

# Evolution of the Health Sciences Library Commons: 1985 - Present

## Generation 1: 1985-1990

### General Information

Name: Health Sciences Microlab  
Governance: Health Sciences Classroom  
Services  
Dates: 1985-1990  
Size: 1688 square feet  
Staff: 2.5 FTEs, 8 part time students



A 1983 IBM PC XT with green monochrome phosphor screen and 10MB hard disk drive  
By Ruben de Rijcke - <http://dendmedia.com/vintage/> - Own work, CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3610862>



A rendering of the 1986 Macintosh

### Equipment

#### Macs and PCs

- 24 'Classic' Macintosh and 12 IBM 286 PCs with monochrome monitors
- PCs were donated by the School of Public Health, Macs were donated by an early grant from Apple.
- Floppy disc drives
- Slow vendor proprietary networking - only used for printing
- Sheet-fed dot matrix printers
- Student computer lab - primary use was word processing and SPSS statistical software



8-inch floppy disks, a type of disk storage composed a flexible disk of magnetic storage medium enclosed in a piece of square plastic. This size quickly was discarded in favor of the smaller 5.25 and 3.5 inch floppy disks. The latter can still be used today with the help of an external USB floppy disk drive.  
Adobe Stock | #75395374

# Generation 2: 1991 - 1999

## General Information

Name: Health Sciences Teaching Learning Center (TLC)

Governance: UW-IT, then UW Health Sciences Administration

Dates: 1991-1999

Size: 4043 square ft

## Equipment

Operating systems evolved over the period from early MacOS, DOS 3.1 to later MacOS, Windows 3, and then Windows 95

- Computers: 40 Macs, 40 PCs
- More capable Mac 11 and IBM 386 machines with color monitors
- Small hard drives (only in megabytes)
- Local-only non-proprietary ethernet network running over co-ax cable - this was pre-internet, the lab was not connected to any outside resources
- File, application, and print servers
- Dot matrix and B/W laser-printing with a bill and coin-fed vendor managed printing

## Renovation

First large-scale renovation of the Commons space

- Expanded into the T348A space, adding 2005 square feet of lab space
- Added small training classroom (T-340, 350 square feet for basic computing classes
- Added electrical to the T-351 and T-348 spaces. electrified the computer tables

## Student Computer Lab

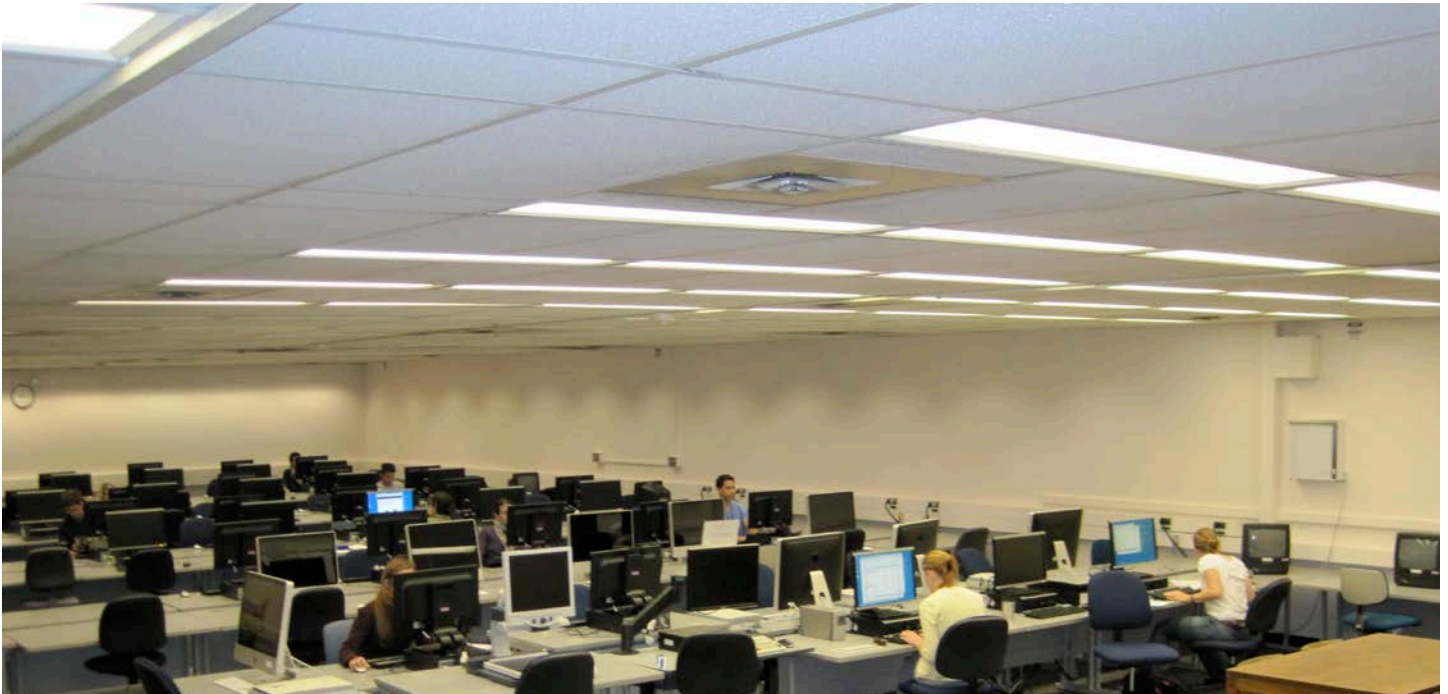
Primary use was Microsoft Office, multiple statistical packages and medical education applications



An assortment of Personal System/2 by IBM in various form factors, released in 1987. These used 3.5 floppy disks and the VGA video standard, providing a palette of 262,144 colors. These computers would have run Windows 3.0.

By Raymangold22 - Own work, CCO, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=37299547>

# Generation 3: 2000-2015



View of the Commons computer lab in 2010 - Retrieved from the HSL Commons Archive

## General Information

Name: Health Sciences Learning Commons  
Governance: UW Health Sciences Administration - Moved from a library ownership print model to Campus computing 'dawgprints' printing solution  
2000-2015  
6803 square feet  
1 FTE, 8 part time students  
STFC funding

## Equipment

- Computers: Mostly PC (100), Some Mac (20)
- Larger capacity PC hard drives (gigabytes)
- Added 'smart board' projectors to each of the 4 classrooms
- STF funding secured continuing operation and modernization thru this period, with hardware getting replaced every 4 years.
- 10-baseT ethernet networking, attached lab network to campus backbone, added internet tools such as browsers when they became popularized. Upgraded the speed of the network over time.
- Added Wireless capability when it became

available campus-wide

- Removed the dedicated lab file servers. Much of the educational software loaded locally on file servers either migrated to the larger local hard drives or migrated to the web.

## Renovation

Turned T351 into 2 classrooms, added 2 more classrooms for a total of 4 teaching spaces  
Removed T-340 training room, turned that space into help desk and manager's office  
Added additional power

## Student Computer Lab

The 'student computer lab' evolved in this period to a classroom lab in support of classroom instruction. Heavy use by courses to teach the software tools and course concepts in hands-on instruction.

# Generation 4: 2016 - Present

## General Information

- Name: Health Sciences Commons
- Governance: Health Sciences Library
- 2016-Present
- 6803 square feet
- 1 FTE, 1 part time student
- STFC funding

## Equipment

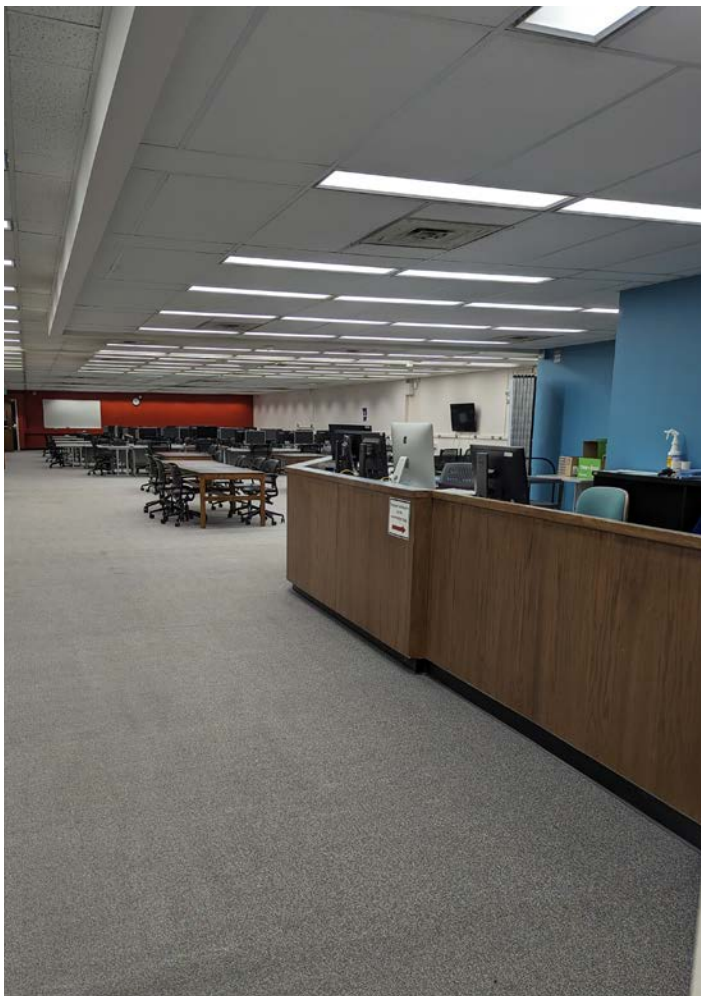
- All PC (120)

## Student Computer Lab

The evolution of exams and testing: By 2016, use of the Commons changed due to UW's School of Medicine laptop curriculum requirement. With each student required to supply their own laptop, the demand for a drop in computer center reduced.



View of the Commons computer lab in 2023 (above) and view from the help desk (left) - photos taken July 24, 2023



UW Health Sciences Library

HSL saw an opportunity to partner with the UW School of Medicine to pilot student exams for Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) and Graduate Medical Education (GME) in the Commons, in order to establish the need for a future testing center. Between 2017-2022, exams and tests were hosted in the Commons in order to learn more about the future needs of instructors and students. The convenience of having the Library host and provide technical support provided a strategy for future considerations. Since then, the Commons has been hosting School of Medicine UME and GME board exams on a regular basis. These exams are conducted in a supervised, proctored setting with PCs.