

Playing in the Front Yard

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Physical settings on college and university campuses, including outdoor areas, play an important role in student satisfaction. Their features influence the extent to which individuals are attracted to and satisfied with any given setting (Strange, 1991). It is important to consider the design and maintenance of outdoor environments because of their importance in portraying the personality of an institution. The settings reflect the values and traditions of the institution in a way that sets the campus apart from others (Thelin & Yankovich, 1987). Studying physical environments, especially outdoor settings, can provide meaningful information about how well the setting promotes the institution's mission and values. Using environmental assessment techniques, practitioners can evaluate how campus environments affect, and are affected by, students and other campus community members.

Dunn Meadow at Indiana University-Bloomington, is a multi-purpose outdoor area with a rich tradition of student activity. On a sunny summer day, dozens of people participate in an assortment of activities. Relaxing, sunbathing, expressing views on social issues, playing ultimate frisbee and exercising pets are activities that happen simultaneously in Dunn Meadow. The Meadow serves as the main area on campus for recreation. As Richard McKaig, Dean of Students at Indiana University states, "Dunn Meadow has the ambience of the campus front-yard—it's the home for unorganized events" (personal communication, May 25, 1993).

In addition to its recreational purposes, Dunn Meadow is the political heart of the campus (Millett, 1991), the place most campus protests and demonstrations occur. In the early 1960's, when student protests, marches and assemblies were frequent, a resolution was introduced in the Bloomington Faculty Council "to prevent further debacles over freedom of speech, protests, and orderly demonstrations by setting aside a place on the campus where anyone could speak freely to any audience, or to no audience" (Clark, 1977, p.557). It was suggested that a corner of Dunn Meadow be used for this purpose:

To establish an easily available facility for spontaneous speaking and assembly, the University hereby designates an area of Dunn Meadow, immediately north of the Memorial Union Building, to be known as the Indiana University Assembly Ground and to be marked as such. Here, in particular, members of the University community may express themselves freely on all subjects, within the limits of applicable laws and regulations, with or without advance notice.

(Official Board of Trustees Minutes, July 18-19, 1963, p. 14, Part 6, a, 2).

The Board of Trustees passed the proposal on July 18, 1964, officially designating Dunn Meadow as the space on the Bloomington campus for student assemblies.

The purpose of this study is to assess the Dunn Meadow environment in the summer, including the characteristics of those who utilize the space, as well as the perceptions of the purpose of Dunn Meadow compared to how the space is actually used. According to Dober (1992), "settings . . . define and celebrate a sense of place; communicate an institution's purpose, presence, and domain; and generate a public image charged with symbolism, graced by history" (p. 3). Dunn Meadow signifies such an institutional image created in response to student need.

A review of the literature on campus environments provides guiding theoretical perspectives: physical, perceptual, and human aggregate. The physical approach holds that all environments contain certain physical features, both natural and man-made, that influence human behavior by setting broad, but specific, limits on the behaviors and activities that can occur in any given setting; thus, some behaviors or activities are more or less likely to occur in certain settings than others (Strange, 1991).

The physical environment indirectly affects the social climate of a particular setting by attracting certain types of people. Moos (1979) reported that the physical characteristics of the environment affect perceptions, attitudes and values which directly influence behavior. Given the concept of the campus as a place intended to encourage contact and communication, a setting such as Dunn Meadow encourages both formal and informal meetings, events, and congregations that serve to enhance the social environment.

Koffka (1935, cited in Walsh, 1973), offers an alternative interpretation: how one internalizes or perceives the physical environment determines one's behavior. According to the perceptual approach, "the physical world can affect the individual only through his or her perceptions or experiences of it. It is the psychological environment, not the physical environment, that determines the way in which the individual will respond" (Walsh, 1973, p.2). Therefore, knowledge about individual and collective perceptions of an environment is needed to better understand how individuals are likely to behave. In this study, the users' perceptions of Dunn Meadow's environment and purpose determine its use.

The human aggregate approach assumes that the character of the environment is dependent upon the nature of its members. People tend to search out, enter, and remain in environments that are consistent with their interests and personalities. An environment dominated by the presence of a particular personality type, such as those used in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator would likely reflect the characteristics of that personality type. One can, therefore, predict what will happen when a person is put into a particular environment.

Methodology

In order to conduct an environmental study of Dunn Meadow, the physical boundaries of the setting must be determined, as well as the inclusive range of meanings and activities located there, including sensory perceptions and purposes, memories, feelings, ideas, and orientations (Moos, 1979; Thelin & Yankovich, 1987; Walter, 1988). A multi-method approach was used to assess Dunn Meadow, allowing the researchers to take advantage of the various resources (Baird, 1988).

Physical Analysis

Jim Gibson, director of student activities, Richard McKaig, dean of students, and Dave Smith, from the University Architect's Office, were interviewed about the history and intended uses of Dunn Meadow.

Questions for these interviews differed according to the function of each office and its relationship to the site. Gibson and McKaig were both asked about the history of Dunn Meadow and the institution's dedication to the preservation of Dunn Meadow. Questions addressed to Smith covered the intended, current, and future physical and architectural designs for the area, as well as its landscaping and maintenance. Responses were used to direct the focus of the study and identify the historical characteristics of Dunn Meadow.

Instruments

Three instruments were used to collect data from people in Dunn Meadow. The first, the Personal Style Inventory (P.S.I.) (Hogan & Champagne, 1979), was used to determine what types of people use Dunn Meadow. The P.S.I. categorized respondents' behavioral preferences into personality trait dimensions: introvert/extravert, intuitive/sensing, thinking/feeling, and perceiving/judging.

The second instrument used was a questionnaire developed specifically for this study. Through multiple-choice and open-ended questions, respondents were asked about what they do when in Dunn Meadow, how often they use the space, how long they stay, for what reason they visit, and how they feel while in Dunn Meadow. The questionnaire also asked respondents to describe what they like most and what they would like to change about Dunn Meadow. Respondent anonymity was assured.

The third instrument, the Space Usage Observation Form (S.U.O.F.), was used to record behaviors observed in Dunn Meadow for a ten-day period. Each observation included the day of the week, the time of day, and the weather conditions. Those utilizing Dunn Meadow as a thoroughfare were documented by gender, by mode of transportation, and use of sidewalks or grass. The various types of activities, and where they were taking place, were noted with a designated symbol on the Dunn Meadow map.

Method of Data Analysis

Individual's scores of the P.S.I. were completed to determine the personality types of respondents in Dunn Meadow. The results were compared to identify any commonalities among respondents. Commonalities were then classified using a method similar to the Environmental Assessment Technique, in which absolute numbers for each personality type are converted to percentages of the total number of P.S.I.s completed (Holland, 1966). The environment is then represented by the highest percentage of each type, and is classified into the four personality categories of the P.S.I.

The qualitative questionnaires were compared to identify similarities and differences among responses. Conclusions were drawn concerning who uses Dunn Meadow and for what activities. Respondent demographics were also recorded in order to identify who uses Dunn Meadow.

The S.U.O.F.s were tabulated and inferences were drawn concerning the various activities recorded in the environment of Dunn Meadow. Gender of observed users was recorded.

Observations of individual activities were transposed onto a perceptual map of Dunn Meadow to determine the most frequent locations of certain activities.

Limitations

One limitation to the study was its seasonal nature. The study took place during a summer semester when student enrollment was considerably lower than the fall or spring. As a result, fewer people participated in various activities in Dunn Meadow than would have during the academic year.

The second limitation to the research was human error factors such as the subjectivity of choosing questionnaire respondents and the impossibility of making error-free observations. Since not all users of Dunn Meadow were questioned or observed, the results were not based on a statistically random sample, but rather on subjective selection. This limitation also affected the precision of the statistics offered in the results and the conclusion.

The third limitation of the study was the weather. Since the environment studied was an outdoor area, observed activities decreased, as anticipated, when the weather was poor. Results of the data obtained during poor weather conditions skewed total usage figures slightly.

Results

History of Dunn Meadow

Dunn Meadow has a rich tradition of student involvement. In fact, the acquisition of the land first known as Dunn Meadow was initially recommended by students in 1894. An editorial in the *Indiana Student* on April 17, 1894, called attention to the fact that Purdue and DePauw had recently purchased extensive parks for athletic purposes. "Let us make it our ambition to secure, within the next five years, the Dunn Field north of the University as a playground" (cited in Myers, 1952, p. 387). The land was subsequently purchased in 1897.

Through the years, Dunn Meadow has undergone numerous dramatic changes, responding to the needs of the University and the students. Following the designation of an easily available facility for spontaneous speaking and assembly in an area of Dunn Meadow in 1963, student protests were numerous and varied. The Vietnam War years at the University were a period when students marched in protest and presented demands and petitions. This culminated in a student boycott of classes in 1969 involving over ten thousand students amassed in Dunn Meadow (Raines, 1969).

In 1969, guidelines were created governing the use of the free speech space known as Dunn Meadow (Campus Demonstration . . . , 1969). These guidelines include the disciplinary actions the University may take and in what circumstances; use of signs, symbols, or structures; and rules regarding the right to gather in other areas on campus. These parameters were constructed in an attempt to more clearly state the university's position and procedures regarding freedom of speech (Jim Gibson, personal communication, May 20, 1993). These guidelines have been amended on several occasions since 1969.

Although the name and purpose of Dunn Meadow have not changed, the actual amount of space defined as Dunn Meadow has decreased dramatically since the original purchase in 1894.

Physical Approach

Dunn Meadow is shaped like an isosceles triangle, approximately two blocks long and one block wide. The Jordan river forms a natural boundary on the south side, while Seventh Street and Indiana Avenue form the north and west boundaries respectively.

The Meadow has numerous shady areas along the sides of the river and roads where the observed activities were predominantly studying and exercising pets. There is a large, open, grassy area in the northwest corner with no shade in which all observed team sports took place. There is a paved sidewalk running parallel to the river, cutting the Meadow approximately in half. Group activities were observed taking place on the west side of this sidewalk, while individual activities (e.g., sunbathing, studying, eating) took place on the east side of the walkway. The majority of socializing (with one other person or a group) in Dunn Meadow occurred at these sidewalk intersections.

Results of total observations concluded that males accounted for 57% (3,221), and females 43% (1,361), of the users of Dunn Meadow. During every hour of data collection, more males were observed in the Meadow than females. Results also showed the three busiest one-hour time periods for Dunn Meadow usage were from noon to one p.m., eleven a.m. to noon, and four p.m. to five p.m. Those using the Meadow as a thoroughfare represented more than 87% (4,001) of the total observations (4,582). Of this 87%, males accounted for 59% and females 41%. Over 73% of all thoroughfare usage took place on the sidewalk, with walking representing over 77% of this figure.

When utilizing Dunn Meadow as a thoroughfare, males were twice as likely as females to use the grass. Significant results were considered to be differences of 30 percentage points or higher between male and female usage. This comparison shows males biked and jogged on both the sidewalk and grass more than females.

Significant results for activities occurring in Dunn Meadow were considered to be differences of 0.5 percentage points or higher between male and female usage. Females were observed talking with another person, talking with a group of people, exercising their pets, and tanning more often than males. Males were observed participating in non-team sports and undefined activities more frequently than females.

Average observed usage by time of day was also determined after dividing data collection periods into three categories. The noon to four p.m. time period was most used by respondents (43.5%), eight a.m. to noon ranked second (30%), and four p.m. to eight p.m. was third (26.5%).

Human Aggregate Approach

The P.S.I. was administered to twenty-five random individuals who were utilizing Dunn Meadow at the time. Only two users refused to complete a P.S.I., resulting in a 93% completion rate. Because of tied scores on certain traits, 33 different personalities were found.

Of the respondents, 79% were categorized as "Feeling" people, compared to 50% of the population of the United States and 61% had natural tendencies for intuitiveness, compared to 25% of the population with this natural inclination (Keirse & Bates, 1984).

Questionnaire results concluded that all of the possible sixteen personality types were present in Dunn Meadow. The most common combinations found were ENFJ, ENFP, INFP, and INFJ. These four types represented 48% of those tested on the Meadow.

The study also identified four different temperaments of individuals who used Dunn

Meadow. The NJ temperament makes up only 12% of the general population of the United States, while 48% of the people surveyed in the Meadow exhibited this personality type combination. Results showed that while SPs represent 38% of the population of the United States, only 9% of the respondents of the P.S.I. had this temperament (Keirse & Bates, 1984).

Perceptual Approach

The results of the questionnaire revealed that users' perceptions of Dunn Meadow's environment and purpose have an effect upon its usage. Of the ninety questionnaires distributed, all were completed and returned. No respondent refused to complete a questionnaire, resulting in a 100% completion rate. The results were then tabulated by both quantitative and qualitative means.

Over 78% of respondents were self-described students, 10% were visitors, 9% alumni, and just over 2% staff. No self-described faculty members completed the survey. Of the ninety respondents, 47% (42) were males and 53% (48) were females. The overwhelming majority of respondents described their ethnicity as Caucasian (89%), while 6% responded they were either African-American (3%) or Hispanic/Latino (3%). The remaining 4% were comprised of Asian-Americans (2%), Native Americans (1%), and other (1%).

On the questionnaire, respondents were first asked to identify how often they used Dunn Meadow other than as a thoroughfare. Given six descriptions from which to choose, ranging from never to more than five times per week, the two most frequent responses were: 1) only for special events (24), and 2) two to five times per week (20).

The most frequent responses to why respondents never used Dunn Meadow were: 1) they did not have enough time, and 2) they lived too far away. The most frequent responses to why Dunn Meadow was used often were 1) to play with pets, and 2) to socialize or recreate.

Asked when they used Dunn Meadow most, 87% of the respondents replied that they used it in the afternoon, 3% in the morning, and 1% in the evening. The remaining 9% did not respond to the question.

The next question asked how long respondents stayed in Dunn Meadow other than just passing through. Of the ninety respondents, 78% answered that they stayed in the Meadow for more than 15 minutes per visit. Nearly 39% indicated they stayed between 30 and 60 minutes.

Respondents were then asked what they usually do while in Dunn Meadow. The four most frequent responses were: 1) relax (15%); 2) socialize (14%); 3) study (11%); and 4) read (10%). The two least occurring responses were 1) demonstrate (2%) and 2) protest (1%).

When respondents were asked what their perceptions of the intended use of Dunn Meadow were, the five most common responses were: 1) to socialize; 2) to recreate; 3) to relax; 4) to protest and demonstrate; and 5) for special events. Seventy-nine of those respondents also felt that Dunn Meadow served its intended purpose well, two said it did not, and nine did not respond.

Respondents were then asked how they felt when using Dunn Meadow. The top five responses were: 1) relaxed (17%); 2) peaceful (14%); 3) content (12%); 4) happy (12%); and 5) free (11%).

The last two questions were open-ended providing the study with environmental referent information. The first asked what respondents liked most about Dunn Meadow. The most frequent responses included physical descriptions, location, and the diversity of activities and users. The second asked respondents to identify what, if anything, they would change about Dunn Meadow. The most frequent responses to this question included changing nothing and improving physical characteristics such as lighting, benches, and tables.

Discussion

In order to determine who uses Dunn Meadow, the study compared the results of the S.U.O.F.s and the P.S.I.s. The S.U.O.F.s provided limited demographic knowledge other than what percentage of the users were male and female and which gender used the Meadow at what times. Males represented 60% of the users while females only 40%. Males also outnumbered females using the Meadow at all times of the day.

In an attempt to identify what type of person uses Dunn Meadow, two different personality temperaments were studied. Results showed the NF temperament, which makes up only 12% of the general population of the United States, represented 48% of the people surveyed in the Meadow. Common characteristics of NFs include: passion, creativity, and genuineness. NFs strive to maintain their own individuality, but also seek out relationships, thrive on interaction, and enjoy socializing (Keirse & Bates, 1984). These characteristics fit the personality types of a typical user of Dunn Meadow. Dunn Meadow was identified by respondents of the questionnaire as an excellent place to socialize and meet all types of people.

Results also showed that Dunn Meadow was perceived as a place where people went to be themselves and meet other people. Questionnaire respondents commented often that Dunn Meadow accommodates and attracts all types of people and is a good place to express individuality.

Evaluation of the P.S.I.s also indicated that while SPs represent 38% of the population of the United States, only 9% of the respondents of the P.S.I. had this temperament. It can be hypothesized that this type of person may not use Dunn Meadow because SPs are super-realists and extremely action-oriented (Keirse & Bates, 1984). They enjoy such things as racing cars and skydiving. The slow, relaxed pace of Dunn Meadow would bore SPs.

Of the users of Dunn Meadow, 70% were "Feeling" people. "Feelers" prefer to be sociable and friendly. This helps to explain why the most frequent response to this question "What is your perception of the intended use of Dunn Meadow?" was "to socialize." Results obtained from observations also showed the largest percentage of people using the Meadow did so to socialize. All of these results helped confirm what activities occurred in Dunn Meadow.

Finally, the study compared the perceptions of the intended purpose and uses with the observed purpose and uses of Dunn Meadow. Self-reported perceptions were confirmed by the study's observed usage of Dunn Meadow. The three most frequent perceptions of intended use were confirmed by site observations, showing socializing, recreating, and relaxing to be the most popular activities on Dunn Meadow.

Consistency of respondent demographics might be explained as a reflection of campus demographics. Of the respondents, 89% identified themselves as Caucasian and 78% students. It would be interesting to study the affirming nature of Dunn Meadow to determine

if minorities as a percentage of the population actually use the Meadow less than Caucasians as a percentage of the population. This could be accomplished by choosing respondents who reflect the appropriate percentages of the campus population.

It is meaningful to note that the fourth most frequent perception of intended use of Dunn Meadow (for protests, demonstrations, and assemblies) was represented by only 3% of the questionnaire respondents. Of the eighty-one respondents who identified whether Dunn Meadow served its purpose well, seventy-nine responded yes. This shows a discrepancy between the perceived intended purpose of Dunn Meadow and the actual reason why respondents used Dunn Meadow. Further research should be conducted to explain this discrepancy.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study and environmental referents from the questionnaires, ten suggestions have been identified to make the Meadow more convenient, safe and aesthetically pleasing. These changes require only minor physical changes to the existing environment.

First, picnic tables and benches should be added along the south bank of the river to attract more people to Dunn Meadow. This was the most frequent recommendation by those responding to the questionnaire.

Second, better lighting along the sidewalk parallel to the Jordan River should be added as an increased safety precaution for those who walk through Dunn Meadow at night. This was the second most frequent suggestion recorded on the questionnaire, and a possible reason for the lack of observed users in the Meadow after dusk.

Third, in recognition of the tradition surrounding Dunn Meadow, a plaque should be constructed next to the kiosk's current location in the southeast corner of the Meadow. The plaque should state some of the history of Dunn Meadow, as well as its designation as the free speech area and assembly ground on the Bloomington campus.

The next three recommendations were each suggested by respondents in roughly equal numbers. First, respondents indicated that the Jordan River was one of the most well-liked characteristics of Dunn Meadow, but its banks should be cleaned and maintained periodically. Second, many respondents complained about pet owners' lack of consideration for other Dunn Meadow users. With this in mind, signs should be posted on all exterior limits of the Meadow emphasizing owners' responsibility for cleaning up after their pets while in Dunn Meadow. Third, a drinking fountain should be installed conveniently located near the middle bridge on the north bank of the Jordan River to accommodate the 78% of Dunn Meadow users who stay more than fifteen minutes.

The next recommendation for improving the physical environment of Dunn Meadow is to rebuild the stage located on the south side of the Jordan River. The research team believes the current stage is a potential liability for the University and should be made more structurally sound and aesthetically pleasing.

According to Huebner (1989), a campus environment can influence the physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being of students. The purpose of this study was to identify the activities that occur during the summer in Dunn Meadow, who participates in these

activities, and how the perceptions of the intended purpose of Dunn Meadow compared to the observed purpose. Further study of Dunn Meadow is suggested to obtain more information regarding the Human Aggregate Approach and the influence of the environment upon students. Studying Dunn Meadow during different periods of the academic year, such as August, December, and March is also recommended.

Implications

In light of the information obtained from this environmental assessment, campus officials should consider qualitative and quantitative assessment of significant areas on campus as a means of learning more about why specific settings become important to their constituents. Environmental assessments are also valuable in identifying who uses these settings, and for what purposes these areas are used as compared to their intended purposes. Understanding the history and functions of significant settings on campus, as well as their uses and space efficiency, is important in developing an attractive, unique institution whose setting communicates its purpose well and generates a positive public image.

The research team has attempted to demonstrate the process and value of performing an environmental assessment for an outdoor campus setting. The process of data collection and methods of analysis used in this study are examples of how such an assessment might be conducted. Although these worked best for this study of Dunn Meadow, each assessment requires a combination of different processes and methods, depending upon the needs and purposes of the evaluation.

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