

UBC Social Ecological Economic Development Studies (SEEDS) Student Report

**An Investigation into Fostering Vibrant Social Spaces Through Games and Activities**

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**APSC 261**

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# **An Investigation into Fostering Vibrant Social Spaces Through Games and Activities**

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# **ABSTRACT**

## **“An Investigation into Fostering Vibrant Social Spaces through Games and Activities”**

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The purpose of this report is to investigate the popular games and activities among the UBC student body and propose ideas that the new SUB could implement in order to create a more vibrant atmosphere. The ideas proposed are based on the survey that was conducted from various students on campus. Each proposed idea will undergo a triple bottom line evaluation in order to consider the social, environmental, and economical aspects of it. The three ideas proposed are the three game tables: table tennis, pool and foosball, major video game consoles, and a movie session.

The survey results are discussed in the introduction section. In the next section, each of the options are evaluated with the triple line assessment, and determined if viable or not. At the end of this report, the table tennis, pool and foosball table, the video games and the movie session had been recommended to be installed in the new SUB for fostering vibrant social spaces.

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## GLOSSARY

### *3LCD-*

The name and brand of a major LCD projection color image generation technology used in modern digital projectors. 3LCD technology was developed and refined by Japanese imaging company Epson in the 1980s and was first licensed for use in projectors in 1988.

### *Energy Star-*

A joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy helping us all save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices.

### *Placemaking-*

A multi-layered process within which citizens foster active, engaged relationships to the spaces which they inhabit, the landscapes of their lives, and shape those spaces in a way which creates a sense of communal stewardship and lived connection

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

UBC - University of British Columbia

AMS - Alma Mater Society

SUB - Student Union Building

# 1.0 Introduction

Many universities have a location or building which allows students to socialize. That building is accessible to all students and commonly includes the following: the food court, club rooms, vacant rooms for social events, and etc. It is basically a place where students can come to relax and socialize. In the University of British Columbia, this building is known as the Student Union Building (SUB). UBC is currently constructing a new Student Union Building (SUB) which is planned to be open in the September of 2014. The Alma Mater Society (AMS) is in charge of designing the new SUB so that it will reflect the needs and wants of the student body.

Many surveys were conducted for the new SUB during 2009 by the AMS and there were many complains that the new SUB should have a living room, a gaming lounge so that people can drop by and relax, all of which the old SUB doesn't have. The AMS is interested in how such space can be created and because of this we are to provide ideas as to how to foster vibrant space through games and activities in the new SUB by using the concept of placemaking.

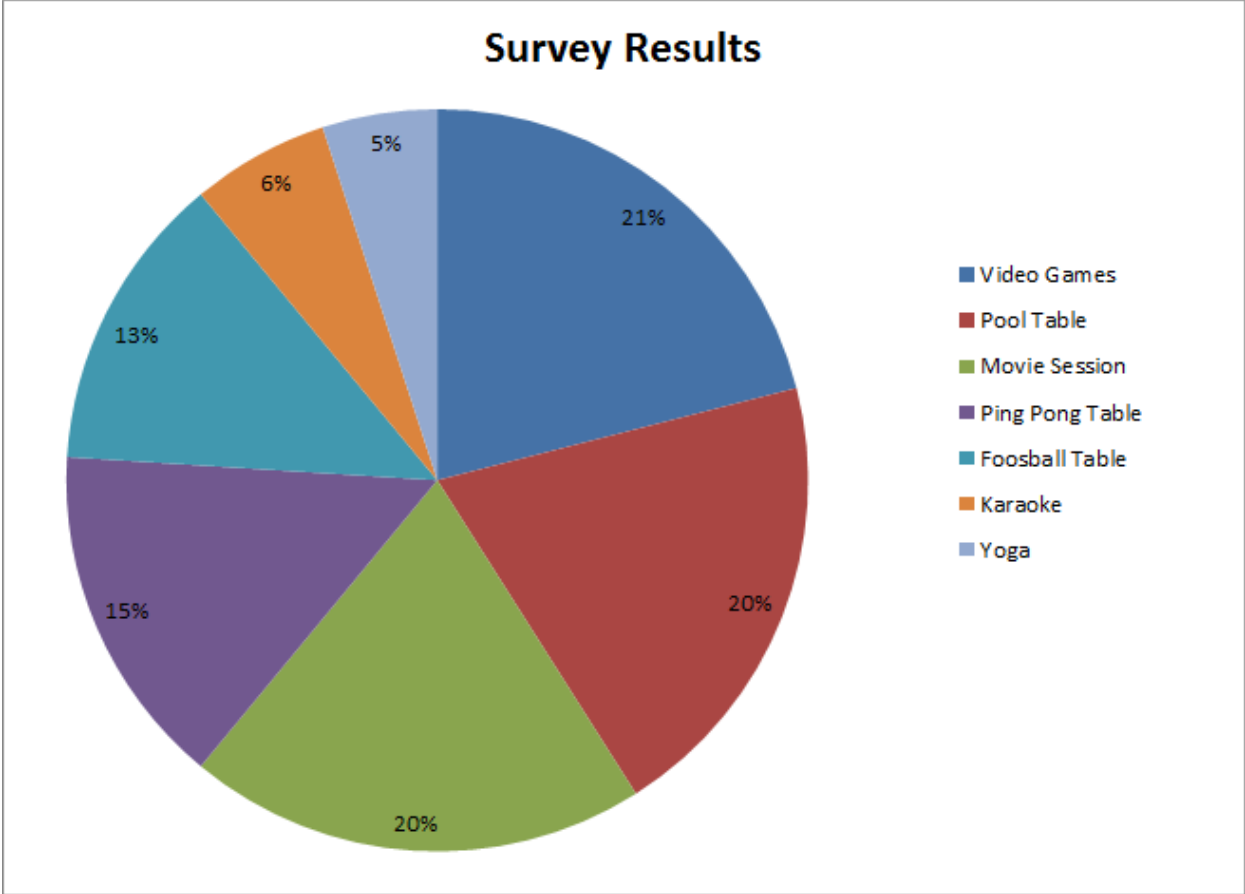
In order to provide an appropriate solution, we have to first consider the wants and needs of the individuals that are actually going to be using the space. At the same time, we will also have to evaluate the triple bottom line assessment, which are the following: social, environmental and economic. In order to collect data for what people want, we have conducted a survey that asks participant to choose from various choices of activities and games. After compiling all the data, the table tennis, pool and foosball table, video games and a movie session prove to be the most popular choices.

Many building on campus has table tennis, pool and foosball tables but these are mainly in UBC housing. These are games that people living off campus would also like to enjoy. When collecting the data, more than 80% of the participants have played one of the given table games. However, these table games are only opened to the residents in UBC housing since they are required to deposit their housing key in order to borrow equipment such as paddles and cues.

After the surveys were conducted, video game is one of the many choices that is popular among male participants. The most popular games were the ones that allow them to compete with one and another. These games take around 10 minutes for one match, and can allow 2 to 4 people to play at the same time. The movie session from the results is not like the movie theaters



that we see in cities, but one that is an open space with chairs and tables, with a projector and a screen where people can just drop in at any time to enjoy. The room used for the movie session can be any available open rooms in the new SUB provided that it has sufficient capacity. Below are the specifics of the survey result.



**Figure 1:** Survey Results

## **2.0 TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE ASSESSMENT FOR POOL TABLES, PING-PONG TABLES, AND FOOSBALL TABLES**

### **2.1 BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF THE CURRENT SUB**

The current SUB has a sufficient amount of food source, but they are lacking in games and entertainment. According to survey, the majority of the UBC students have shown a great interest in a game room which provides multiple types of entertainment. Pool is the most popular among the student body. Pool is a game which involves two players in which they try to make the pool balls into the pockets of the table. Ping pong or otherwise known as table tennis is also very popular. Table tennis is a game which can have either two or four players. The objective of the game is try to hit the ping pong ball back to the other side so the opponent misses it. Foosball is a minimize version of the game of soccer. It can have two or four players playing it at once. The aim of the game is to try to control the players to kick the ball into the opponent side's goal.

### **2.2 SOCIAL ASPECT**

Physical activities have been recognized as methods of stress relief. If we combine the competitiveness of a game with some decent skills involved, such as pool, Ping-Pong and foosball, etc. also with physical exertion required, the level of stress will decrease significantly (Mork, 2012). However, it really depends on if you take this game with or without frustration. As we can see, many schools, companies and facilities has adopt the method of stress relief by setting up pool tables, Ping-Pong tables, foosball tables, which allows the students and workers to release stress from daily work through participating in those physical activities.

Based on the survey we provided for students and staff in University of British Columbia, it shows that pool table is the most popular activity. Right next to the pool table are the Ping-Pong and foosball tables. You can imagine that a bunch of people gathering around after class and make big circles around the tables, talking about how good the players are and how impressive the games has been played, or waiting for their turns to compete against the winner. It has become very obvious that the most common feature for these items is that they are socially interactive activities, which means as more people are getting involved, the more interesting and

competitive they become, and the more fun you can receive from these activities. It is hard to imagine how much excitement you can get as you are playing by yourself, while other people are standing around you watching and perhaps waiting for their next turn.

## 2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT

Setting up pool, ping pong, foosball tables does not require too much space at all, since they will have their own designated area. When we relate anything with environment, the first thing that comes in our mind is how sustainable the item is, how long it can last, and how do we recycling it when it comes to its end. Depending on the materials, different tables have different lifetimes.

The most common materials for these tables are solid wood, plywood, and press-board. Among these, solid wood is considered to have the longest lifetime. Another important feature about solid wood is that it is also easy to recycle. When the tables reach the end of their lifetimes, the solid wood will not come to a waste. In many different ways, solid wood can be cut into pieces or re-shaped so that it can be reused for many other items such as furniture and even buildings components. Therefore, solid wood is our number one option for what material is going to be used for our tables.

## 2.4 FINANCIAL ASPECT

These tables we introduced will definitely require a substantial amount of cost. First of all, we want these tables to be brand new and made by high reputable companies so the quality and lifetime of the tables are guaranteed. Also, insurance with a lifetime warranty is also regarded which will result in an additional cost and it is definitely worth it in the long run. In terms of lifetime, as what I have already mentioned in the environmental aspect, the lifetime of a table depends on the material it is made of. However, the lifetime of a table also depends on the maintenance. The more frequent it is being taken care of, the longer the tables can last. As a result, the costs of maintenance materials and tools are also taken into account. The table of the life-cycle financial costs is shown below.

	Purchase (item and the parts)	Maintenance (daily)	Insurance	Lifetime (years)
Pool Table	\$2000	\$2	\$600	5
Ping Pong Table	\$500	\$2	\$150	4
Foosball Table	\$400	\$1	\$100	4

**Table 1.** Life-cycle Financial Costs of Gaming Tables (Golden West Billiards, 2011).

However, the cost of the tables and the maintenance tools is not a huge concern because of the opportunity cost of happiness and stress relief it brings.

Each time, students can enjoy the benefits these table activities bring to them without paying an excessive amount of cost compare to the clubs or bars. We will have cues, balls, brackets, and chalk ready for the pool table. For the ping pong table, people are encouraged to bring their own paddles and balls. If students prefer using the paddles and balls provide by the AMS, which is also perfectly fine, they will have to deposit one of their UBC Student ID card until they finish playing. This way we can also keep crack on the equipment we lend out.

### **3.0 TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE ASSESSMENT FOR VIDEO GAMES**

#### **3.1 BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

The second option that we introduced is that we are going to set up a video games section in the game room so that everyone can enjoy playing all different types of games. Video game is a type of game with electronics that human interaction takes part. It produces feedback on a visual device such as a screen, from a video game console such or a personal computer, which are also known as platforms (Wikipedia, 2012). These platforms have a wide range from large mainframe screen computers to small portable devices. In recent years, video games have come to its climax that more and more people and households purchase video games and use them for their daily entertainment.

#### **3.2 SOCIAL ASPECT**

Video games have become so popular not just because of its unique elements and features. More importantly, it brings people together through competing and cooperating. As we can see recently, more and more gaming producers have developed and brought up the multiplayer function to a whole new level. Players are more willing to purchase games so that they can be satisfied from playing with one and another. As a matter of fact, the main purpose of setting up the video games is to make people have fun by playing together. Therefore, we will also have multiple screens and controllers which allow more people to play at the same time.

Video games can also be an efficient stress relief path. As what research has shown, stress relief can bring down blood pressure and stabilize heart rates (Mork, 2012). Even some more games are designed and experimented by psychologists and are specifically certificated for stress relief. Most of the games have positive impact, as they lower your stress level through friendly competition.

### 3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT

The screens that we are going to use are all energy star qualified and the gaming systems all have their auto-lock functions so that if they are not being played for a period of time, they go into sleep mode automatically, which meets the expectation of energy saving. Also, the materials that are used for the gaming consoles have reduced the uses of hazardous substances to the environment (Greenpeace, 2008). As an example, the Nintendo Wii is manufactured without having beryllium, the uses of aspolyvinyl chloride (PVC) and phthalates are restricted. The PlayStation 3's circuit is made without the use of bromine and there are also less brominated materials used in XBOX 360 (Greenpeace, 2008). The rare metals inside these gaming consoles are also certified to be easily recycled when their lifetime comes to an end.

### 3.4 FINANCIAL ASPECT

The costs of the gaming systems and TVs are quite significant, and the maintenance costs and warranty is not as much compare to the tables. However, frequent maintenance and gaming habit are the key factors which determines how long the gaming devices can last. The table below shows the life cycle financial costs of setting up different types of gaming systems with all their accessories.

Systems and accessories	Cost
Play Station 3	\$249.95
XBOX 360	\$199.99
Nintendo Wii	\$149.99
Nintendo WiiU	\$299.99
TV	\$299.99 ~ \$799.99

**Table 2.** Costs of the Major Gaming Systems and TVs (Futureshop, 2012).

In addition, we will also focus on the latest games so people can choose from many different types of games so that they will not get bored, and each game will cost around \$59.99 (Futureshop, 2012). Some people have suggested having Ipads and other different tablets as well. It is not a good idea to have those touch screen devices because they are easily damaged and also have a high chance to be stolen.

## **4.0 Triple Bottom Line Assessment for Drop-In Movie Session**

### **4.1 BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

Another option that the UBC student bodies showed great interest in is the idea of a drop in movie session. The currently SUB already has the Norm Theatre which plays movie weekly, however, the Norm Theatre requires an entrance fees of \$5.00 dollar or \$2.50(for members of the Film Society). The show time for movies is usually around 7:00 pm or later which is decided by the UBC Film Society (UBC Film Society, 2012). According to survey, the majority of the UBC student body finishes their classes between 4:00-5:00 pm and most leave the university campus between the time frame of 5:00 pm and 6:00 pm. This means that the schedule that the Norm Theatre have for movies do not match the timeslot of the majority of the UBC student body. Ones that do attend the Norm Theatre for movies are mostly students that live on or near the university campus. A drop in movie session is aimed at the majority of the student body. According to research, a lot of students are free from 12:00pm to 2:00 pm because they would like to allocate that time slot for having lunch. Playing a movie from 12:30 to 2:30 would definitely attract a lot of attendance. The movie room is aimed to be at around 1450 square feet in order to have enough capability of up to around 100 students. The movie rooms can be very flexible depending on the attendance. If the result is positive, a larger room can always be used.

### **4.2 SOCIAL ASPECT**

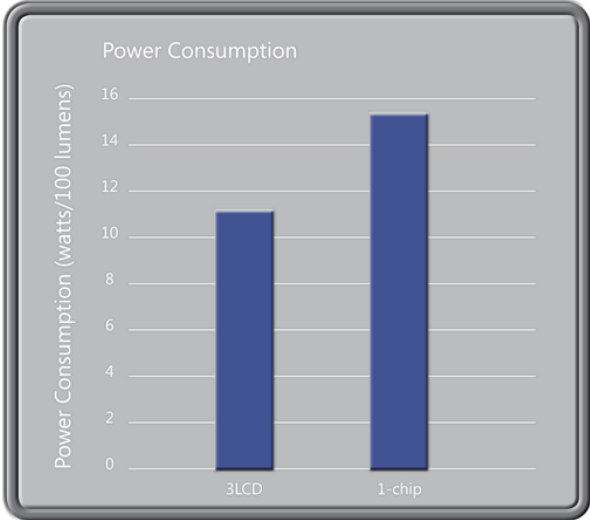
Movies have always been a popular choice among the student body. According to survey result, 20 percent of the participants want a drop-in movie session. Unlike some of the gaming options that we listed, movie can allow a great number of students to participate. This can definitely create more interaction among the student body because movies can have different impacts psychological and sociologically. A movie can work as a common topic for students. This will definitely help promote a more vibrant atmosphere in the new SUB. UBC is a competitive university. Many students have a heavy course load which can lead to a lot of tension and frustration. Studies have also shown that movies are a very effective stress relief as it can “act as an escape hatch for people who wish to forget about all their worries, frustrations and



tensions” (Mohan, 2011). Movies can also help enhance one's imagination which is beneficial for the student’s mind as it helps them visualize more. Another important impact that movies have is that it educates the viewers. This is extremely effective because a movie can help relax one’s mind and at the same time educate them different ideas.

### 4.3 ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT

Sustainability is definitely one important factor to consider and a drop in movie session definitely achieves that goal. A drop in movie session simply requires a room with some seats, a projector and a screen. Other than the movie that is being played, everything that is required for the session to operate is reusable. The chairs, the room and the projectors can all be used over and over again if taken great care of. For the projector, we propose to use one that is energy efficient. Although the energy star program has not yet included projectors to be one of the products, an energy efficient projector will have the same effect. Energy star efficient products not only help save on the electricity bill, it also help improve the environment by emitting less greenhouse gases. According to statistics, energy star products in 2010 help “avoid greenhouse gas emission equivalent to those from 33 million cars while saving nearly \$18 billion on utility bills” (Energy Star, 2011). A projector that uses a 3LCD projection technology can definitely help achieve the same cause that the energy star program is aiming for.



**Figure 2:** Power Consumption Statistic.

3LCD projection technology uses requires 25% less electricity per lumen of brightness compared to conventional projectors. (3LCD, 2012) This is depicted in the graph above. Other than the electronic products, everything else in the movie room is completely environmental.

#### 4.4 ECONOMICAL ASPECT

In order to keep the cost low, we propose to have this run by a student club. The UBC Film Society is a great candidate as they are currently operating a lot of the shows in the Norm Theatre. This means that they are experienced and can provide a good selection of movies for the students. A typical 3LCD projector price range is from \$700 to \$1000 dollar (Tiger Direct, 2012). They are a bit more expensive compared to the conventional models. However, this will be a more cost efficient investment in the long run because it will save more electricity thus cutting down on the utility bills. A projector screen for the viewing of around 100 students would need to be around 150 to 200 cm in width and height. A projector screen with that kind of dimension cost around \$100 to \$200 dollar. (Tiger Direct, 2012) The initial idea was to have mattress for audience to sit on in order to keep the price as low as possible but, many students argue that they prefer a chair to sit in than have to sit on mattress as it might be uncomfortable after a period of time. The movies room can use chairs that the SUB already has to prevent any extra spending. If we charge everyone that comes watches the movie every time, it would be no difference from the Norm theatre. Because of this, we propose to include these fees in the AMS fees for every student. UBC has around 56, 300 students in total. If a 10 cents fee is to be included in the AMS fees, it would generate around 5600 dollars. This number is sufficient enough to fund the entire operation of the movie session.

## **5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation**

After having considered our results, we propose to have the installation of a game room and a movie room. The game room should be around 1500 square feet which is enough capacity for a pool table, a table tennis table, a foosball table, a widescreen T.V. with video games and several sofas. The reason for a huge room is so that the players from different game tables don't cluster which can create a high risk of danger. More spacing between the tables is recommended. The sofas can provide the student with a place to sit and socialize while watching their friend participate in the entertainment provided. In order to keep the game room operating at an orderly fashion, we propose to have the AMS provide one member to supervise it at all times. To prevent students from damaging the equipment in the game room, all students who wish to use the equipment must deposit their UBC student identification card with the AMS supervisor. This way, we can prevent students from treating the equipment carelessly and also keep them accountable for any possible damages to the equipment in the game room.

The movie room is to be around the same size as the game room. The room should include a projector, a projector screen and enough chairs for up to 100 students. The movie session is recommended to be operated by the UBC Film Society and they should play a movie from 12:30 to 2:30 pm on Monday and Wednesday. 12:30 to 2:30 are the times where the majority of the student body has no classes. The cost for the movie room and the game room are recommended to be included in the student's AMS fees and because of this all students are allowed to have access to the game room and movie room.

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