

Building Headcounts: An Observational Usage Study, December 2016

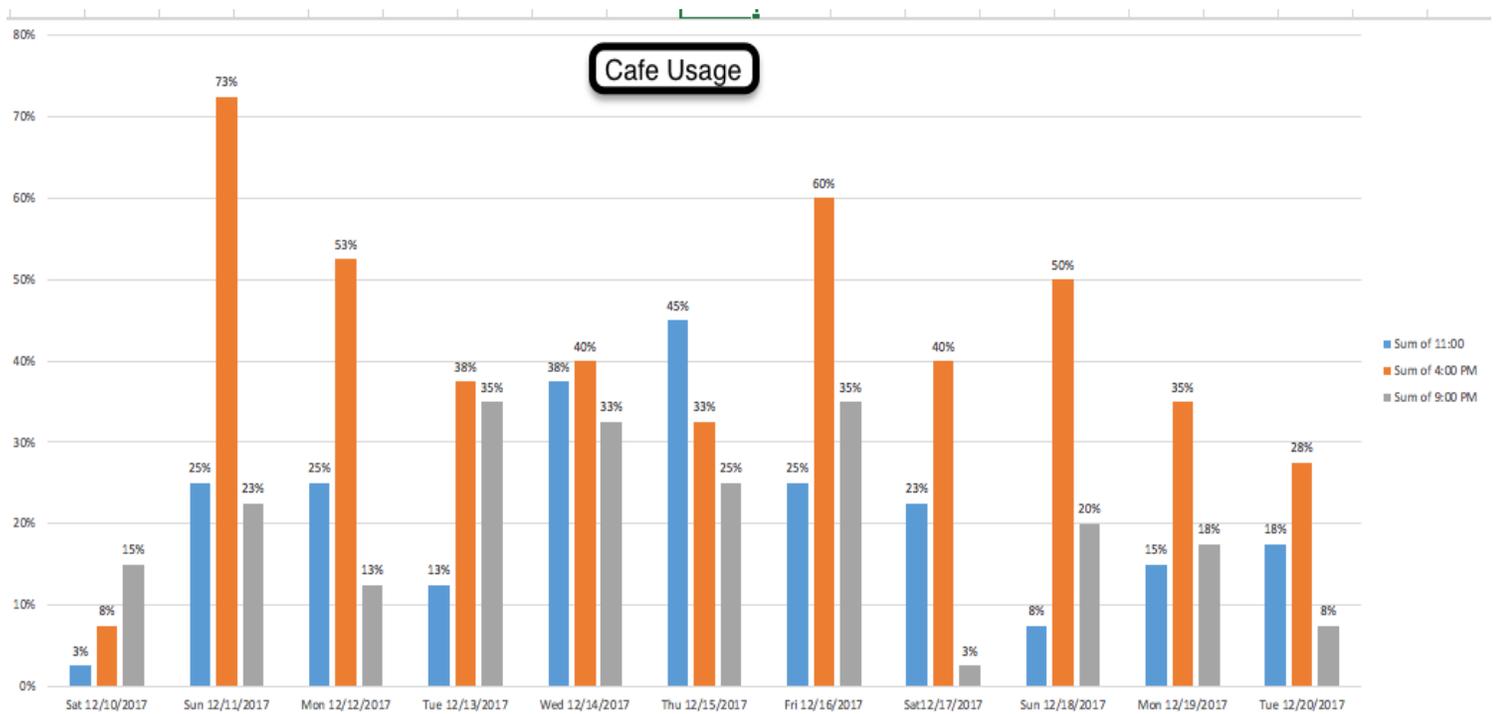
Days of the study: 11 days, end of the semester including finals period (December 10-20, 2016) at 11am, 4pm, and 9pm

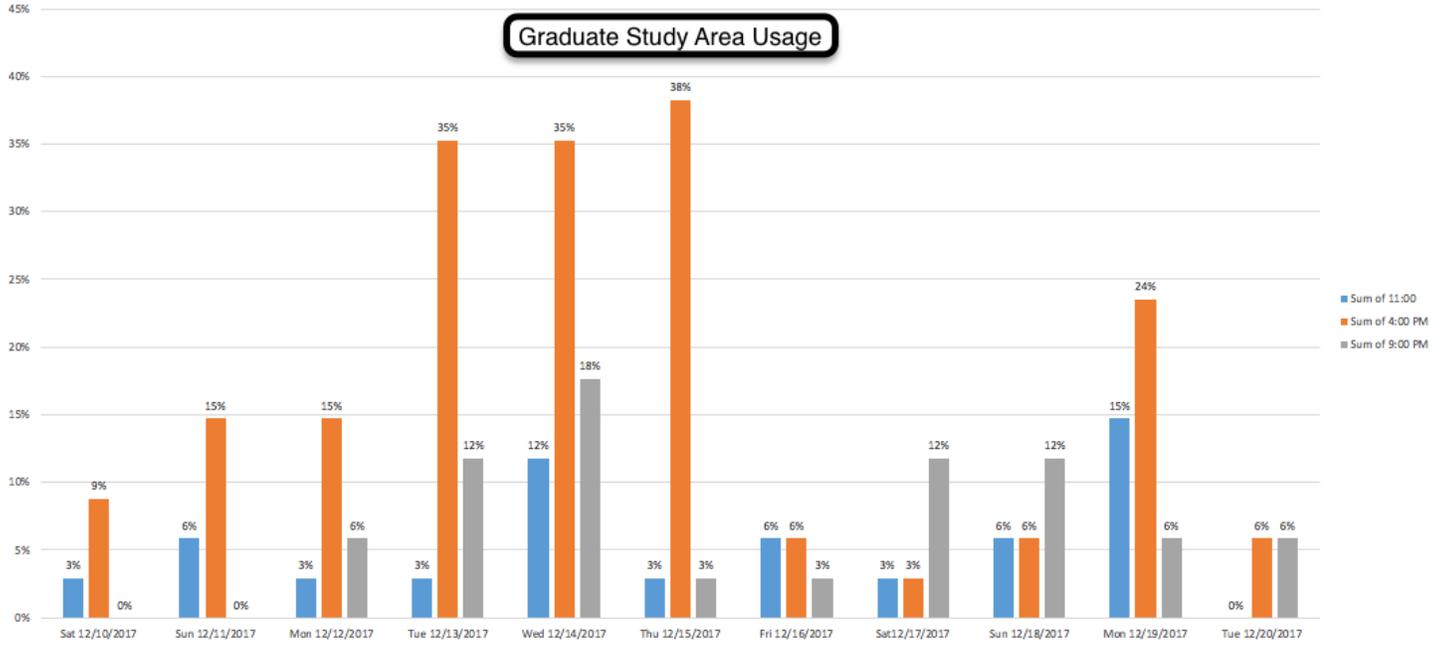
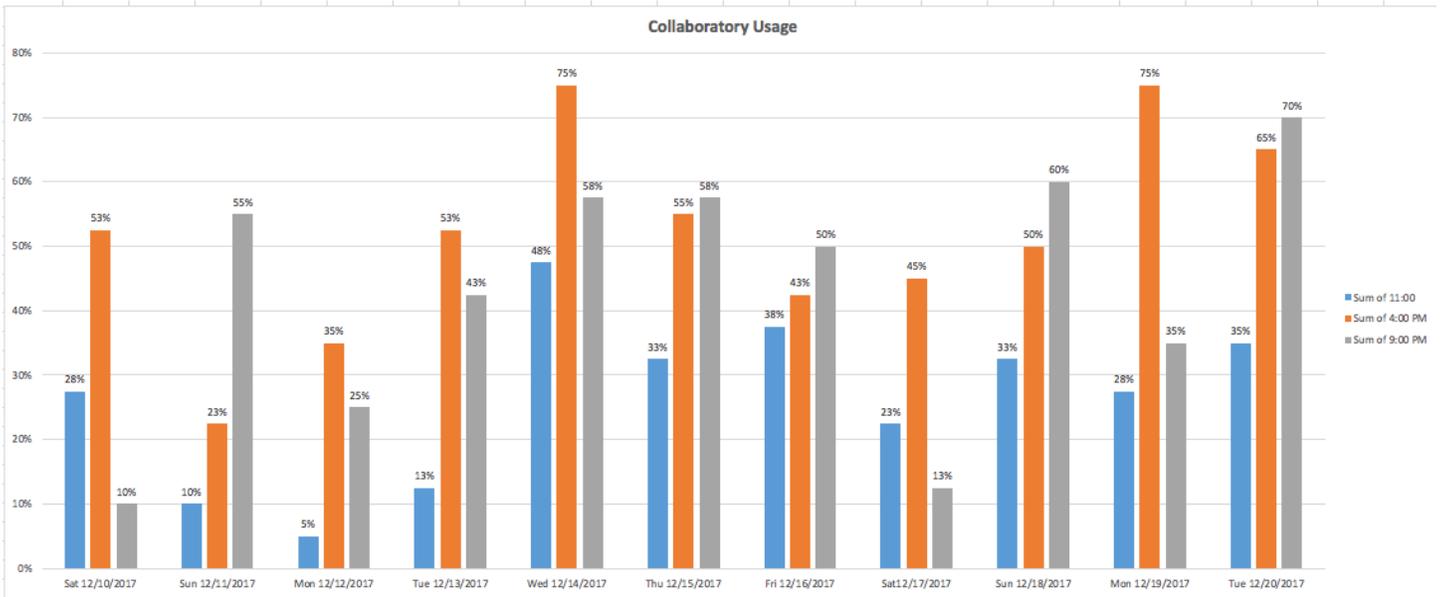
Population: Anyone in the building

Format: SUMA: A tablet-based toolkit for collecting, managing and analyzing data about the usage of physical spaces.

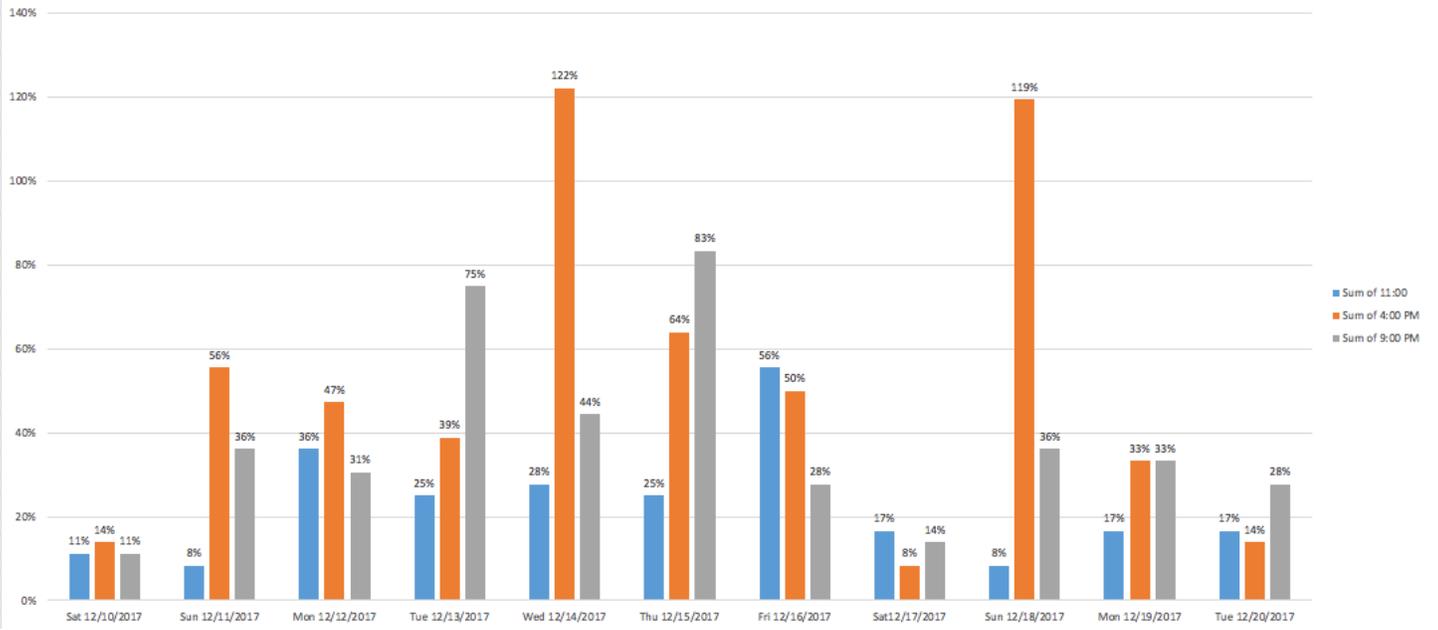
Type: Headcount through observation that reports % of total occupancy.

DATA

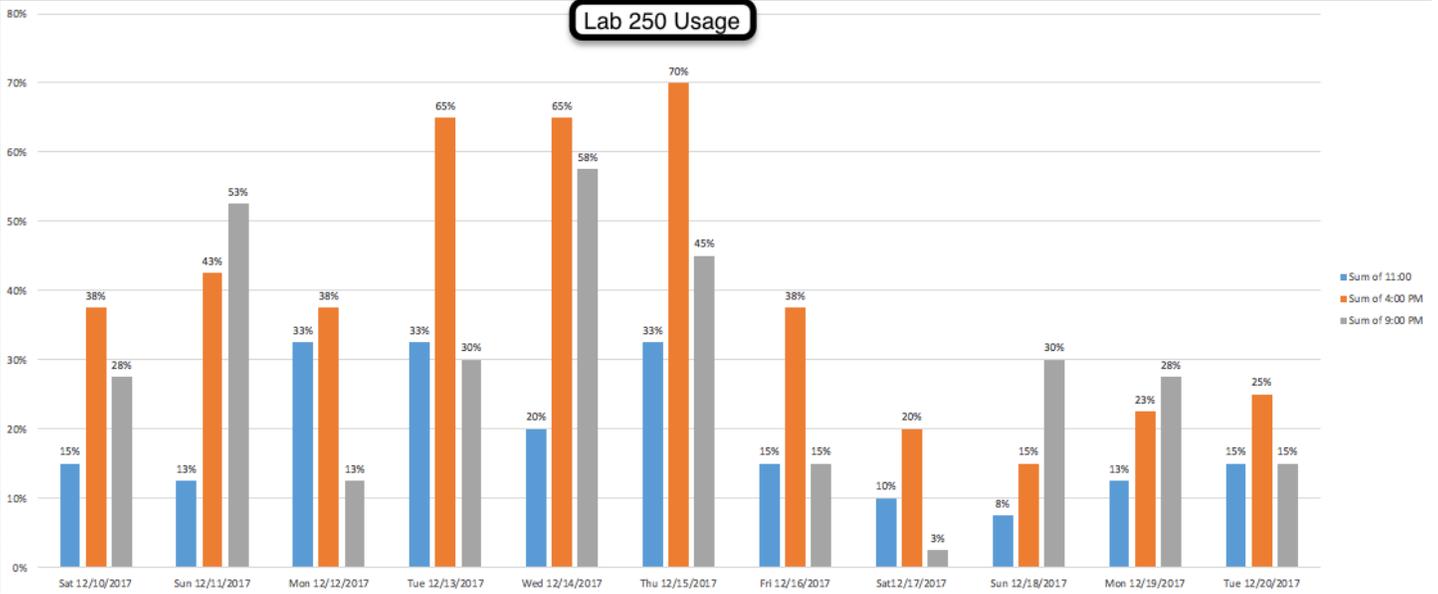




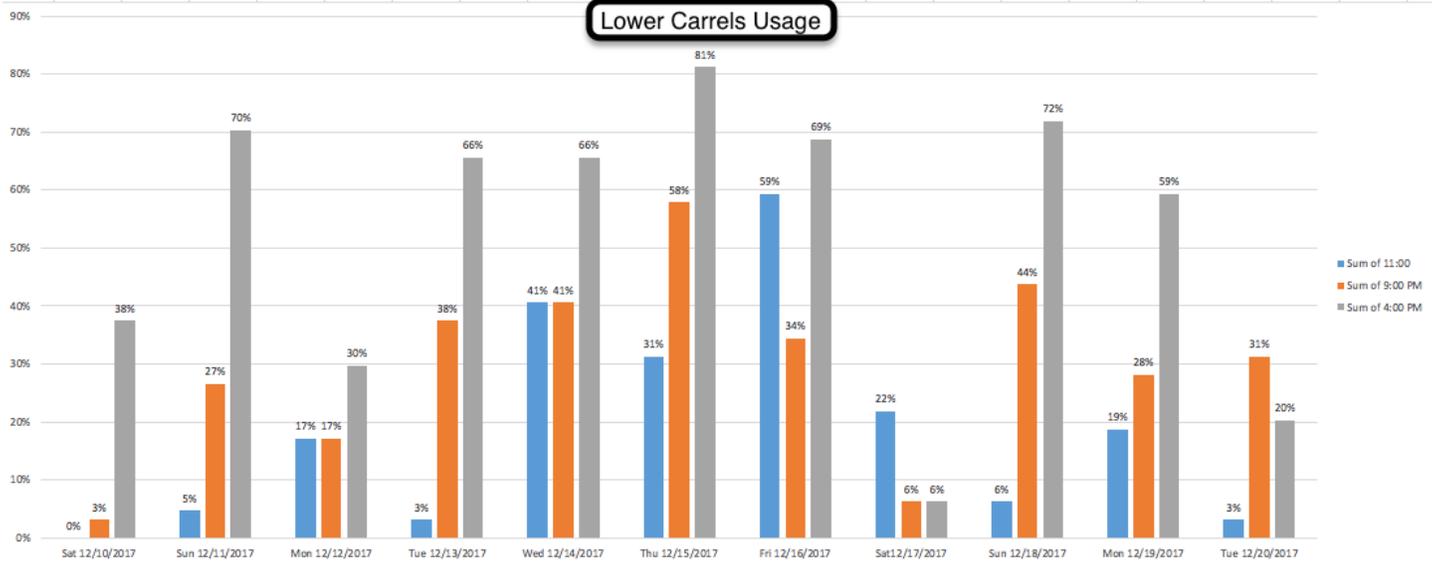
Information Commons Computer Lab



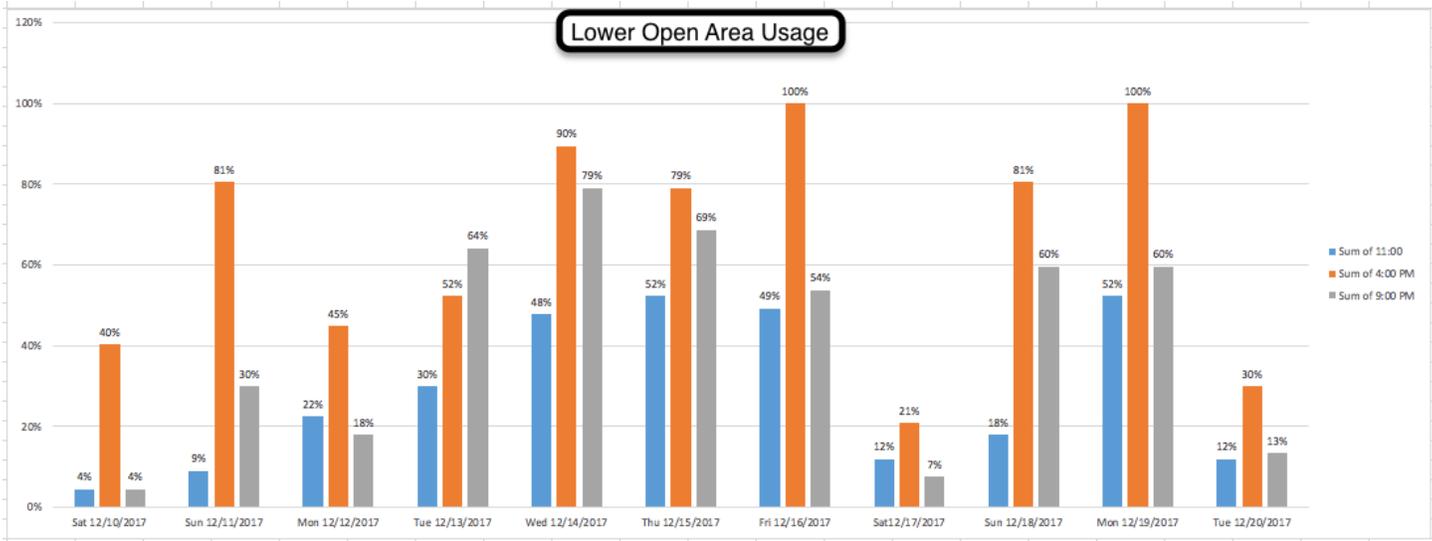
Lab 250 Usage



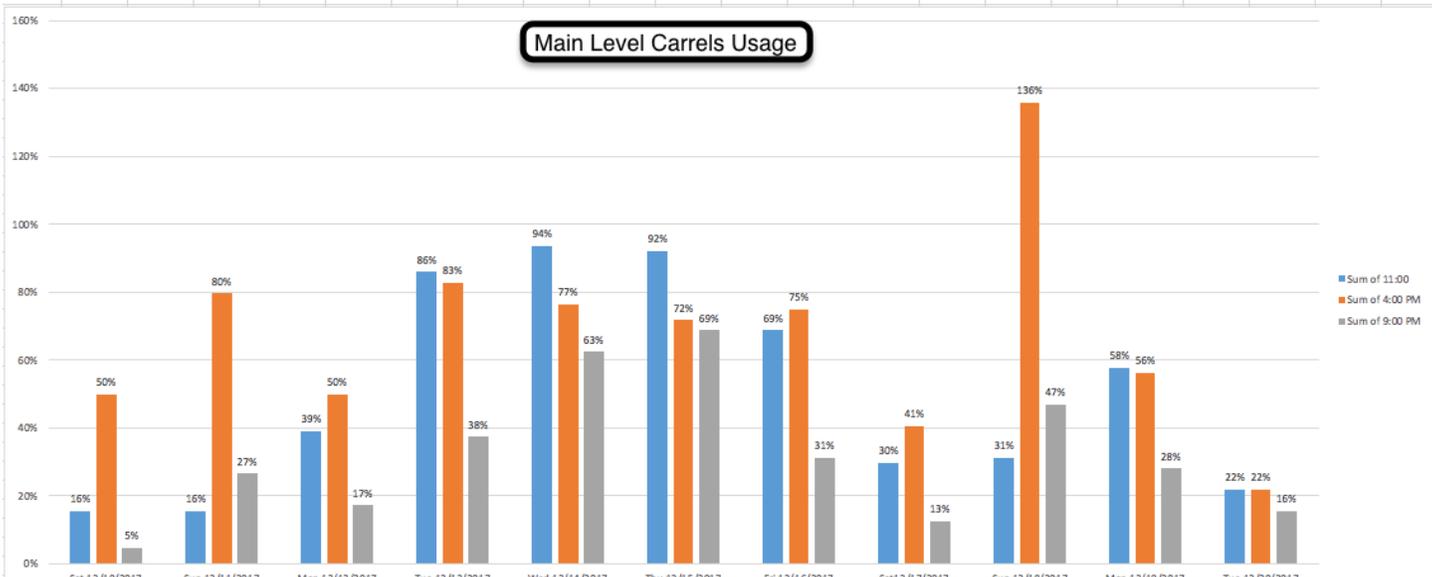
Lower Carrels Usage

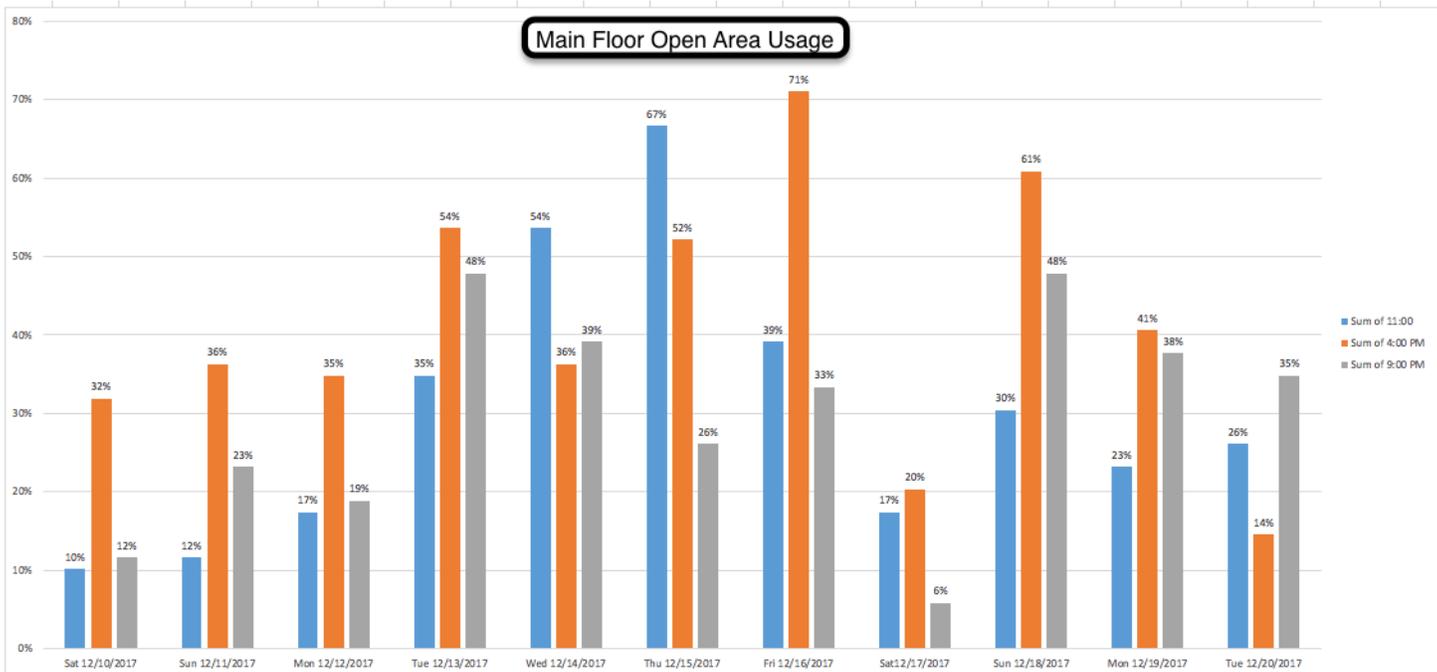


Lower Open Area Usage



Main Level Carrels Usage





DISCUSSION OF THE DATA:

We can observe from the data that the middle portion of the time period (December 13-December 16) saw the highest occupancies, and the occupancy at 4:00 PM was 60% higher than it was at 11:00 AM and 9:00 PM. This included two reading days. The highest occupancy during the entire study was the second reading day (December 14). We found it surprising that the occupancy at 11:00 AM was the same as it was at 9:00 PM—our assumption was that there would be more usage at night. Both Saturdays included in the study saw the lowest occupancy rates, down 60% from the highest day’s total.

Though there was a general downward trend in occupancy during the latter portion of the study, we saw a rise in usage of the collaboratories during this time period. This high occupancy rate continued until the night of the last day of finals.

Though all of our students come with their own computers, we saw very high rates (over 100%) of usage in our Information Commons Computer Lab at certain times. This was especially surprising.

The usage pattern for the lower level carrels run counter to other locations in the building. We see a significant spike in the 9:00 PM hour. Likewise, the usage of the main level carrels also runs counter to other observed usage patterns as we see very high occupancy rates during the 11:00 AM hour. Consider exploring the “Why Did I Choose This Seat” data for this area.

We see very high occupancy levels in the lower-level open area, especially during the 4:00 PM hour. We wonder why. Study carrel use and open space use both seem to be important to students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Easy responses:

Staffing needs are greatest in the afternoons, and less on Saturdays. Consider holding “support events” in the afternoons and/or on reading days to reach the greatest number of students.

Discuss with the Outreach Librarian best ways to meet the needs of students in the collaboratories during the last half of finals. Free coffee?

Long term planning:

Analyze collaboratory usage now that reservation system has changed.

Explore possibilities of occupancy trends/predictions using published finals schedule.

Analyze main/lower level carrel space now that significant seating changes have been made.

Deeper dive into computer lab data needs to occur before renovation.

Crazy idea?: