Birch-Welch-Roberts Classroom Space Improvement Project

2nd Priority
3rd Priority

Proposing Representatives
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Project Overview

The connection between student development, residence hall living, and academic success is widely known. With recent research at Iowa State University which indicates that students living in the residence halls perform better academically, it is readily apparent that the existence of an academic environment which fosters that success is necessary within the residence halls.

In addition to the community living environment, the existence of a classroom space within a residence hall can add a great deal to student experience and achievement. This project is intended to provide an academic environment available to students, faculty, and staff in an area of campus which currently does not provide the space in any form. More specifically, our hope is to transform a currently underutilized space into a highly visible and accessible classroom/study space which can be utilized by various faculty, staff, and students within the university.

This space will also be integrated very well with current facilities already available on campus. By making others at the university aware of the space, such as the academic success center, learning communities, and various colleges, we can work to fold the existence of this space into the daily operations of the university. Having this space will assist in the recruitment and retention of students, both to the residence halls, and also to the university as a whole. Consistently, many students state that they love the community which exists in the Richardson Court Association (RCA), but do not enjoy the walk to class nearly as much because of the distance to many of our larger academic areas on campus. Creating a classroom space within Old RCA would certainly contribute to great student satisfaction.

In addition, the existence of a computer lab in Roberts Hall, which is very near the space being proposed, would allow further connection between a lab setting and a discussion/presentation setting. Faculty members frequently utilize the computer lab, yet are forced to find an unintended space for non-computer specific instruction. The creation of this space would alleviate those difficulties.

Purpose for Project Expenditures

- **LCD Projector, A/V Equipment & Screen** - the growth and prevalence of instructional technology creates a necessity for these items as a service to faculty in order to accurately and effectively carry out their curriculum
- **Dry-Erase Boards** - Although technology has become very important to the classroom environment, the ability for faculty/staff to provide notes to students, as well as allow students to interact more fully in the classroom environment creates a need for these boards.
- **Surround-Sound System** - In order to provide accurate and quality sound so that students may take advantage of the audio/visual opportunities provided by current instruction methods, this system is very important.

Availability of Facility to Students

A. The space will be open and available for all current class times at Iowa State University

B. The space is large enough to hold classroom sizes up to approximately 50 students
C. Numerous student populations will benefit from this facility
   a. **Birch-Welch-Roberts Residents** - 488 students reside at Birch-Welch-Roberts Hall and would have access to the facility during classes which they may have in the space, as well as utilizing the space for study groups, group projects, etc. during non-class times.
   b. **Barton-Lyon-Freeman Residents** - Approximately 300 students reside in Barton, Lyon, and Freeman Halls. The proximity of the space to these halls makes access very easy and readily available.
   c. **All on and off-campus students** - access to the space would be available to all current ISU students through classroom reservations, as well as study and potential tutoring spaces.

D. **Innovation** - the creation of a dedicated classroom/academic environment is not new to the residence hall community. However, the existence of this environment within the Old RCA Community (approximately 1500 students) is new and well-deserved. In addition, the increased student traffic that will result from the Academic Success Center, which is scheduled for completion this year, will certainly increase the visibility and desirability of the space for faculty, staff, and students alike. This classroom space will also allow many first-year experience courses such as Psychology 131 and English 104/105 to move into a suitable location within the living environment of the students taking these courses. There will also be the opportunity to engage students in structured tutoring sessions as a result of this space, as well as host Supplemental Instructions sections within the classroom for those courses which are highly attended by students and demand has increased.

**University Facility**
The location for the classroom space is 1270 Welch Hall. See Appendix A for a floor map and Appendix B for a room layout.

**Support and Maintenance**
If awarded the grant, the student representatives of the Birch-Welch-Roberts Hall Council have discussed and agreed to help maintain this facility when necessary. There is overwhelming support for this facility within the community, and student involvement would continue to be high in the installation and maintenance of the facility. In addition, the space is already maintained from a custodial standpoint through the Department of Residence. Electricity would be provided by the Department of Residence as well. In addition, there is significant student support financially for various components of this space so the cost would be a shared cost. The Birch-Welch-Roberts Hall Director is also working with the Department of Residence to bring in updated furniture and other facilities to improve the classroom environment beyond the technology requests being presented here.