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Making Room for Moms: Advocating for a Lactation Space in the Library


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UNO LIBRARIES

Making Room for Moms: Advocating for a Lactation Space in the Library

Dr. Heidi Blackburn, STEM and Business Librarian
Joyce Neujahr, Director of Patron Services

Seeing the need

Women make up:

- 80% of the library workforce
- 56% of the student body in higher education
- 53% of the faculty, staff, and administration in public universities in the U.S.



Photo courtesy of University of Nebraska Communications 2018

- <https://www.bls.gov/cps/>
- <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372>
- <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Gender-RaceEthnicity-of/240488?cid=cp134>

Finding best practices

- Ask the moms to be! (Staff input)
- Read the literature – What are other institutions doing? What are industry leaders doing?
- Find an expert – UNO Gender and Sexuality Resource Center director was armed with best practices
- Learn from mistakes – feedback about other campus lactation spaces that didn't quite work



Photo courtesy of University of Nebraska Communications 2018

Working with administration

- Budget crisis
- Cost savings vs efficiencies
- Who's on first?
- Navigating political waters



<https://vimeo.com/213149910>

Building awareness of the problem

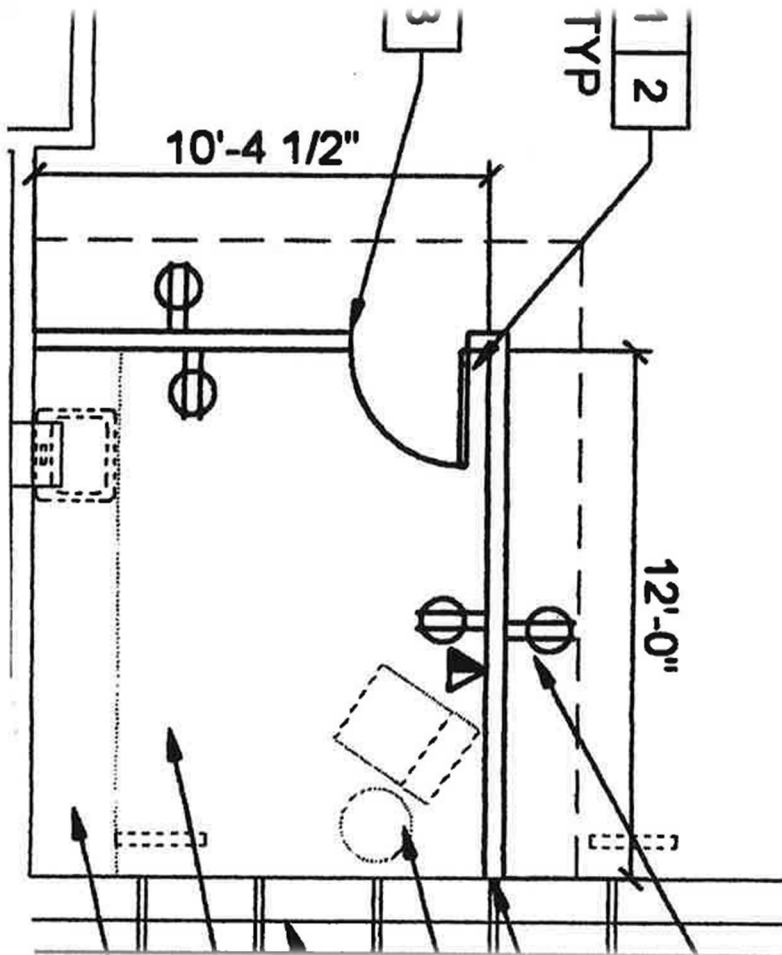
“I’m not the one who started the project. I’m just the loudest.” ~Heidi

- UNO Libraries begins to talk about needs, February 2017
- CCSW advocates with UNO’s Chancellor, June 2017
- Follow up, December 2017
- Follow up, March 2018
- Follow up, May 2018
- Plans arrive, Summer 2018
- Now taking bids, Fall 2018!



CCSW co-chairs with UNO Chancellor Gold (2018 CCSW luncheon)

Current status



Current status



Current status



Current status





Lessons learned

- Advocating with administration
 - Always be ready to speak up
 - Have your two-minute ask ready
- “Women’s problems are everyone’s problems”
 - How do I explain that my cause is your cause?
- What is the long game?
 - Are you prepared to ask for a month? A year?
 - How is this serving your patrons in the end?

Lessons learned

- Practical amenities
 - Sink for cleaning supplies
 - Refrigerator (pros and cons)
- Lock on the door
 - We have an online booking system
 - Key will be checked out at the main service desk
- Signage
 - Lactation room or Mother's room?





Lessons learned

- Complete individual privacy
 - Communal space for moms who want to be in the company of other mothers while pumping
- Ergonomically designed furniture
 - Nursing is different than pumping
- Furniture that is easily cleaned from spills
- Functional yet stylish ambiance
 - Invites mothers to decompress and recharge
 - Allows them to return to their work feeling energized, appreciated and productive

We are including:

- Changing table
- Chair, footrest, side table
- Baby wipes, paper towels, hand sanitizer, tissues
- New parent books, magazines
- Small children table and chairs
- Children books and games
- Additional seating for two more adults or Mom and child(ren)
- Help button to service desk
- Dimmable lighting
- Ceiling light/fan
- Noise reduction
- Art work
- Whiteboard for Moms to leave messages to each other
- Cork board to pin a picture of your baby up
- Mirror
- Natural light with frosted glass



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