



Reimagining the Food Pantry Experience at Louisiana Tech by an Interprofessional Student Team

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Nutrition Input

Background

Food pantries on college campuses are becoming more common across the United States, and Louisiana Tech University is no exception. When students access this student resource, they sometimes experience emotions of shame, embarrassment, and awkwardness. They may also assume that healthy food options will not be available. Stigmatization is an ongoing concern for those needing assistance. Space planning for student food pantries can be challenging as often space is limited as well as the funds for renovation.

Purpose

An interprofessional student team, one Nutrition & Dietetics major and one Architecture major sought to reimagine the food pantry for students and volunteers. This project aimed to minimize negative emotions by creating a pantry environment that supports dignity with a "food shopping" experience focused on healthy food options. It also sought to improve the functionality of the pantry footprint with the key goal of enabling students and volunteers to move freely throughout the pantry while managing inventory efficiently.

Methods and Materials

Informed by the Theory of Planned behavior and incorporating Color and Nudge Theories, the team began by interviewing key stakeholders and collaborated with faculty. They then developed a plan for re-imagining the pantry.

Results

The proposal included reorganization of shelving and with added floating shelves, cabinetry with an integrated pull out worktable, a new color scheme, workflow improvements, and relocation of cold storage. A designated space for display of education materials and a shopping bag station was also included. A project priority list sensitive to available funding was created. A visual rendering of the recommendations were presented to collaborators and key stakeholders with positive results. Refer to poster presentation to view renderings.

Conclusions

Implementation will not only improve the functioning of the pantry but will bridge the gap between students' need for pantry services and wanting to maintain dignity. Approaching pantry improvements from different professional perspectives, by a collaborative student team resulted in a comprehensive proposal.

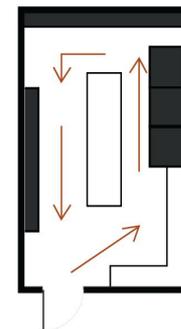
Architecture Input



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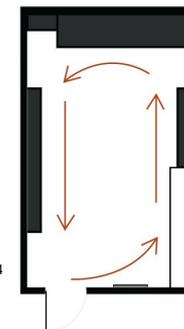
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8

1. current view from the door 2. current view from the back of room 3. current floor plan and flow of room 4. new floor plan and flow of room 5. new view from door 6. new view from back of room 7. new view of pantry shelves 8. new view of cabinet