

Environmental Assessment of Alumni Hall at Marian University: Building Community Through Constructed Environments

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Our research sought to determine how Alumni Hall contributes to a sense of community at Marian University using a mixed methods approach. Using Gardner as a framework, we identified eight domains that represented different aspects and perceptions of community. Our results showed that the presence of Alumni Hall fosters and sustains community.

Marian University is a small, private, Franciscan university located in Indianapolis, Indiana. Alumni Hall is one of the newest buildings on campus and prior to its development, a communal space that met the needs of students, faculty, staff, and visitors did not exist. The creation of Alumni Hall marks a shift in institutional planning as it puts a focus on improving the sense of community on campus (R. Rodgers, personal communication, September 18, 2015).

As Bonfiglio (2004) stated, “campus buildings are . . . symbols of the ways that institutions of higher education see themselves in a cultural context” (p. 28). Thus, buildings such as Alumni Hall can reflect the ways in which a campus values the creation of a sense of community. By understanding what happens in Alumni Hall, attempts can be made to understand how this building contributes to a sense of community at Marian University. Given this information, our research focuses on how Alumni Hall contributes to a sense of community on campus through the following research questions:

1. How is Alumni Hall used?
2. In what ways does the use of this space contribute to a sense of community at Marian?
3. How is sense of community displayed in the constructed environment of Alumni Hall?

Literature Review

Sense of belonging refers to the human need “to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships” which involves frequent and pleasant interactions with others and a “stable and enduring framework of affective concern for each other’s welfare” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 497). The concept of sense of belonging has also been articulated as the “marginality and mattering” binary (Schlossberg, 1986). On this scale, a person experiencing marginality does not feel like they can fully be accepted by society, while a person experiencing mattering feels affirmed (or in some cases overwhelmed) in their importance by others (Schlossberg, 1986). This concept was envisioned to be used in institutions of higher education to measure the degree to which students felt like they mattered and how the campus environment affected their sense of belonging (Schlossberg, 1986).

The feeling of mattering, or sense of belonging, is known to be an important factor in student retention and success (Haufman, Richmond, Morrow, & Solomone, 2002). A strong sense of belonging within a community can lead to social learning, which increases meaning making and provides a context in which classroom information may be applied (Rullman & Harrington, 2014). Therefore, it is important for colleges to make sure that

they are creating environments that foster community building.

College Unions and Campus Community

Alumni Hall exhibits characteristics that are consistent with the definition of a college union. Historically, college unions represented the physical and symbolic backbone of the college community (Strange & Banning, 2015). The Association of College Unions International (ACUI) defined college unions as:

...the community center of the college, serving students, faculty, staff, alumni, and guests. By whatever form or name, a college union is an organization offering a variety of programs, activities, services, and facilities that, when taken together, represent a well-considered plan for the community life of the college (ACUI, 2015).

Alumni Hall does not have a central body of organized leadership and does not have a specific mission or purpose statement as many other organizations do. Therefore, Alumni Hall could not, in its current form, be considered an “organization” as is stated of college unions by ACUI (2015). However, the space currently meets all the other requirements for consideration as a college union. As further measures take place to centralize student services at Marian University, Alumni Hall will most likely come to resemble the definition even more closely (R. Rodgers, personal communication, 2015).

A key component of ACUI’s definition is the statement that the union is “for the campus community at large” (ACUI, 2015). A space that meets the needs of the entire community must take into account the wide variety of people as well as the various needs they have. As Banks, Hammond, and Hernandez (2014) stated, “[c]ollege unions are in a position to be a central point where institutions can promote inclusion and be a

welcoming place for numerous student populations” (p.13). Providing a space for students, faculty, staff, and visitors to meet is a step in the right direction if developing a sense of community is the end goal of an institution. Campus spaces where people are free to gather for whatever reasons they choose are critical to the development of community and the encouragement of relational learning (Bonfiglio, 2004).

ACUI’s (1996) characterization of college unions posited that unions are the “center of the college community life.” This assertion has been demonstrated in higher education literature that details the effects that the physical and constructed environments of college unions have on student behavior and engagement. College unions were the first campus facilities that were neither for academic or residential purposes. For this reason, college unions, including Alumni Hall, are often referred to as the “living room of campus” (Rouzer, De Sawal, & Yakboski, 2014; R. Rogers, personal communication, 2015). Rullman and Harrington (2014) noted the importance of this “living room” space on campus, saying that “Community created in college unions can help individuals apply what is learned in and beyond the classroom, while also experimenting with meaningful interaction and a deepening of understanding about self and others” (p. 43). In order to maximize the use of such a space, higher education scholars have begun to investigate “the influence of architecture and the physical campus on student behavior” in order to “create physical environments for learning and facilitate a sense of belonging for students” (Rullman & Harrington, 2014, p. 39).

College unions also have the capability of influencing how people feel and interact within the space (Strange & Banning, 2015). The concept of “environmental press” describes the way in which an environment

either discourages or encourages a certain type of behavior (Pace & Stern, 1958). When the needs of the participants within a constructed environment and the environmental press that is perceived by and impacts these participants are congruent, growth can occur (Strange & Banning, 2015). If the constructed environment within Alumni Hall contributes to environmental press toward community development, it is likely that a greater sense of community can be achieved. However, within constructed environments, there is much room for interpretation about the perceived impact of the space and the community. This interpretation is dependent upon the meaning people ascribe to various elements of the environment (Strange & Banning, 2015). Therefore, this study seeks to determine the meaning participants within Alumni Hall are making of the constructed environment within the space.

Framework

Gardner (1991) provided a palpable, encompassing outline for the concept of community and is the framework on which we built our study. He argued that there are ten “ingredients” to community: wholeness incorporating diversity; a reasonable base of shared values; caring, trust, and teamwork; effective internal communication; participation; affirmation; links beyond the community; developing of young people; a forward view; and institutional arrangements for community maintenance. Gardner (1991) described each of these ten “ingredients,” which have been cited as a framework for developing and organizing community, public administration, and education (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2004; Achinstein, 2002; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000). Each ingredient is summarized below:

1. Wholeness incorporating diversity refers to valuing diversity as more than a good. This requires deep tolerance and sympathy. Wholeness incorporating diversity is characterized by pluralism, “an open climate for dissent,” and the freedom for marginalized groups to both maintain their identities as well as share their perspective when developing larger community goals (Gardner, 1991, p. 16).

2. A reasonable base of shared values requires that members of the community see themselves as an “active defender” of these shared values, giving them a sense of shared social purpose (Gardner, 1991, p. 17). These values should be exemplified, not preached (Gardner, 1991).

3. Caring, trust, and teamwork posits that a good community will create a sense of belonging and community identity through a spirit of mutual responsibility and respect for individual differences. Tasks must be shared, the community should have a variety of bonding experiences, and all “sub-groups and individuals” must feel that they are fully accepted (Gardner, 1991, p. 18).

4. Effective internal communication encompasses open forums or spaces for “public talk” as well as a feeling of freedom to express dissent, which is facilitated by a community common language (Gardner, 1991, p. 20).

5. Participation in the community includes voting, speaking out in public meetings, volunteering, and bringing up the youth with a sense of community responsibility (Gardner, 1991).

6. Affirmation requires that the community face its flaws, tolerate criticism received from individuals both inside and outside the community, and possess confidence in itself (Gardner, 1991).

7. Links beyond the community

refers to the impossibility for smaller communities to survive without linkages to a larger framework; these linkages are often formed by multiple representatives in power within the community reaching out (Gardner, 1991).

8. Developing of young people seeks to maintain the vitality of the community by enabling the young members of the community to develop fully as well as preparing these young members to preserve a common heritage by instilling shared values and commitments to shared purposes, often done through volunteering and intern experiences (Gardner, 1991).

9. A forward view posits that a healthy community has an idea of where it wants to go and what it might become, created through planning commissions, institutional effort, and continuous research that is relevant to the future of the community (Gardner, 1991)

10. Institutional arrangements for community maintenance are predominantly provided by a system of governance, which could include a board of trustees, a director or staff, or volunteer committees. This government must act as an instrument of the community in which the community actively participates; this system must earn the trust and respect of the community (Gardner, 1991).

These ten elements provide a comprehensive view of the concept of community. The “ingredients” compose the framework that informs the following methods and data analysis.

Methodology

In our study, we used a qualitative case study approach to assess how Alumni Hall contributes to participants’ sense of community. Using a case study design provided us with the opportunity to incorporate various qualitative methods in obtaining our data. Our case study design allowed us to uncover emergent themes in the data rather than test a predetermined theory (Schuh & Upcraft, 2001). We understand that there are multiple social constructions of community. The qualitative aspects of our research provided insight as to how those various aspects of community manifest within Alumni Hall (Mertens, 2014).

Methods

Our study employed a variety of methods in order to construct a thick description of Alumni Hall’s environment (Merriam, 1988). We used a questionnaire to gather demographic and usage information about the environment. The questionnaires were administered on tablets, and the data was stored in Qualtrics, an online survey software. We employed participant observation as a means to gain a deeper understanding of the activities and interactions that take place within Alumni Hall. The on-site interviews allowed us to gain a deeper perspective of people’s experiences in and perceptions of Alumni Hall. The interview questions were developed in an attempt to gain insight about the perceptions of community based on Gardner’s ten characteristics of community (1991). Our aim was to boil down the ten characteristics into five questions that would give participants the opportunity to discuss the various pillars of Gardner’s framework such as shared values,

incorporation of diversity, a forward view, and institutional arrangements. With this design, we pieced together information from interviews in order to give more context to what we observed as participants in the space. All data collection processes were approved through IRB.

Collection of data for our study spanned a two-week period, during which pairs from our research team spent two-hour blocks of time administering the questionnaire, observing the space, and conducting brief on-site interviews with participants in Alumni Hall. Convenience sampling was used in both the observational and questionnaire phases of data collection since we could not control who would be in the space at the times we chose to observe and administer questionnaires (Mertens, 2014).

Data Analysis

After we collected our data, we used consensual qualitative data analysis methods, as outlined in the process of Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR), to derive meaning from our qualitative data (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). This method suited our study because our research design fit within the core components of CQR (Hill et. al, 1997). Although our study employed the use of mixed methods to some degree, the quantitative data did not shed light on the stories of community as it was perceived in Alumni Hall by its patrons. The stories that were told through our observations and interviews helped us understand the experiences that participants in Alumni Hall have in developing a sense of community at Marian University. Quantitative data was important as we attempted to construct an accurate description of the environment, including the people who use the space to determine what level of structural diversity existed in this environment. As structural diversity is a key component of any campus climate, it was critical that this be assessed

as part of our study (Hart & Fellabaum, 2008).

The central requirement of this method was that the group of researchers came to a consensus. Consensus ensures that multiple perspectives are considered, which is an important piece in approximating "truth" and "minimizing researcher bias" (Hill et. al., 1997). Our research group was able to come to a consensus, which was supported by an external auditor.

Results

After two weeks of collecting data, we conducted and transcribed twenty-six interviews with patrons of Alumni Hall. We observed Alumni Hall for a total of 15.5 hours, taking detailed field notes of the people, activities, and interactions that occurred in the space. Observations and interviews were conducted at various points during Alumni Hall's hours of operation (7:00am-12:00am) as to ensure that we could capture the full range of activity within the building. Finally, we were able to obtain 211 questionnaire responses in order to understand the demographic composition and general use of the space, as indicated by respondents.

After all the interviews were transcribed and the observations completed, we conducted data analysis using the CQR data analysis process outlined above (Hill et. al, 1997). The following domains were established during this consensus meeting: Perceptions of Diversity; Reasonable Base of Shared Values; Caring, Trust, and Teamwork; Effective Internal Communication; Participation and Links Beyond the Community; A Forward View; Institutional Arrangements; and Perceptions of Community. Some of the domains were chosen because of their relevance to Gardner's (1991) ten characteristics of community while others were born out of

what the data revealed as the study progressed. The tables in Appendix 1 outline the domains and respective core ideas as well as provide examples from our field notes and interviews in order to give a deeper description of the information we gained during our research. The quotes provided in each example reflect experiences from a variety of participants.

The eight domains that emerged during our data analysis reflect many of Gardner's ten characteristics of community (Gardner, 1991). We chose to incorporate them in our analysis as much as possible in order to evaluate this constructed environment against a basic framework of community. In instances where too few examples of behavior that applied to a specific characteristic were present during our observations and interviews (e.g. "Affirmation"), we were not able to include that characteristic as a domain. We blended two of the characteristics together to create Domain 5, "Participation and Links Beyond the Community" and "Developing Young People" as a core idea within this domain. In our data, the instances of developing of young people as described by Gardner (1991) appeared in relation to acts of participation and links beyond the community. Domain 8, "Perceptions of Community" emerged purely from the collected data. It encompasses instances in which participants spoke of the value of community within Alumni Hall without being prompted. See Appendix 1 for more details and examples about the domains and how examples from the interviews informed the formation of these domains. The following discussion is organized into three sections, each of which corresponds with our research questions.

How is Alumni Hall used?

Our first research question is addressed by both the quantitative findings gathered from the questionnaire as well as the qualitative information collected from interviews and observation. The participant responses to the questionnaire on their use of Alumni Hall mirrored much of the qualitative data gathered and can be divided into four usage categories: academic use, consumption of dining, social use, and use as an intermediary space. The quantitative findings lead our discussion of how Alumni Hall is used, as they are reflective of the self-reported use of the space. The qualitative data, containing self-reported use to a lesser extent as well as the observations, supplement the quantitative findings to create a robust understanding of use.

Alumni Hall functions as a space that supports academics. When identifying their use of Alumni Hall, participants overwhelmingly indicated on the questionnaire that they came to the space to study. Approximately two-thirds of participants reported their use of Alumni Hall as a study space. Every observation period yielded field notes describing students "working" or "studying." During an interview, a pair of students even suggested closing half of the family room portion to create a "silent study" in Alumni Hall "because the library is so enclosed and not very friendly."

The results of the questionnaire indicated that 27% of respondents used Alumni Hall for group meetings and an additional 13% for meeting with a professor or staff member. Students were observed studying for tests together and working on group projects in forty-seven instances. Additionally, of the 2% of participants who indicated that they were in the space for other purposes, one individual noted that they were in the space to tutor a peer. Six

instances of tutoring were observed in Alumni Hall to supplement this finding.

Consumption of dining services constitutes the largest percentage total of space use recorded by the questionnaire. 61% of participants indicated that they were patrons of Starbucks. The Starbucks in Alumni Hall seemed to encompass each of the four categories of space usage as a study space, social meeting space, and intermediary space. Observations also indicated that patrons of Starbucks, after having purchased their goods, had no intention of interacting in the space and exited Alumni Hall. Participants also reported use of the dining options Grille Works and Papa John's at 39%. The consumption of dining services was observed acting as a facilitator for meetings and social bonding, such as a student meeting their professor over Starbucks coffee or a social group gathering for dinner from Papa John's. To a lesser extent, the researchers observed individuals purchasing goods from Starbucks, Grille Works, and Papa John's and leaving soon after.

The social use of the space, similar to the use of Starbucks, permeates the other three categories. Participants were observed studying, eating, and bonding together between classes. 38% of respondents use Alumni Hall to hang out with friends. Students were observed laughing, talking, and generally spending time together in the space. The majority of the eight domains presented either focuses on social aspects and interaction or refers to a lack of communication as a threat to the continuance of a healthy community. These results are discussed in further detail in relation to the other research questions.

For the approximately 68% of resident and 32% of commuter respondents, Alumni Hall functions as an intermediary space. 37% of respondents noted that they used the space to wait between classes, and 30%

indicated that they simply wanted a place to get out of their room. Alumni Hall, in these instances, acts as an intermediary between physical spaces such as class and home, but it has the capability to be a space that mediates relationships through providing neutral ground for professors and staff to meet with students. This use, in combination with academic use, consumption of dining, and social use, provides a foundation for how Alumni Hall contributes to and displays a sense of community.

In what ways does the use of this space contribute to a sense of community at Marian?

Overall, our data revealed that Alumni Hall is a space that promotes many of the characteristics of community described by Gardner (1991). One of the most telling signs that Alumni Hall is perceived as a communal space is that without being prompted, seven of our participants mentioned that they thought Alumni Hall was a space that facilitated community building. Within Domain 4, Effective Internal Communication (see Table 4), there were thirty instances in observations and interviews that demonstrated how Alumni Hall is used as a common meeting ground, largely due to its central location on campus. Additionally, there were twenty-three instances of observed spontaneous positive interactions (see Table 4) within the space, indicating that Alumni Hall is a space conducive to unplanned as well as planned meetings. In addition to Alumni Hall's central location, our data showed that Starbucks was a facilitator in community building, as it offers space and products that bring constituents from all around campus into Alumni Hall. Marian University should continue to capitalize on the convenience and popularity of Alumni Hall and its amenities by using it as a space for intentional community-building programs.

Alumni Hall should also continue to be considered a premier location for programming and community building because the data, especially as it relates to the “caring, trust, and teamwork” domain (see Table 3), suggests that Alumni Hall is already an environment that is conducive to bonding, working in teams, and feeling comfortable and secure. The feelings of comfort and security were also prevalent in the “perceptions of community” domain (see Table 8). Alumni Hall was perceived as a transformational addition to campus in that it provides a new space that is a comfortable and secure location for campus community members to bond with other members of the Marian community. These components are essential in community building, as Gardner (1991) has described.

While the perceptions of Alumni Hall were overwhelmingly positive, when prompted, most participants articulated ways in which Alumni Hall could better serve the Marian University community. Most participants saw the potential Alumni Hall brought to campus community and provided ideas about how the space should be used and additional resources they would like to see within it. Participants were primarily interested in adding more of what Alumni Hall already offered to the campus community as opposed to removing or changing anything (see Table 6). This finding leads us to believe that the participants have a strong, forward view of future enhancements.

Participants’ perceptions of diversity within Alumni Hall also point to the communal nature of Alumni Hall. Participants perceived that people from different backgrounds and social groups interacted often in Alumni Hall. This perception is validated by the data we collected in our survey which showed that the structural diversity of the space mirrors that of the campus as a whole. This, at least

in part, demonstrates an aspect of Gardner’s description of what diversity looks like in a community. Our research did not address the ways in which marginalized groups are able to both maintain their identities and share their perspectives within Alumni Hall. This is an important aspect of Gardner’s (1991) concept of wholeness and should be considered in future assessments in order to examine whether and how patrons with marginalized identities are able to participate fully in the space.

Community was also exhibited in that participants in the interviews were able to identify the ways in which they saw the Franciscan values at work in Alumni Hall, either in physical embodiments of the values or in the behaviors displayed in the constructed environment of the space (see Table 2). Out of thirty-five data points that related to the “reasonable base of shared values” domain, twenty-four alluded to the existence of the Franciscan values within Alumni Hall. Responsible stewardship had the most notable presence within our data, as there were eighteen instances either observed or mentioned in interviews that referred to Alumni Hall’s commitment to sustainability as an enactment of the Franciscan values. Dignity of the individual was also perceived as prominent in the space, as it was mentioned five times as an important part of Alumni Hall’s constructed environment.

Although perceptions of diversity and shared values were generally positive, there were some indications that patrons of Alumni Hall had not considered their own perceptions of diversity or values in the space or acted in ways that may pose a threat to the maintenance of a welcoming and inclusive environment. This reality may pose a threat to both the “wholeness incorporating diversity” and “reasonable base of shared values” tenets of community, as described by Gardner (1991). Our data

revealed five instances of threats (e.g., racial, ethnic, gender) to “perceptions of diversity” (see Table 1). Two of these instances were related to students’ negative perceptions of “trans*” as an option for gender on our questionnaire. Further, there were many instances in which participants did not know the Franciscan values or could only list them partially. In order to maintain the patrons’ positive experiences in the space, Marian University should consider the ways in which it can leverage Alumni Hall as a space to provide educational programs around multicultural sensitivity while tying in the Franciscan values (namely, Dignity of the Individual) in order to promote their incorporation into the constructed environment of Alumni Hall and promote ideals of diversity and community on campus in general.

Community may face a further threat in Alumni Hall. Our data revealed that patrons of the space do not seem to have a clear idea about how to give feedback about their experiences. This may prove as a threat to both the internal communication and institutional arrangements in relation to Alumni Hall (Gardner, 1991). If Alumni Hall serves as an example for the community of Marian as a whole, there is evidence from our data to show that many members of the Marian community do not have a clear idea of whether or not their feedback would be heard or what outlets they have to provide their feedback about the environment of Alumni Hall (see Tables 4 and 7).

How is sense of community displayed in the constructed environment of Alumni Hall?

In response to our third and final research question, we primarily focus on the behaviors we observed within the space that suggested certain norms have evolved as this community has developed over the past

year. Consistent with the phenomenon of “environmental press,” change and growth can occur in an environment when the needs of the participants in the space and what the space provides to them align (Strange & Banning, 2015). Many participants said that before Alumni Hall was built, there was no space on campus where people could gather for reasons other than studying or attending class. Because Alumni Hall offers a space where various types of interactions can occur, it may contribute to the environmental press that either promotes or hinders community development. As the culture of Marian develops further, the physical as well as the social artifacts begin to provide guidance for those within the community regarding their behaviors and how they should interpret the behavior of others (Kuh & Hall, 1993). These behavioral artifacts were clearly visible within Alumni Hall and seemed to have an impact on the behaviors that were common among participants within the space.

The primary behavioral norms we noted were communal behaviors such as studying or working in groups, meetings both for formal and informal purposes, and non-academic or non-professional socialization. These behavioral norms primarily speak to the domains of “caring, trust, and teamwork” and “effective internal communication” (see Tables 3 and 4). Additionally, we noticed many instances during our observations of individuals recycling or using reusable cups. These instances fall under the second domain, “a reasonable base of shared values” (see Table 2), suggesting that there is a commitment to the shared value of Responsible Stewardship. Alumni Hall also provided an ideal location for students to mobilize their own campus initiatives. The data revealed five different student-driven initiatives during our period of data collection. These were observable acts by students to further

their own projects such as a Haiti backpack drive or a campaign to promote the use of reusable cups on campus. The convenience and popularity of the space made it an ideal environment to promote drives and collections, campus sustainability initiatives, and other student driven events that add value to the experience at Marian University. These commonly observed behaviors suggest that it is an expectation of students within this community to get involved and contribute in some way to the betterment of the community.

The last and perhaps most prominent behavioral norm noted throughout our research was expressions of “comfort and security” within the space, with a total of thirty-five instances in observations or interviews (see Table 3). Participants within the environment would often lounge, take their shoes off, and show other signs of relaxation and comfort such as laughing, sleeping, and demonstrating signs of physical affection. Often, participants within the space would also leave their belongings unattended as they went to get food, used the restroom, or greeted a friend or colleague. This suggested that a form of trust as well as a commitment to respect one another is shared among members of the community. These behavioral norms can communicate a lot of information both to usual participants within the space as well as to newcomers. In further research and examinations of this community or other similar environments, it would important to consider how certain behaviors may hold different meanings for different people.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is the possibility that participants in the interviews understood that we, as the researchers, were also observing them in the space. This may have led to some discomfort as we

approached participants for interviews. Moreover, we did not pilot our interview questions or our questionnaires, nor were we able to identify the interview participants to have them check our transcriptions or analysis for accuracy.

Finally, our research did not take into account the ways in which social identities affect participants’ experiences in Alumni Hall. Future studies of Alumni Hall should consider the climate of the space for groups of Marian students based on race, gender, sexuality, residential status, and grade level in order to get a complete understanding of the ways in which Alumni Hall contributes to the experiences of these students and to understand how the university can ensure that the space is benefitting students equitably across various social identities.

Recommendations

This preliminary study of Alumni Hall at Marian University indicated that Alumni Hall embodies most of the domains and characterizations of community as outlined by Gardner (1991). However, the study does leave lingering questions that should be considered for future research. First, future research on Alumni Hall should consider the perspectives of Marian University community members that do not use the space on a regular basis. As previously mentioned, our study did not consider the ways in which the intersectionality of identities affected community members’ experiences in Alumni Hall. Understanding these experiences is paramount in order for Marian University to maintain an environment that is accessible, comfortable, and affirming for all community members and should be an immediate focus for any continuing research in this space. Finally, it would be interesting for future research on Alumni Hall to consider the ways in which the addition of Alumni Hall to Marian

University's campus contributes to the success of students at the institution. This information could prove useful as Marian University continues to build new spaces for students on its campus in the near future.

This research could also be used as peer institutions seek to assess their community spaces, particularly college unions or student centers. As mentioned previously, ACUI states that these spaces must represent a "...well considered plan for the community life of the college" (ACUI, 2015). In order for this to be realized, administrators, staff, and other stakeholders responsible for providing opportunities for the formation of community in these spaces could consider this study as an example of how to go about assessing their spaces for community development.

Conclusion

Throughout our research, participant responses as well as our own observations indicated many ways Alumni Hall has helped to create and sustain community at Marian University. Some of our participants noted that before the construction of Alumni

Hall, there were few, if any, community spaces on campus. The addition of Alumni Hall to Marian University has proven valuable to the campus environment as it provides a space for community that previously did not exist on campus. It was not until the creation of Alumni Hall that many participants felt the benefit of having a centralized, open space on campus. As the plans for the additional two phases of centralized student services continue, this research would be beneficial in ensuring the development of environments that are open, welcoming, and supportive of a sense of community.

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Appendix 1

Table 1

Domain 1: Perceptions of Diversity

Core Idea	Number of Instances	Description
Existent	17	<p>Example from field notes during observations: <i>Participant: I mean, I guess just everyone coming together as a whole, like, not thinking of gender, race or anything like that and I guess everyone just like working together.</i> <i>Researcher: Ok. Do you see that happening here?</i> <i>Participant: Yeah, I see it a lot in Alumni Hall and the library and all around campus.</i></p>
Non-existent:	7	<p>Example from an interview response: <i>Researcher: So in what ways do you see people from diverse communities interacting in this space?</i> <i>Participant: I don't really see that much diversity in here. Um, pretty much see the same people with people they normally hang out with, I guess. Or I don't really pay attention. I'm just - I just come in here and sit by myself cause I don't really talk to anyone here, so I guess - I don't really pay attention to the people around me.</i></p>
Threat (offensive/destructive behavior and comments):	5	<p>Example from field notes during observations: <i>Researcher reports that there is a new group of people in the food court area who appear to be male athletes, and they chuckled at us having trans as an option on the survey.</i></p>

Note/Summary: For this domain, examples have been pulled from observations and interviews that collectively demonstrate the perception of the community felt within Alumni Hall. ·

Table 2
Domain 2: Reasonable Base of Shared Values

Core Idea	Number of Instances	Description
Existent	24	Example from an interview response: <i>Participant: Well, I guess, like, the Starbucks right now, they're doing like the reusable cups. So that's like being a responsible steward. That's part... That's part of it.</i>
Non-existent:	11	Example from an interview response: <i>Researcher: Thinking about Marian University and the Franciscan Values that come along with that, how do you see those values expressed or not expressed in Alumni Hall?</i> <i>Participant: Skip that.</i> <i>Researcher: Ok.</i> <i>Participant: Sorry.</i>
Threat	3	Example from field notes during observations: <i>Researcher observes a student who is offering to pay someone for writing a paper for them.</i>

Note/Summary: The examples above demonstrate instances in which participants have verbally expressed a commitment to the Franciscan values and how those values are enacted in this space.

Table 3
Domain 3: Caring, Trust, and Teamwork

Core Idea	Number of Instances	Description
Teamwork	17	<p>Example from an interview response: <i>Participant: I guess kind of like in a sense of like a support system I guess we always kind of support each other...it's kinda like pretty much open here in Alumni and a lot of people come with their friends and study so it's a lot of encouragement, I think, rather than in a library where you would be by yourself, you know, and it's quiet and there's no one saying "just keep going;" the girl I had here earlier with me, we try to encourage each other to stop talking so that we could get our homework done. So I think in that sense it—you gain dignity through realizing that you can study even in an environment like this with your friends and things.</i></p>
Bonding	26	<p>Example from an interview response: <i>Participant: I've seen my professors here which is kind of interesting. You see them in a—a classroom setting versus, like, this kind of setting and it's interesting. It makes it more, I guess, personal in a way.</i></p>
Comfort and Security	35	<p>Example from field notes during observations: <i>The student who was sitting with sunglasses and a hat on has now laid down on the orange couch. He took his shoes off and propped his feet up on the back of the couch while the rest of his body is lying face up on the seat of the couch. He is using his backpack as a pillow.</i></p>

Note/Summary: For this domain, the examples demonstrate a commitment the participants had to supporting and encouraging members of the community. This domain had the highest number of relative instances within interviews and observations.

Table 4
Domain 4: Effective Internal Communication

Core Idea	Number of Instances	Description
Spontaneous positive interactions	23	Example from field notes during observations: <i>Another person joins table closest to the main room; person pats on a chair and exclaims "Sit!" as she smiles at her friend who has now joined the group.</i>
Common meeting grounds	30	Example from an interview response: <i>Participant: I'm a business major and for business projects we have group projects a lot. And a lot of times in this space is where they all meet and come together...I know that some clubs hold meetings in here. Like I know Sophia club [Marian University's philosophy club] is holding an event in this space and like they welcome everyone.</i>
Threat (people not knowing who in the institution to talk to):	13	Example from an interview response: <i>Researcher: Do you know where you would go, like if you wanted to share that idea with someone, do you think you would be able to?</i> <i>Participant: Mhhmm</i> <i>Researcher: Do you know who you would go to?</i> <i>Participant: Um, I guess, like - You know, I don't know who I would go to. Who would I go to?</i>

Note/Summary: For this domain, examples have been pulled from observations and interviews to demonstrate various forms of established modes of communication within this environment. Namely, this environment is a good place for holding meetings as well as interacting with other community members either formally or informally. The threat within this domain indicates a lack of knowledge among community members about how to provide feedback and affect change within this environment.

Table 5
Domain 5: Participant and Links Beyond the Community

Core Idea	Number of Instances	Description
Student driven initiatives:	5	Example from an interview response: <i>Participant: One of my friends, one of my friends is in a sustainability group so, like, he's been working with Starbucks to make sure that the reusable cups are happening. So this is just one aspect of responsible stewardship, but it's kind of played out here.</i>
People outside of Marian participating in Alumni Hall	17	Example from an interview response: <i>Participant: Oh, when I come here it's usually for community events...you know, campus events, and there's always people in and out. Last week we were here for Trick-or-Treating. There were tons of kids and families and everyone was so welcoming, and it's not just a place for students to come. Obviously, we're not students. So, we picked this place cause we wanted to meet up and hadn't seen each other in a long time, and this is a central place. So we knew it would be a good place to stay and chat and feel comfortable and safe, and that's why we came here today!</i>
Developing young people	5	Example from an interview response: <i>Participant: Uh, so, I guess a good example is we have a mentor program over in [the medical school], and so whenever I meet with my mentee, this is the perfect place to come. You know, they have the Starbucks here, it's a common space for both of us. A lot of med school students live off campus, so it's a great way to just kinda keep in touch with people and touch base. It's convenient.</i>

Note/Summary: For this domain, examples have been pulled from interview responses to demonstrate the frequency with which participants in the space took a vested interest in the development or expansion of the community as well as interactions outside of the community.

Table 6
Domain 6: A Forward View

Core Idea	Number of Instances	Description
Changes	8	Example from an interview response: <i>Participant: If I had the ability to change anything...well, I don't know. I guess I would maybe have an area like sectioned off for... if somebody wanted to do more like quiet time or something, have it...or... sometimes they have these doors down or they'll separate the, you know, the room in half and I feel like I've heard lots of people enjoy that because like it's extra space to be quiet and another area to study besides the library...</i>
Neutral:	5	Example from an interview response: <i>Participant: I don't know that I would really change anything. I think it's serves its purpose rather well.</i>
Need for more	16	Example from an interview response: <i>Participant: I would probably make more, like, more options like this on campus. This is really the only option like this. Like if they made more buildings that are similar to this, it would be good.</i>

Note/Summary: For this domain, examples demonstrate the ways in which community members are seeking to alter the environment as time goes on. When community members did have suggestions for change, they were most often suggestions for additions to the space.

Table 7
Domain 7: Institutional Arrangements

Core Idea	Number of Instances	Description
Ensuring adaptability and maintenance of space	14	Example from field notes during observations: <i>The woman with the walkie-talkie has returned to view and is now speaking with a student about something, indicating that he needs to move. The woman moves some furniture and the student repositions himself a little toward the east.</i>
Threat (people not knowing who in the institution to talk to)	10	Example from an interview response: <i>Researcher: So do you know what the proper avenue would be to have that change...like how would you...?</i> <i>Participant: I have no clue how to do that, but I'm sure somebody would be...I can just go to a professor and ask them if they would know.</i>

Note/Summary: For this domain, examples demonstrate the commitment by the institution to the upkeep of this environment. Similar to the threat within the Domain 4, a potential threat noted mostly through participant responses is a lack of knowledge about how to communicate their feedback or concern regarding various components of the environment.

Table 8
Domain 8: Perceptions of Community

Core Idea	Number of Instances	Description
Physical	17	Example from an interview response: <i>Participant: I like all the bright colors, and the furniture is really comfortable, and the fact that there's outlets everywhere is super helpful cause I always have my iPad and computer and I have plenty of places to plug them in.</i>
Feeling	19	Example from an interview response: <i>Participant: I, personally, I'm a very big fan of coming here early in the morning. I think that especially on the weekends too, like Sunday mornings are like, that's prime time for this space to like—I feel that's the essence of this space. Because it's about, it's about studying and it kinda, it kinda just gives the feeling like, I am in a room that is like part of Marian, Marian University but it feels peaceful. And so I really like early in the mornings. Or like late at night, you know, right when everybody's trying to finish up all their stuff for the next day.</i>
Transformational Addition to Campus	9	Example from an interview response: <i>Participant: This is one way I have a community with people I don't live with...So, that has helped, I guess, the community, and I think it just brings people who don't live on campus and people who do live on campus together without it being like, "why are you in the re—" like, when I hang out in the residence halls, like, "Oh, I never see you, why are you here?" kind of thing. So here, it's just like normal for me to be here, it's not like weird. So, I think it's helped the community in that aspect.</i>

Note/Summary: For this domain, examples have been pulled from interview responses to demonstrate how participants expressed their own perceptions of the community within Alumni Hall. These perceptions were most often influenced by the physical components of the space, feelings the space elicited, and the perception that this environment has changed the overall environment on campus.