

Of fish and forests: designing, operating, managing and governing a student led place of social learning

Greg Robertson

Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

greg.robertson@mq.edu.au

Despite the construction of Macquarie's new Library, which was designed to function as a Learning Commons, and the expansion of social spaces in the Hub complex, there is still unmet demand from students for places to sit, gather and work. Macquarie is presently engaged in the process of refurbishing parts of the old Library building to provide students with a range of different places as part of a research study that will inform the full redevelopment of the site in 2016.

Three different firms of Architects have been appointed to design three different spaces within the site. They will maintain a connection with the site for the duration of the study: observing how students interact with their space, consulting, and modifying it if needs be. Various groups that offer support services to students will trial new models of service delivery in the site. They, too, will be researching student response, consulting, and refining their programmes. A key principal of the project is to place students at the centre of all endeavours. This is ensured by the fact that the emerging Student Advisory Board will play a central role in the design, operation, management and governance of the site. Ostrom's (1990) approach to the management of common pool resources, and her model of social-ecological systems (Ostrom, 2009), will inform the various endeavours which underpin this research. This project reifies Macquarie's vision of enhancing the student experience by creating places which support them to engage with all aspects of campus life.