

THE FORUM

envisioning the future of A&AA

The Forum is an exchange. It embodies the philosophy of A&AA, and generates well-rounded thinkers from across all disciplines. The Forum is also a place. With cutting edge tools, comfortable spaces, and a clean environment, it becomes a place for students to gather and share their vision.

The primary goal of the School of Architecture and Allied Arts is to develop students who improve the human environment, and this mission can be realized by integrating the departments more comprehensively. The exchange of knowledge between each department within A&AA bridges gaps. Facilitated through interdisciplinary classes and projects driven by student groups, The Forum fortifies this collaboration. Imagine a design studio that enrolls planning and architecture students alike, a non-profit management course that reaches out to digital arts majors for design lessons, or a class that challenges historic preservationists to consider product design.

How can this concept be taken further? A&AA's collaborative philosophy should extend to all departments at the University of Oregon. Furthermore, A&AA should strive to interact more with other universities as well as professionals and experts. How can we achieve this?

The A&AA school should build a Forum.



RESEARCH

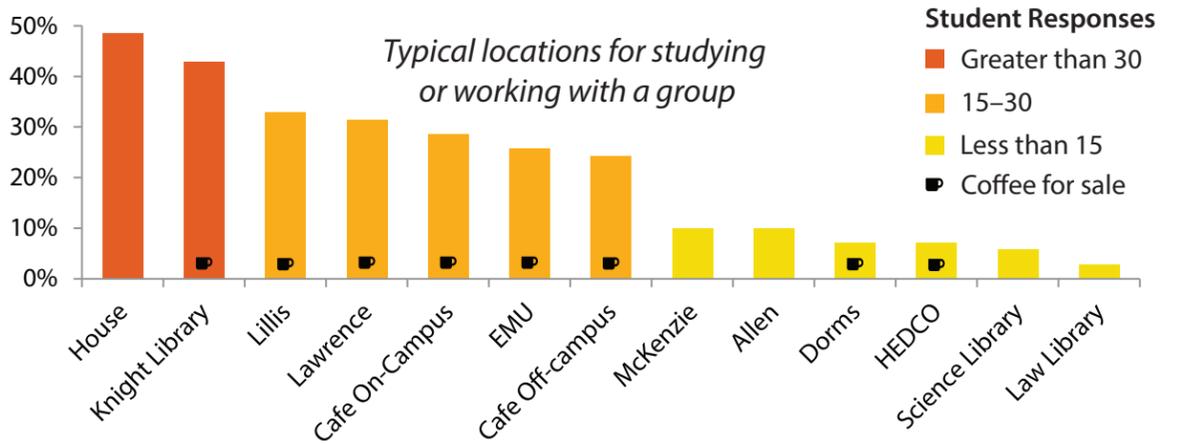
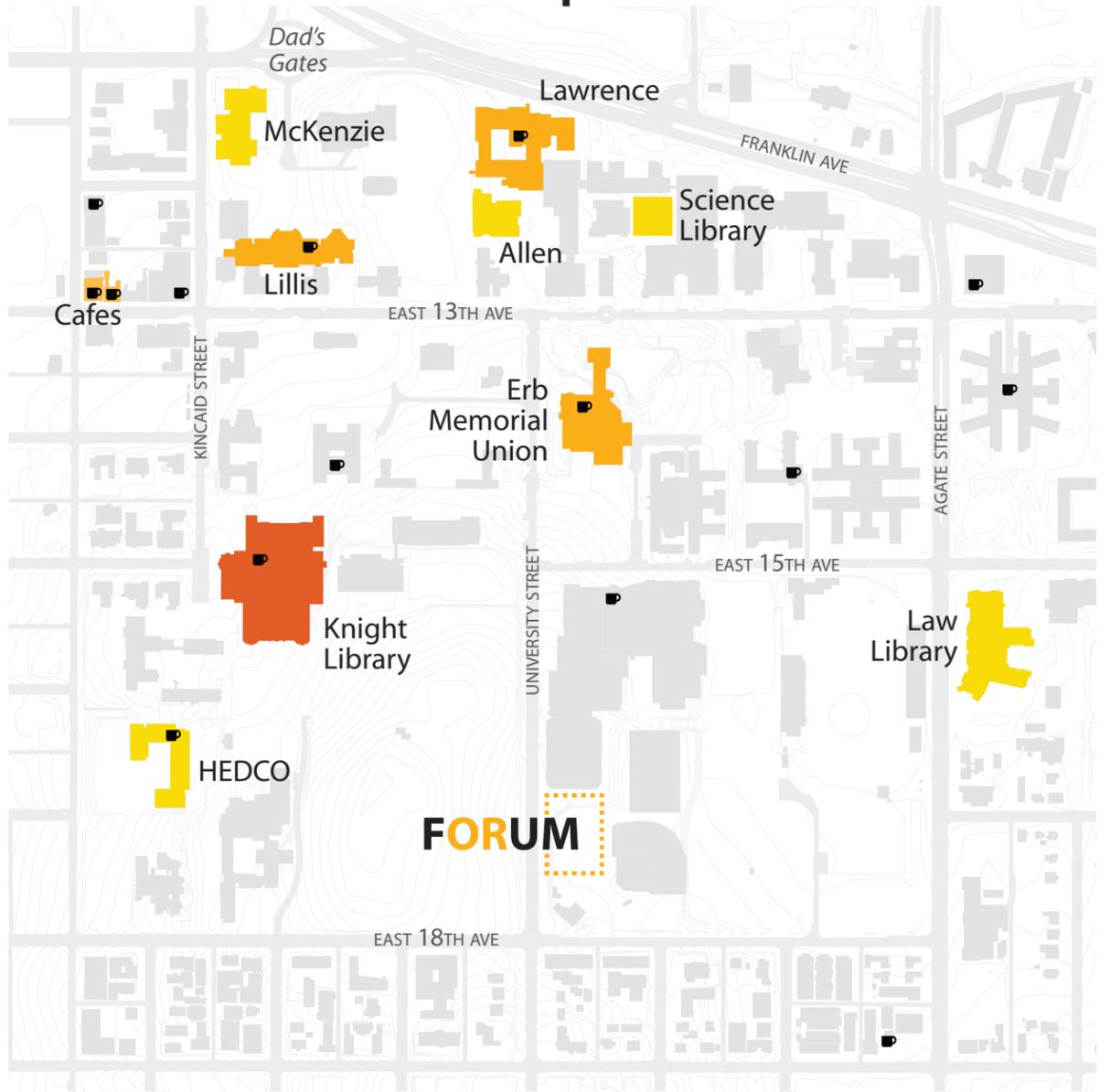
It is critical that the Forum is built with a solid understanding of how current students work together in groups.

We surveyed 70 students from a variety of majors to find out where, how, and why they work together. We also asked what they like and dislike about existing spaces available to work on campus, and what things they need to effectively work together.

Some of our most important findings include:

- 89% of students surveyed have **at least one group project assigned per term**, and more than one third of students have 2 to 5 group projects per term.
- Top rated places to meet with groups, on or off campus, have **access to coffee** in the same building.
- The proposed site for The Forum fills an obvious **dead-zone on campus** where no student work seems to take place.

Where collaboration takes place



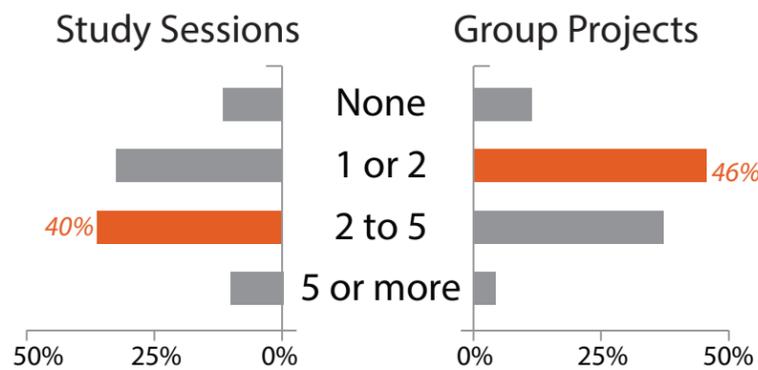
Beans of Unity



There is prime opportunity for creating a gathering space reminiscent of the Hearth at an under utilized entrance to campus.

Teamwork makes the dream work

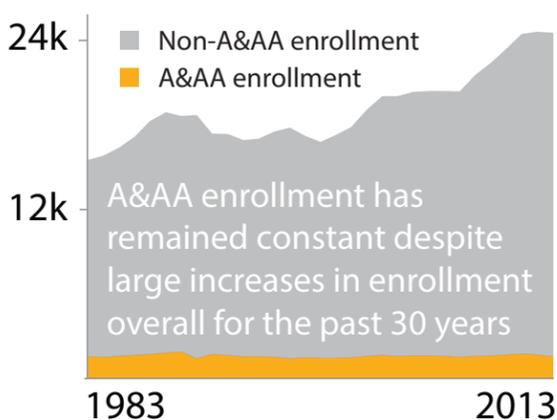
Opportunities for group work in an average term



Working in groups is a key component of the UO curriculum. A huge volume of projects and exams creates a massive demand for spaces that students can use together for various purposes.

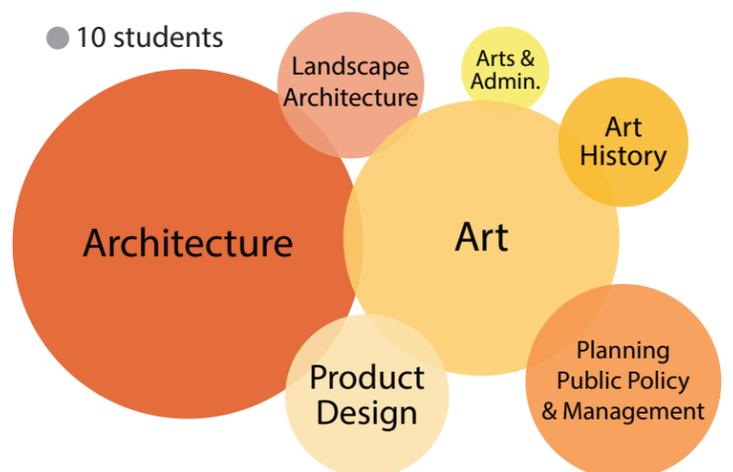
A&AA over time¹

Thousands of students



Diverse set of skills¹

The School of Architecture and Allied Arts includes a wide variety of departments and majors both big and small. As A&AA seeks to grow, the school must consult the primary users of the Forum to understand the tools that different departments need to operate.



¹Fall term enrollment for students' first major. Courtesy of UO Institutional Research

THE BUILDING

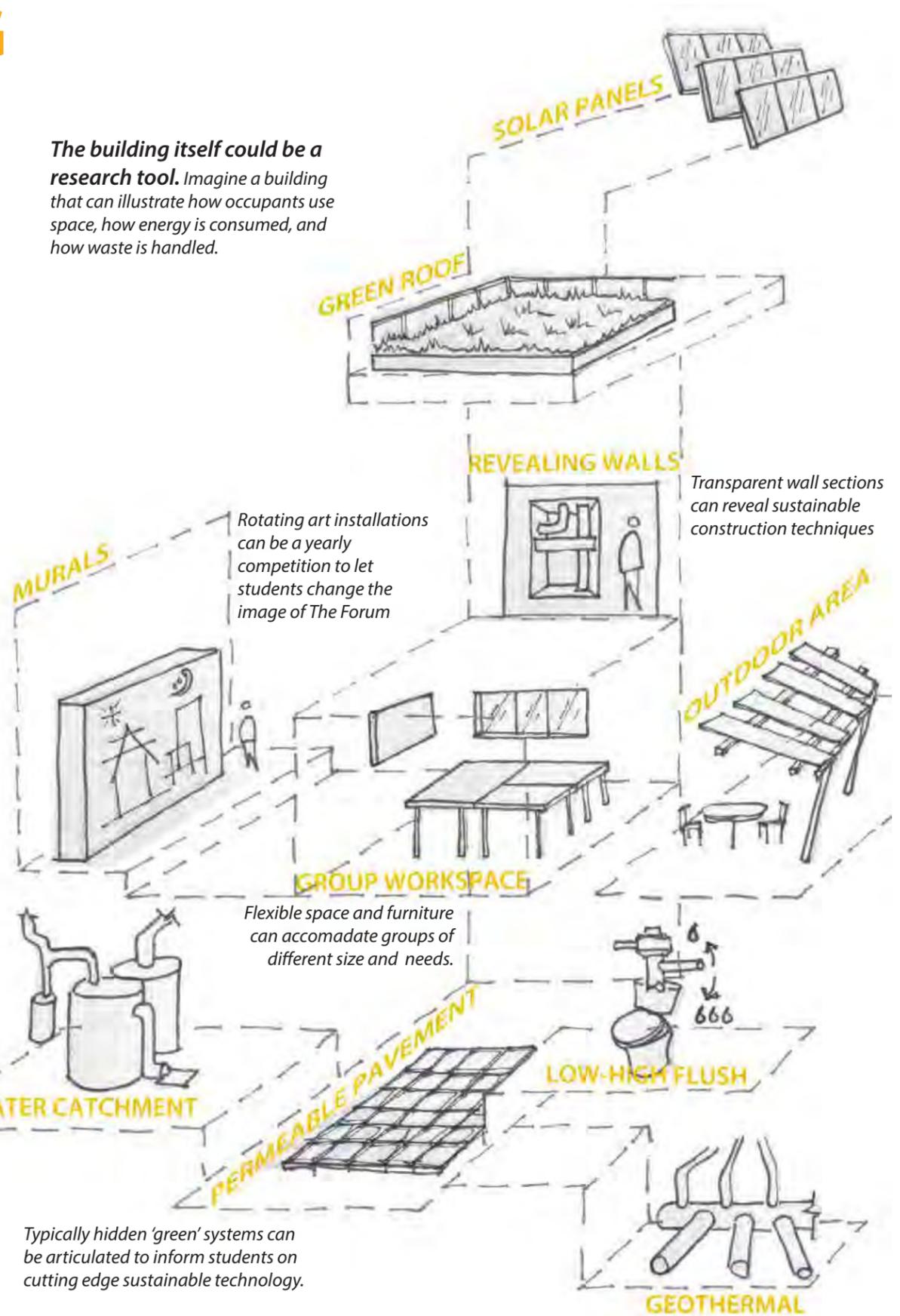
The Forum is a place for exchange. It is a space that reinforces the benefits of a collaborative education. Large tables and whiteboards, ample daylight, and varying levels of privacy are all desired elements according to our survey.

The Forum is also a place for display. The building should showcase student work at every possible chance, taking full advantage of all vertical surfaces to allow students to make an imprint on the space.

It can display technologies and ideas that are taught at the A&AA school as well. Water catchment, PV arrays, and other 'green' systems can demonstrate the School's philosophy to students.

To this end, LEED Platinum certification is a must in order to ensure that students comprehend the full scope of the school's mission.

The building itself could be a research tool. Imagine a building that can illustrate how occupants use space, how energy is consumed, and how waste is handled.



SUSTAINABILITY

- Solar panel array
- Green roof (accessible)
- Permeable pavement
- Lo-Hi flush toilets
- Rain catchment system
- Facade shading devices
- Heating from geothermal
- Air dryers in bathrooms

TOOLS FOR STUDENTS

- Large format scanners
- Laser cutter (more than two)
- 3D printers
- Material exchange area
- Dedicated GIS stations
- Abundant power outlets
- Whiteboards

WORK SPACES

- Large wood shop
- Communal tables
- Modular/moveable furniture
- Library
- Archive of past works
- Exhibition spaces
- Pin-up walls

Selected survey responses about students' ideal place to work on campus



A good study room needs natural light and a nice view outside. My favorite thing is when private rooms have doors or a balcony that opens to the outside.

On an upper floor if possible to avoid the noise of passersby. Remote, but still feels like it's connected to whatever building it's in.



Not too loud, food and drinks, being able to control the privacy of the space.

My ideal place would probably be set up a lot like a conference room with a big central table that has outlets. There would, ideally, also be a projector screen/display to go through study material together.



In some groups it's nice to be in a more public setting, when discussing or brainstorming.



THE FORUM

“Think I’ll lock up in the covered racks today, I’m going to be here all day and it looks like the weather might turn” Ricky thinks as he dismounts his bike.

On an uncharacteristically pleasant February day in Eugene, puffy white clouds are gathering overhead hinting at a stormy day to come. On his way to the door of The Forum, Ricky spots his friend Sarah, an art major, overseeing three landscape students helping her install her sculpture in the big rain garden by the door. He notices that the shiny twisted metal of the sculpture perfectly accents the natural curves of the garden.

“Hey Sarah!” Ricky shouts. Sarah looks up, smirking, and waves a grungy, dirt caked hand.

“That looks great, nice job! Stephen really picked the best spot in the garden for you.”

“Thanks! Got’ta love those landscape kids!” She laughs as her three helpers sigh.

Inside, Ricky hangs his jacket on the coat rack. “First thing’s first” he says to himself as he walks over to The Agora for a cup of coffee. In line he runs into Andrew, the planner in his project group.

“Hey Andy, how ya doing today? Did you get those traffic counts figured out? I want to start looking at where these benches are actually going to go.”

Andy, bleary eyed, replied “Yes, yes I did. But let me tell you it took all night. Want to take a look right now?”

The long communal tables are starting to fill up with the morning rush, and the two spot their other partner, Erin, an architecture major, sitting at one end. They all squeeze in and share greetings.

“You get that file together Andy?” she asks.

“Yeah and it took forever, you owe me big time!” Andy jeers. “I’m glad we’re all here though, we can skip our meeting later and get this out of the way right now. Check it out.”

They all gather around and start looking at what they have to work with. Andy tells Erin what Mr. Schlossberg wants from him, and then lends a few suggestions about what her building can do to help him.

“Well if Ricky’s benches are going to be installed,” Erin says, “this looks like the best spot to have people gather outside my building. Oh, and that helps you make that pedestrian-only street, Andy. Thoughts?” Everyone agrees, they share their files, and then plan on when to meet next.

“Great, now on to the fun stuff! Lets make this thing a reality.” Ricky says. By this time his coffee is empty and The Agora is in full swing as groups and friends all discuss their work. He leaves Andy and Erin to find a quieter place to design his product and discovers an empty alcove along the hall where he can use the projector and pin his sketches up. As Ricky settles into his work, the din of the hallway begins to fade into the music playing in his headphones. Outside the windows of the Forum it begins to rain.

