A Learning Space Rating System (LSRS) for Higher Education
October, 2011

**Overview.** A nationally-recognized rating system for learning spaces has the potential to provide institutions with a measure of how well their planning reflects best practices in the provision of learning spaces. Such a system would help galvanize administrative support to achieve a recognized quality rating that represents their institutional priorities for supporting effective learning.

A Learning Spaces Rating System will assist institutions:
- by providing guidelines for upgrades to existing classrooms;
- by planning for more effective future learning spaces at a campus-wide scale;
- by considering their full spectrum of learning spaces, including places for informal learning;
- by providing a basis for consistency in designs across learning spaces types.

The intent is to create a set of measurable criteria that will assess what the space enables students and faculty to do in it. These criteria will be prioritized into an overall rating system. Such a learning space rating system could be used to guide the planning and design of learning spaces and then to measure the performance of the spaces once in use, relative to those same criteria. The system will encourage institutions and accrediting agencies to move to criteria beyond traditional utilization, condition, and space efficiency measures. The proposed system looks to establish criteria to measure the effectiveness of learning space designs to enable active learning, taking advantage of the informed and systematically consistent deployment of not just technology but many other design considerations.

The project looks to the success of design standards and criteria to promote environmental sustainability in of buildings, spaces, schools, and neighborhood development. These systems, while differing in details, share the same basic approach: they provide a set of design criteria that, when achieved, award a design a number of points according to the degree of achievement. Leading examples include BREEAM, Green Star, and LEED. Collectively these sustainability rating systems have certified over many billions square feet of space. The goal for a LSRS is to ignite a similar enthusiasm for designs of learning spaces that have active learning as their core value.

**How to comment and participate.** There is a [web site](https://sites.google.com/site/learningspaceratingsystem/) for the LSRS project. Anyone wishing to be put on our mailing list, to make suggestions for the project, or to participate in a future round of testing is invited to use a [Google form](http://tinyurl.com/lsrsfeedback). You may also email Malcolm Brown (Director EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative) at <mbrown@educause.edu> for information.

**Alpha draft outline.** The LSRS criteria are currently in provisional, “alpha” draft mode. We present the outline (opposite side of this sheet) of the alpha criteria and invite all community members to comment.
ALPHA DRAFT OUTLINE

INTEGRATION WITH CAMPUS CONTEXT [ICC]
- ICC Credit 1: Implements the institution's Academic Strategic Plan
- ICC Credit 2: Integrated with the institution's Learning Space Master Plan
- ICC Credit 3: Compatible with Technology Strategic Plan
- ICC Credit 4: Support for Distributed Learning Systems

PLANNING PROCESS [PP]
- PP Credit 1: Stakeholder Engagement
- PP Credit 2: Evidence Based Design
- PP Credit 3: Involvement of LSRS System Accredited Professional
- PP Credit 4: Pilots and Prototypes
- PP Credit 5: Innovation in Design and Exemplary Performance
- PP Credit 6: Learning Space as a Teaching Tool
- PP Credit 7: Assessment and Evaluation Plan
- PP Credit 8: Dissemination of Assessment Findings
- PP Credit 9: Alignment with Institutional Project Management Practices

SUPPORT AND OPERATIONS [SO]
- SO Credit 1: Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation
- SO Credit 2: Space Orientation and Training
- SO Credit 3: Support and Rescue
- SO Credit 4: Training of Support Team
- SO Credit 5: Sustainability of Operations
- SO Credit 6: Faculty Development
- SO Credit 7: Extended Hours of Use
- SO Credit 8: Scheduling System

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND ATMOSPHERE [EQA]
- EQA Credit 1: Good Sightlines
- EQA Credit 2: Variable Lighting
- EQA Credit 3: Thermal Comfort
- EQA Credit 4: Acoustic Quality
- EQA Credit 5: Environmental Stimulation
- EQA Credit 6: Daylight and Views
- EQA Credit 7: Visibility and Views of Activities
- EQA Credit 8: Proportion of Space
- EQA Credit 8: Movement through Space

ENABLED ACTIVITIES [EA]
- EA Credit 1: Multiple Activities
- EA Credit 2: Specialized Activities
- EA Credit 3: Adjacent Activities
- EA Credit 4: Flow of Learning Activity into Adjacent Areas
- EA Credit 5: Blending of Informal Learning with Social Activities
- EA Credit 6: Virtual Participation

TOOLS, TECHNOLOGY AND FURNISHINGS [TTF]
- TTF Credit 1: Room Controls
- TTF Credit 2: Adequate Network Access from Student Locations
- TTF Credit 3: Adequate Network Connectivity for Presenter Locations
- TTF Credit 4: High Resolution Visual Displays for Presentation and Collaboration
- TTF Credit 5: Session Capture and Playback
- TTF Credit 6: Support for Mobile Devices
- TTF Credit 7: Feedback Systems
- TTF Credit 8: Appropriate Furnishings
- TTF Credit 9: Physical Storage
- TTF Credit 10: Adequate Access to Electrical Power