Rachel Reid

June 15, 2011

The Student Center: Nucleus Café

The OHSU Student Center is a large, underutilized space. It has great potential to be a place where students feel comfortable to come and study, catch up/hang out with friends, or meet with professors or mentors. Yet, the only hour in the day that the Student Center’s chairs are filled is during lunchtime (12 – 1 pm).

The Nucleus Café suffers from lack of business during non-lunch time hours. The majority of students that come to eat lunch are the dental students, who have their break during this time. Yet, there are several other students on campus who have barely ever stepped foot into the building. From my observation, from 9 – 11 am, there were about 4 customers that stopped by for coffee. After 1 pm, the lunchtime crew cleared out, and there was once again, silence in the room with maybe two people sitting on their laptops.

The Nucleus Café could act as a desirable meeting place for students, but the environment is, obviously and unfortunately, not a comfortable space. This space is very cafeteria-like with bright lighting, uncomfortable seating, and has an eerie, silent sound. Though a negative attribute of the Student Center is the far off location, this could be minor, as students will often drive long distances to a comfortable coffee shop study spot. So why not try to imitate that desirable coffee shop vibe? Cozy sofas, warm lighting, good, calm music playing in the background, smells of fresh pastries filling the air could all help to create that environment. Separating the food space from the coffee shop space could help to break up that large, intimidating space as well. Serving coffee in large mugs, encouraging people to stay and drink their lattes there is always a good idea. And providing several kinds of outlets for cords for electronic devices is important as well.

Before changes are made, I think it would be important to survey the students about what they would like the space to be. After all, I am only one opinion and I am graduating. Before investing money in any project, you must see if it would be financially worth it!

Marketing surrounding a cozy coffee shop like this would be essential IF significant changes were made. It would be important for students to know that this space existed.