

Ecosystem Analysis: Community Cooking In Stratford



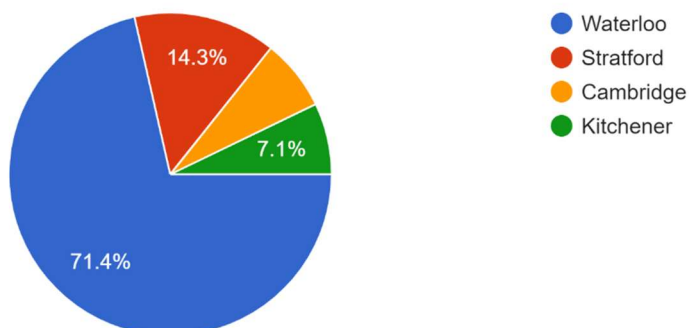
Introduction

This report will help to understand this issue better by examining the more specific problem of students lacking an education in food and cooking. The major components of the ecosystem around this issue at the Stratford campus are: the people involved at the school namely the staff, the instructors, and the students; the Stratford campus building and it's utilities; and the community and resources of Stratford as a city. Understanding the basis of these aspects and how they interact with each other will help showcase the best course of action to spearhead this situation.

1. The People In Stratford

The most important part of this ecosystem are the people directly involved in the Stratford school because without any people there can be no community. There is less than one thousand people involved at the Stratford campus; this includes all three categories of staff, students, and instructors. In the proposal it is stated that a focus on strictly *students* living in *Stratford* would be the best course of action. However, this is only a fraction of the total Census of people as it excludes two categories of people; the staff and instructors. Another issue is that in the category it does focus on it includes less than half that population since a majority of students live in waterloo or elsewhere and commute for class, as is Showcased in Fig 1. Evaluating the ratio between the different groups of people, GBDA

Figure 1.



students exceed the rest of the

population by approximately 100:1.

Staff only has 7 people total, there are 24 instructors (currently), 30

MDEI students; who are new each

year, with the remaining amount of

people being GBDA students; having about 600-800 enrolled across all four years of the program.

Although there are few instructor's and staff, they are still a large influence on community at the Stratford campus because without them

the campus could not exist. Staff is frequently trying to inform students about various things and take care of all the administrative functions. Instructors are needed to teach the courses and some

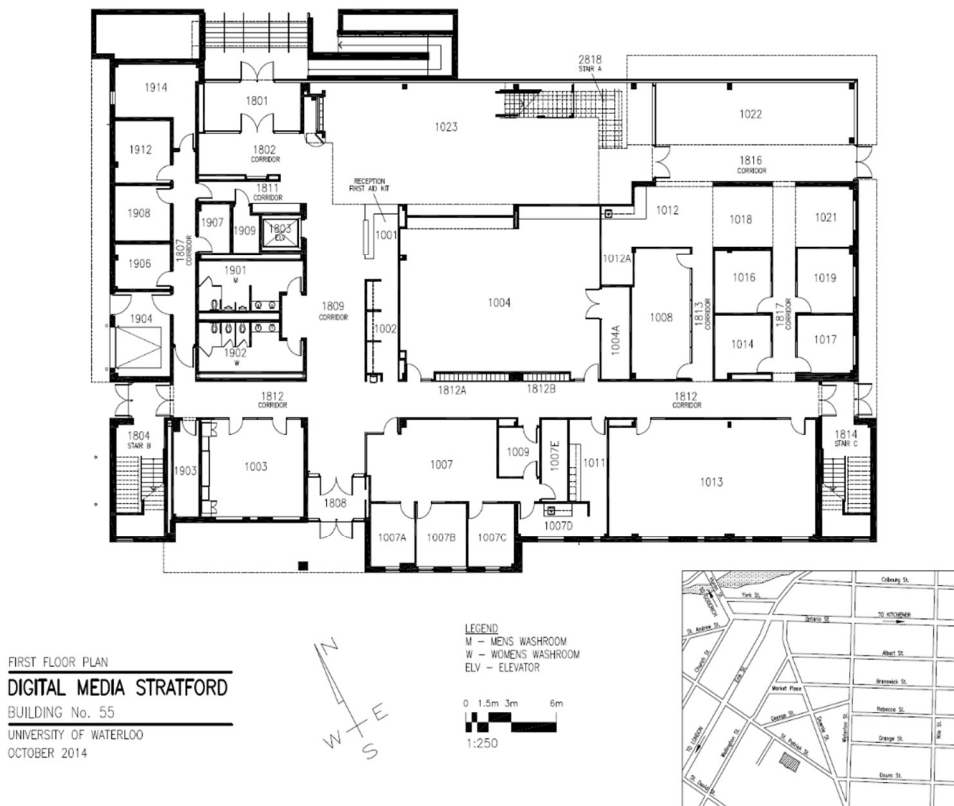
instructors realize how long the days are for students and have a supply of snacks on hand at all times.

So, a majority of the people are GBDA students, many of which reside in Waterloo, but that does not mean the other groups should be excluded from discussion and research.

2. The Facility

The next large component is the facility of the Campus. It is a 42,000 square foot building with 3 stories. Fairly small compared to buildings on main campus, such as the Applied Health Science building, which showcases a 56,000 square floor plan and 4 stories tall. Although it is a smaller building it is proportionate to the size of the programs that use it. It has a collection of classrooms, media labs, collaboration rooms, video and audio production studios, and many other specific use rooms for student use. It has a very open concept for example, most rooms that can be closed with a door have glass walls so they are extremely visible from the outside. Taking a look at Figure 1., the floor plan for the first floor of the facility, a majority of the large rooms and space is for student use and lounging, specifically the Atrium (1023), the only classroom on this floor (1004), and the student lounge area (1022). This is the same for the second and third floor, with large open areas for student use taking up most of the space

while offices are hidden away in the corners of buildings. The facility was built keeping in mind with



what type of programs would be functioning there. The Building looks aesthetically pleasing, which opposes the general likeness of most the University of Waterloo Main Campus buildings. There is an award-winning Christie MicroTiles display, that is the largest of it's kind in the world, showcased in the atrium of the facility. The

building was obviously developed to support the design centered programs working in it. There are some snacks available to students, as well as access to microwaves. However, unlike a lot of main campus buildings there is no on campus restaurant or café of any kind. Altogether, the campus seems to be geared towards uplifting students as best as possible but, there is little access to food or the ability to make food on campus.

3. Stratford Resources

Looking at the Stratford community about food we can break it into two sections: restaurants, and grocery stores. Restaurants being somewhere for people to eat out, and grocery stores a location for people to purchase ingredients to make a meal at home. Starting with grocery stores, Stratford has a variety of grocery stores however, a majority of them a quite a distance from the Stratford campus.

Most of the cheaper options, such as Walmart, Food Basics, and No Frills are a 30+ minute walk away from the Stratford campus. Being such a distance, going grocery shopping in Stratford would only be relevant for people living *in Stratford*. Now for the people living in Stratford, especially students who rarely have access to a vehicle, this takes up a lot of time that most students don't have. This leaves the option of restaurants very appealing to both students residing in Stratford and elsewhere. The issue with this is that eating out is expensive, especially in Stratford. Stratford being a tourist town, a large majority of its restaurants are expensive and the ones that are not are far from campus. This leaves the most realistic option for students, no matter their location, to be to prepare food to bring with them more often than not.

Conclusion

In Sum, there is a lot of obstacles outside of a lack of knowledge for cooking that hinder students' ability to properly fuel themselves while on campus. With the Stratford community itself offering students little access to food unless they want to pay a fortune, and the facility offering a minimum access to food, the burden lies on the people themselves. A majority of students already lack knowledge about how to cook efficiently, properly, and make it taste good. With a large number of obstacles making it a challenge to cook for students at Stratford, even for those who are very good, student education about cooking is an issue that hinders the community at the Stratford School of Interaction and Design and it should be looked into more aggressively.

