

Creating Community Through Creative Communities

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Introduction

Through this poster we will show how the inclusion of a maker space in a residence hall benefits the campus community by providing a safe inclusive space for students, faculty, and staff to build connections with a focus on best practices for student engagement and program growth.

Extended Abstract

Seeing a need to have a space for students to express themselves through creative outlets, the University of Arkansas built the Adohi Creative Community as part of the Adohi Residence Hall project in 2019. Adohi Residence Hall is the first residence hall ever to use a mass timber structural system and cross laminated timber, truly making it one-of-a-kind. This innovation in construction and inclusion of the Creative Community was an intentional effort to enhance the experience of our students with a focus on providing a safe space for students, faculty, and staff to build connections.

The Creative Community was originally intended to be available only to the students living in our Honeycomb Neighborhood, the Adohi Hall complex and the adjacent residential community, Pomfret Hall which have a combined population of approximately 1,600 students. However, the needs of our campus community changed with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Fig. 1 shows how our on-campus population reduced drastically, and safety regulations limited the opportunities for community members to socially engage.

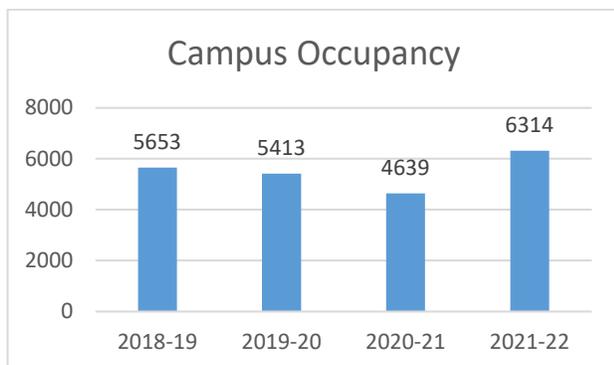


Fig.1 Residence Hall Occupancy

This gave us cause to reassess the access parameters, resulting in the decision to open the Creative Community to anyone living in campus housing which resulted in a

consistent increase of use.

The Creative Community employs 10 student workers, Creative Community Assistants (CCA). When this position began, its focus was of being an opportunity for first year students to begin their campus experience with a leadership position in our residence halls, thus it was marketed to the incoming class. A best practice learned from this process is the need to balance the staff with seasoned members to provide continuity and peer leadership with new staff, thus continuing to afford students an opportunity to be connected at a leadership level from the onset of their experience. However, a challenge of this process has been the recruitment cycle because of the need to align our process with the campus room selection and assignment process.

The peer led classes and events offered through the Creative Community, Fig. 2 & 3, has proved to be a best practice that has increased campus awareness and use of the Creative Community.

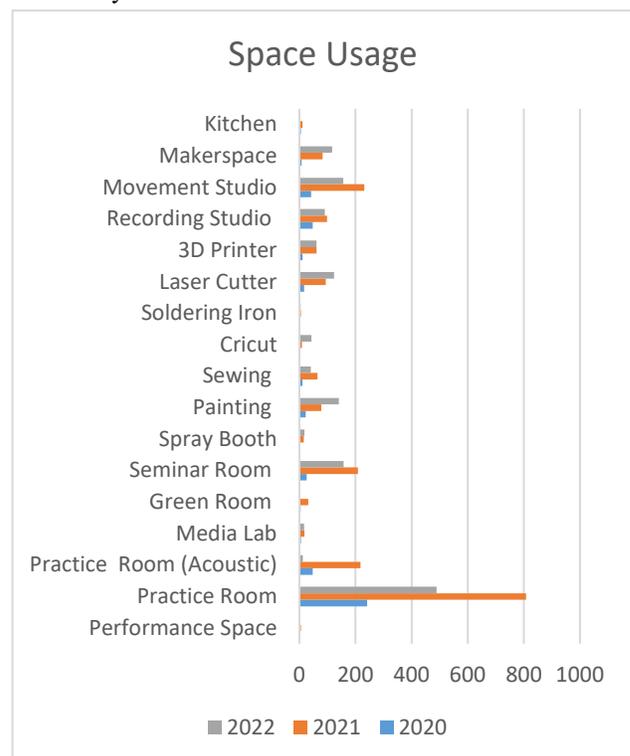


Fig.2 Creative Community Space Usage

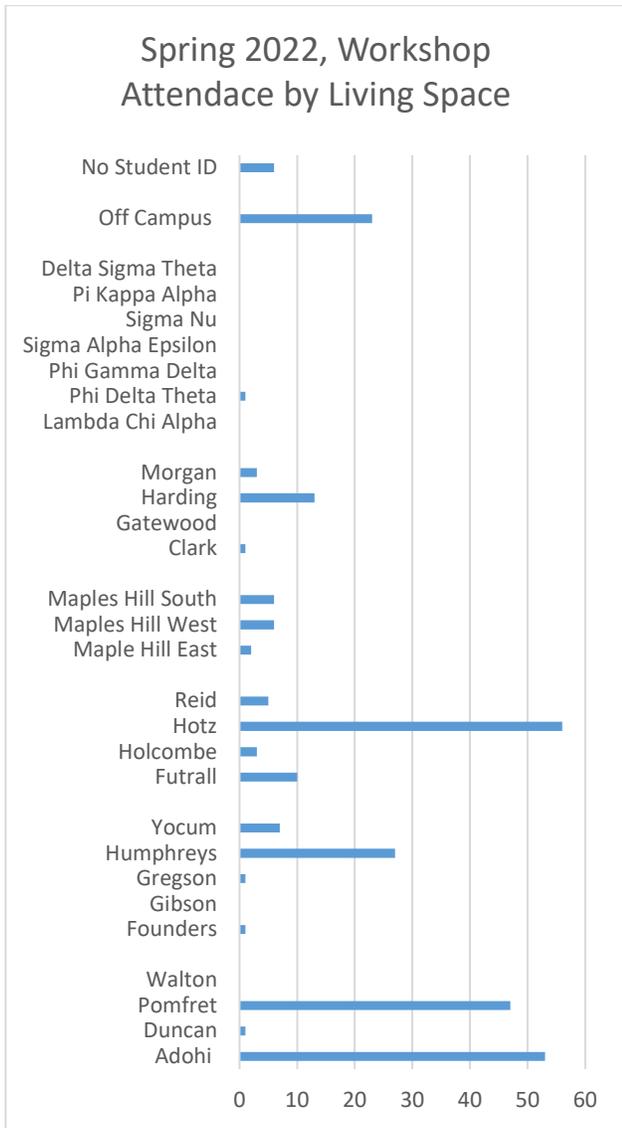


Fig. 3 Attendance of workshops by residential assignments

The final best practice we will feature is the creative community partnerships as seen in Table. 1. From the conception of this space, University Housing has been collaborating with the University Engineering, Music, and Art programs to ensure that the space will meet the needs of our students. Our partnerships have continued to grow with other campus entities including the Pat Walker Health Center with a focus on Wellness and self-care.

Table 1 Creative Community Partnerships

A	UARK Wellness
B	Living Learning Community
C	McMillon Innovation Studios
D	Architecture Studio
E	Professor in Residence

We know that for our students to be successful they need to feel connected, safe, and well. The Adohi Creative

Community is a place that strives to meet those needs through providing a space where Entrepreneurship, Resourcefulness, Innovation, and Community (E.R.I.C) are embraced.

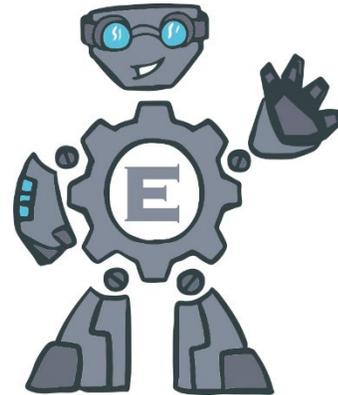


Fig. 4 E.R.I.C; the representative of the Adohi Creative Community