

University of Washington: Learning Space Assessment

Seattle, WA



The University of Washington (UW) is a public research university in Seattle, Washington. Founded in 1861, UW encompasses over 500 buildings with over 20 million square feet of space and has more than 45,000 students.

A UW faculty and staff task force was charged by the University Provost to guide a concise and comprehensive review of classroom needs in light of changing instructional methodologies. Vantage, ZGF Architects and Rickes Associates were brought in to conduct the study and make recommendations for defining opportunities for improved delivery of learning space options focused on supporting faculty and diverse pedagogical initiatives and enhancing student experience with integrated and appropriate technologies.

Aware of the vital role technology plays in the modern educational environment, the task force carefully examined UW's history of uneven technology-related funding, and the resulting backlog of deployment, replacement and maintenance that ensued.

To gather information for the assessment, the cross-functional task force and consultants:

- Evaluated current conditions and utilization rates for all the University's classrooms and learning spaces.
- Compared existing classrooms and learning spaces, technology and related institutional processes with UW's peer institutions.
- Provided structured recommendations to bring any noted issues into alignment with – or superior to – peer institutions within 5 – 7 years, and
- Developed a workable framework for refreshing and maintaining all campus technology.

The analysis was structured with four multi-day on-campus workshops supplemented with tours, facility and student surveys, follow-up conference calls and data exchanges.

Services:

- Strategic Planning
- Benchmarking and Peer Review
- Facilitated Workshops and Visioning Sessions
- Technology Program Development
- Standards Development

Technologies:

- IT Systems Selection and Management
- Audiovisual Presentation
- Videoconference & Distance Learning
- Interactive Classroom Technologies
- Lecture Capture
- Learning Management Systems
- Broadcast System Automation

Benefits:

- Defined the establishment of a Classroom Governance Committee to enhance coordination between learning environment stakeholders
- Identified the need to create departmental requirements and incentives to schedule courses during off-peak times
- Recommended allocation of regular funding for strategic technology and room renovations
- Uncovered cost saving opportunities by identifying obsolete and underused classrooms and removed them from service