



Capital Planning and Space Management

The Furniture and Workplace Program at Stanford University May 2008

Capital Planning and Space Management has been developing a comprehensive Workplace and Furniture Program since the beginning of 2007. The program is a holistic approach to furniture and workplace practices that:

- Support the University space guidelines;
- Promote ergonomic and healthy work environments;
- Maximize sustainability in furniture choices;
- Create high quality, durable and long-term furniture solutions;
- Enable flexibility in design so that furniture can be reused, moved, and “tweaked” to meet changing program needs; and
- Leverage Stanford’s overall buying power in furniture purchasing to achieve better service and more competitive pricing.

This new program is particularly important at this time, because of the unprecedented scope of furniture and workplace volume represented in Stanford’s capital plan. The program is being rolled out in the following phases.

PHASE 1 – Research

The furniture program began with research and benchmarking about Stanford’s current furniture practices, together with research about peer schools and how they approach furniture planning. This involved interviews, meetings and focus group sessions with schools, administrative units, project managers and the procurement department at Stanford, as well as with external vendors and consultants. We also conducted telephone interviews with peer schools and colleagues. This research has supported the development of the key objectives outlined above.

PHASE 2 – Procurement and the Choice of Two Key Vendors

The next step in the furniture program was to convene a committee made up of facility coordinator representatives from the Schools and Administrative Units and led by Procurement and Capital Planning/Space Management. This committee met throughout the Fall of 2007. In February of 2008, the committee selected two preferred furniture vendors, Steelcase and Knoll, to be the leading furniture providers for the University.

Below are key points about this choice of two preferred furniture vendors:

1. The purpose was to narrow the field to leverage Stanford's buying power in our upcoming Capital Plan projects. Both Knoll and Steelcase have the breadth of products and array of resources to service Stanford. Most importantly, they adhere to University initiatives of promoting ergonomic and healthy work environments, maximizing sustainability in furniture choices, and creating high quality and long term furniture solutions.
2. The intent also is to obtain better service for Stanford customers through the development of dedicated service teams from the preferred vendors. The vendors have been charged to identify and create a process whereby service improves in the next 12 months. Metrics and meetings are being set in place to measure performance and to help the vendors increase service levels. If the preferred vendor's team and service process do not improve or become an issue, Stanford will have the option to replace vendors and select other options.
3. It is critical to our on-campus clients that we create a platform of solutions from Knoll and Steelcase that provide cost benchmarks and workplace concepts to accompany the University's Space Guidelines. This will help the schools and administrative units to develop readily available furniture options at a range of price points.
4. Although the intent of the preferred vendor approach is to consider the two vendors for all major new or renovations projects, there will be instances where the preferred vendors may not be the best fit. For instance, a school or area might already have made an investment in systems furniture with another vendor. In those instances, schools and administrative units have the option to choose the appropriate solution for their needs.

PHASE 3 - Concept Development

Within the Furniture and Workplace Program, Capital Planning and Space Management is developing concepts that embrace change management, ergonomics and flexible solutions that are applicable to Stanford's workplace environments. For example, we have developed a "Kit of Parts" approach to furniture and workplace design which emphasizes holistic ergonomics and sustainable solutions that maximize flexibility, re-configurability and mobility of furniture pieces. The "Kit of Parts" is a concept whereby a minimum number of furniture pieces are chosen for a broad array of office needs. These parts then can be moved from one workplace setting to another, creating flexibility and easy changing of environments.

In the Fall of 2007, the "Kit of parts" was applied to an office renovation project in Building 60. Similarly, a "Kit of Parts" is being developed for the Stanford @ Porter Drive Project which will be implemented in the summer of 2008. Our goal is to share these concepts with facility coordinators, architectural consultants and vendor teams. These concepts together with the product portfolio of our vendors and the space guidelines will become the platform from which we initiate our workplace planning in the coming years.

PHASE 4 – Academic Workplace Website Information

Phase 4 will bring together the information outlined above into an easy to use website where principles, concepts, project examples, case-studies, guidelines, ready made solutions and a variety of options will be described. Steelcase and Knoll products will be defined and outlined in the website. This will provide the University with immediate and necessary knowledge to create the very best academic workplaces possible.