

Proposal for Mitigating Heat in Sinclair 301

April 29, 2015

Background

In October 2009, Outreach College was informed that its operations would be relocated with half going to Sinclair 301 and half to a downtown location. In January 2010, one half of the college moved to the downtown location, but the move to Sinclair was delayed due to problems with infrastructure, primarily electrical. In January 2012, the other half of Outreach College, 35 people, finally moved into Sinclair 301. During the 2 years of planning and renovations to Sinclair 301 prior to the actual move, on numerous occasions concerns about excessive heat and inadequate ventilation were raised, but, because of the urgent need to free up space on campus, no actions were taken to address these problems. For the past 3.5 years, Outreach College personnel have been working in extreme conditions.

During 2014, the Environmental Research and Design Laboratory (ERDL) within the School of Architecture conducted a detailed study of the space. Their report documents the environmental problems within the space and recommends solutions for mitigating the heat and humidity problems. (Attached is a copy of the full report.) It is now time to take action on these recommendations. In order to do so, the occupants in Sinclair 301 need to be temporarily relocated.

The Outreach College would prefer developing a workable plan to have its personnel in Sinclair 301 comfortable and return the other Outreach staff, who are currently in rental space downtown, to the Mānoa campus, preferably in a consolidated Outreach office. Since the conditions in Sinclair are so severe, the more urgent matter of moving that group to a more comfortable space must be addressed, while work on bringing the “off campus” staff to campus can continue in an expedient manner.

Of immediate concern are the current warm temperatures and the rapidly approaching high temperatures of summer and fall. Having now worked 3 summers and falls in an unacceptably hot environment, Outreach College personnel cannot be expected to repeat this. These working conditions and lack of progress in addressing them are causing major morale problems. Personnel regularly take sick days because they cannot work in the hot environment and, recently, one employee announced her retirement, citing the poor working conditions as a factor in her decision. In addition, employees have made complaints to their unions and UHM Environmental Health and Safety Office.

Proposed action

In order to address the immediate and longer-term problems, we recommend the following:

- Temporarily relocate the music library to the space on the Diamond Head side of the second floor of Sinclair currently being cleared for the Student Success Center.

- Temporarily relocate the Outreach College personnel in Sinclair 301 to the space on the third floor of Sinclair currently occupied by the music library as soon as possible.
- Renovate Sinclair 301 to current standards of occupational comfort.
- Once the renovations are complete, Outreach College personnel and the music library will be returned to their original space and the second floor will be available for the most appropriate use.
- The operations of the Wong Audiovisual Center will not be affected by this proposal.

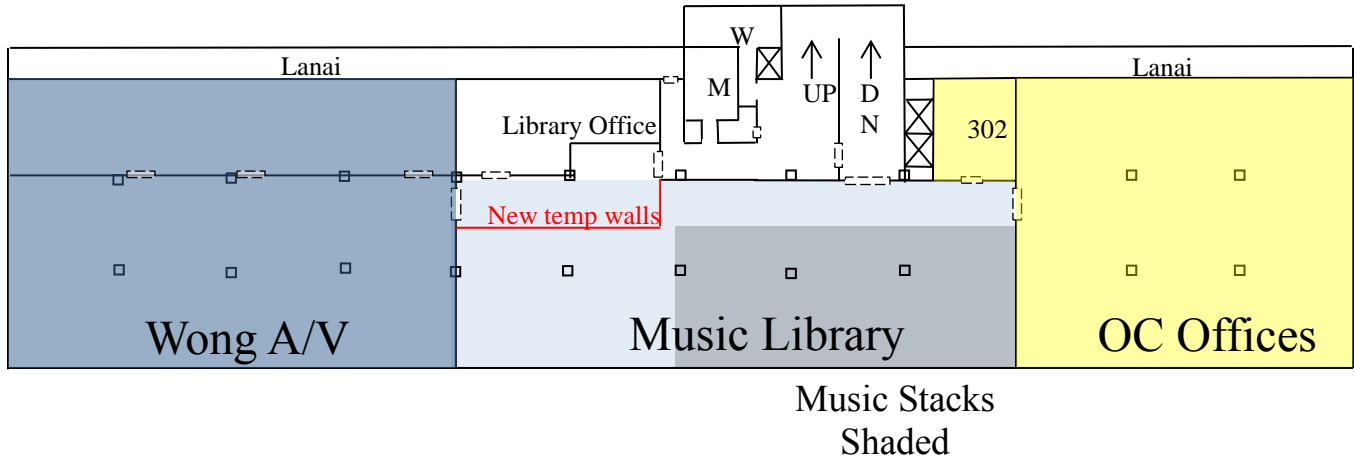
Figure 1 shows the floor plan for the third floor of Sinclair. In order to protect the equipment, documents with personal identifying information, and cash used by Outreach College in the course of its operations, the temporary space will have to be secured. Doing so will require the building of temporary walls, which will also maintain access to the Wong Audiovisual Center. These are noted in red on Figure 1. The main doors to the third floor adjacent to the elevators would become the entrance to Outreach College. Access to the Wong AV Center and the library office would be via the secondary entrance just past the restrooms.

This plan solves the immediate problem of Outreach College personnel working in hot summer conditions. But, it also provides an efficient way of clearing the Sinclair 301 space for renovations. Once renovated, the space will provide a test site for alternative, more energy efficient ways of cooling spaces on campus without full air conditioning.

Issues to be addressed

1. While moving the books in the music library from the third to the second floor will be labor intensive, it is logistically simple. However, more space will need to be cleared on the second floor. There is currently room for about 90% of the music collection. The shelving will have to be moved with the collection.
2. We do not know if there is sufficient electrical capacity in the space for the Outreach College offices. An assessment will need to be made and options developed to address a possible shortfall.
3. The logistics of moving the Outreach College offices are complex. For example, since the desks are currently integrated into the modular offices, a decision will need to be made as to how much of the modular furniture to move. In a large part, the solutions will depend on the expected duration of the temporary move.
4. Since summer is a very busy time for Outreach College, we will need to carefully schedule the move. It may be advantageous to move a few people to the downtown office to ensure continued services to students during summer session.
5. Space will have to be made to accommodate access for construction workers to Sinclair 301 through the temporary offices.

Figure 1: Sinclair Third Floor



Outreach Offices: 9 quadrants = 5,000 sqft
Music Library: 10 quadrants = 5,555 sqft
New Hallway: ~555 sqft