonomic chairs.

A faculty member from Mechanical Engineering stated that many graduate students have private office spaces and thus may not use the library spaces. Another faculty member from Mechanical Engineering stated that the library lacked small group study space and mentioned that other institutions were moving collections to offsite storage to make room for student study spaces.

One faculty member who reported using the Sexton Library often wanted a quiet space to read, like the Central Library.

Recommendations

- Ensure new/redesigned spaces are comfortable for work (wide desks, ergonomic seating).
- Provide adequate group study space.

8. What changes would the library have to make for you to spend more time there?

# respondents	Response
7	quiet reading space, study "pods", study rooms
1	Open space
1	might use VR room
1	services benefitting students and faculty teaching activities
1	Makerspace
1	technology library could check out: data acquisition board, technology kit, multimeter
1	Sandbox space
1	technology drop in hours
1	big book scanner similar to what the Canadian Centre of Architecture has
1	coffee shop
1	likes new book displays
1	likes the 3D printer
1	likes GIS drop in
1	heat issues in Sexton
1	"dated"
1	uses Central Library
1	Central library easy to locate compared to Sexton
2	Central Library - coffee shop
1	Central Library - community space

The most common theme in the responses was the desire for individual quiet spaces for both faculty and student purposes. There were also several mentions of the Central Library – the coffee shop, easy location, study pods and the community space.

Responses by Mechanical Engineering faculty indicated an interest in having the library provide new technologies such as VR or makerspaces, as well as specific technology that could be checked out of the library such as a data acquisition board, technology kit and multimeters.

A faculty member from Architecture noted that having a large-format book scanner, similar to the one at the Canadian Centre for Architecture, would appeal to Architecture needs. See above for more individual responses.

Recommendations

- Ensure new/redesigned spaces have individual quiet study areas.
- Design new library spaces that appeal to faculty (as the Central Library does) (i.e., open spaces, coffee shop, conducive to meeting with students and colleagues).
- See previous recommendations regarding VR (Q4) and Arduino (Q2).
- Investigate other hardware loan requests.

9. In the event of a library space redesign, would you be willing to meet with us again to provide further input?

Every respondent indicated that they would be willing to provide further input.

Three faculty members further supported having space that works for students such as group workspace and open design.

10. Is there anything else you would like to tell us today?

This question was added to provide an open-ended opportunity for participants to raise any issues related to the Libraries. One faculty member was concerned with the lack of community space in the Sexton Library, and another repeated their recommendation that there be “open space” in the library design, otherwise it appears depressing.

One faculty member in Electrical & Computer Engineering suggested that a librarian present a talk about services for faculty at a departmental meeting, and to provide in-class research instruction and promote what libraries can do for graduate students and with capstone and design projects.

An Architecture faculty member enjoyed the use of thesis binding services. Brightspace issues were raised by one participant, while another stated they had not been aware that Brightspace was a library service.

A Civil and Engineering faculty member was happy with resources on the library website but otherwise found the website “chaotic”. They also had issues with the RefWorks citation management software and wanted a simplified search tool.

One participant mentioned the heat of the library in the summer and that the blinds rattle and felt these issues deterred students from using the space. Another felt that students lacked awareness of the print collection. One mentioned they were pleased there was a library on the Sexton Campus.

Finally, one participant stated, “I appreciate you are listening to the needs from (sic) users.”

Prepared by:

Linda Bedwell, Coordinator of Assessment

& Liz McElroy, Sexton Library Intern

December 2021

On behalf of the Sexton Space Assessment Team:

Sarah Jane Dooley, Reference Coordinator & Liaison Librarian for Engineering

Michelle Paon, Associate Dean Resources and Head of the Sexton Design & Technology Library

Amanda Sparks, Manager, Library Services, Sexton Library

Mick Bottom, Manager of Services, Support & Training

Marc Comeau, Director Academic Technology Services

Sexton Space Assessment: Faculty Interviews

- Remind participant of purpose of the interview. (Original invitation is attached.)
- Have participant sign the consent form (attached).

Fill in ahead of time, if possible:

Department: _____ # Undergrad courses taught (typical year): _____

Position: _____ # Grad courses taught (typical year): _____

Years as faculty at Dal: _____

- Turn on recorder and state number on interview form.

QUESTIONS

1. Think back to recent assignments you have given your students. What specialized software programs were required to complete these assignments? [Pause for response.] [Examples are: AutoCAD, MATLAB, Solid Edge] Are these programs readily available in labs or learning commons on campus? [Pause for response.] (If not already answered): At which locations?
2. What other technologies or hardware were required? Are these readily available in labs or learning commons on campus? At which locations?
3. How about support services? Is specialized help for the programs and technologies required for these assignments readily available on campus?
4. Now think to the future. What specialized technologies (programs, equipment, support services) do you anticipate will be required for assignments? Are these currently available on campus and at which locations?

Appendix A

5. Now think about your own teaching and scholarship. What specialized technologies do you require currently? Are these readily available on campus? At which locations?

6. In the future, what specialized technologies do you think you will require for your teaching and research? Are these currently available on campus and at which locations?

7. How often do you visit the Sexton library and for what purposes? (If never, why not?)

8. What changes would the library have to make for you to spend more time there?

9. In the event of a library space redesign, would you be willing to meet with us again to provide further input?

10. Is there anything else you would like to tell us today?

Copy of Invitation:

Dear Sexton faculty member,

In the past week, you will have received an email (see below), inviting you to participate in faculty interviews related to the Sexton Library. Your name has come to my attention as a long-time supporter of the library and hence as someone who may be interested in providing us with an interview. We will begin the interviews in the next few days and would like to confirm whether you would be available to meet between April 16th - May 3rd. If there is a date outside of the stated range that would be more suitable for you, please let us know in the event that we may be able to accommodate it. This meeting would provide an opportunity for you to provide input on your present and future needs related to the Sexton Library's spaces, technology, services, and resources.

Please contact Sarah Jane Dooley (sdooley@dal.ca) to confirm your availability, after which an interviewer will contact you to arrange a meeting time in your office. We look forward to hearing from you!

Best wishes,

Michelle Paon
Interim Head, Sexton Library

and on behalf of Sexton space assessment team members:
Sarah Jane Dooley, Amanda Sparks, Gina Coates, Brian Lesser, and Linda Bedwell

The Dalhousie Libraries are seeking your assistance with the Sexton Library space assessment, to ensure that we are doing our best to meet your present needs and to identify potential future needs related to spaces, technology, resources, and services. As a follow-up to concerns expressed recently about the Sexton Library space, we would like to conduct interviews with faculty on the Sexton Campus during the months of April and May. We invite you to participate in a short 30min interview, to take place in your office at a time that is convenient for you. Your interview responses will be held in confidence and no personal identifying information will be included in our reports. We appreciate your assistance with this effort.

To schedule an interview or if you have any questions about the Sexton Library, please send an email ASAP, but no later than Friday, April 12th to:

Michelle Paon (Michelle.Paon@dal.ca)

Appendix A

Interim Head, Sexton Library and Associate University Librarian, Resources

If you have any questions about the Sexton Library space assessment or library assessment initiatives in general, please contact Linda Bedwell, Dal Libraries Coordinator of Assessment, at [LBedwell@dal.ca]LBedwell@dal.ca

Thank you,

Michelle

Michelle Paon, BSc, MLIS
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Appendix A

Consent Form

Sexton Space Assessment - Faculty Interviews

Dalhousie Libraries

By participating in this interview I understand that my responses will be kept anonymous and will be recorded through note-taking and a digital audio recorder. The audio recording will be deleted immediately following transcription. My participation is completely voluntary and I may opt out at any time.

No personal identifying information will be included in the assessment project final report. This report will be posted to the Dal Libraries' website and I can request a copy to be delivered to me by email.

(Signature)

Copy of report? Yes / No

Email address (if yes):