

2018 RESEARCH STUDY BRIEF:

An Exploration of Lactation Policy and Lactation Facilities Across US Higher Education Campuses

The Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) and the University of Pennsylvania collaborated in a nationwide study to explore lactation policy and facilities in US colleges and universities. The levels, quality, and availability of lactation spaces and supports across campuses for breastfeeding staff, students, and guests have not been widely documented.

The findings and perspectives from this survey could be of interest to other businesses or organizations informing or strengthening their own lactation support program.

NOTE: *The three-page infographic accompanies this brief.*

Access to Lactation Space & Fair Labor Standards Act

The Fair Labor Standards Act was amended in 2010 to require employers to provide reasonable break time and “a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk.” The location provided must be functional as a space for expressing breast milk. If the space is not dedicated to the nursing mothers’ use, it must be available when needed in order to meet the statutory requirement. Some states and municipalities have implemented legislation expanding the reach of this requirement, but many new mothers are still not covered.

While many higher education institutions have recognized their role in accommodating lactating faculty and staff, less has been done to address the needs of students since labor laws do not generally cover them. Lactation accommodation planning for breastfeeding mothers who are visiting (for academic, sporting, graduation, or other events) may also be insufficient on many campuses. Lack of appropriate lactation facilities may pose a serious barrier to the full participation of new mothers in academic life.

The purpose of this research study is to:

- help document the levels, quality, and availability of lactation spaces and supports across campus for breastfeeding staff, students, and campus visitors.
- provide initial documentation that will help colleges and universities move toward a best planning practice for planning policy, design, and amenities for lactation spaces.
- advance accessibility and environments of wellness in higher education.

Method of Data Gathering

An online survey was conducted with institutional members of the Society for College and University Planning. One member from each of 684 campuses was invited by email to participate and could delegate the response to a colleague more knowledgeable on their campuses’ lactation spaces and policies. Individuals representing 114 campuses participated in the survey.

Profile of Survey Respondents

The most frequent titles of respondents were in the areas of:

- 63% physical/facilities planning
- 25% administration and finance
- 11% human resources

Responses by size of undergrad enrollment the largest number of responses came from:

- 10% very large institutions (>30,000 undergrads)
- 30% large institutions (15,000- 30,000 undergrads)
- 33% medium size campuses (5,000-15,000 undergrads)
- 27% small campuses (<5,000 undergrads)

83% of the responding institutions had graduate student enrollment

Lactation Policy on Colleges and Universities

Does your institution have a lactation policy for faculty/staff?

- 56% Yes
- 28% No
- 16% Unsure

Does your institution have a lactation policy for students?

- 27% Yes
- 40% No
- 33% Unsure

Are faculty/staff and student lactation policies the same or different?

- 24% Identical or one policy
- 3% Different policies
- 73% Did not answer

Does your institution track lactation room use (per day or total number of users)?

(only among those who have at least one)

- 16% Yes (variable methods: sign in sheets, online calendars/schedules, access requests, door access card reports, survey)
- 59% No
- 25% Unsure

Is there a guideline or process for creating lactation spaces on campus?

- 68% Yes
- 22% No
- 11% Unsure

Yet the approaches for creating lactation spaces on different campuses vary enormously, and may reduce the quality and appropriateness of designated lactation spaces and their amenities to support breastfeeding mothers.

How are campuses selecting/creating lactation rooms?

33%	No standard process
20%	As requested/central process
12%	Construction standard includes one per building
11%	Concentration analysis to identify locations that would maximize access
11%	Space qualities
6%	Unclear/Informal
5%	Ad hoc/decentralized process
2%	Unknown

Dedicated Lactation Rooms

The survey asked about “dedicated” versus other types of lactation spaces. By dedicated, we mean they are private, not a bathroom, are permanently designated for lactation, and available to any individual who requires or requests lactation space. Law does not require dedicated lactation rooms, but they are becoming more of an expectation in the public spaces that women occupy.

Does your institution have dedicated lactation spaces?

90%	Yes
10%	No

While a high number of respondents were aware of dedicated lactation rooms, the number of individuals who were aware of their locations dropped considerably, as noted below.

Is there a directory of dedicated lactation spaces available for users to access online?

(only among those who have at least one)

50%	Yes
26.5%	No
23.5%	Unsure

Lack of publicly available and catalogued lactation spaces can force delays in the ability for faculty, staff, students, and visitors to access appropriate facilities to express milk, which causes discomfort, distress, risk of infection, and could undermine their milk production and supply.

Are you aware of any informal or temporary lactation spaces that do not meet the above definition of “dedicated”?

53%	Yes
47%	No

Participants were also asked about the percentage of their staff, faculty, and students who could access lactation space within five- to seven-minutes—a widely used guideline. Over 70% of survey respondents said that a dedicated lactation room could be accessed within that time frame.

Discussion

Increasing awareness of the need for lactation space, and knowledge of standards and best practices among campus planners and other decision-makers could improve support for lactating mothers in higher education.

Steering groups for the planning of lactation spaces may look different at different institutions and successful strategies may vary based on local and institutional resources. Planners, architects, human resources, campus administration and finance, individual departments, women's health experts, and outside consultants and funders may all be important contributors to the creation, design, and maintenance of lactation spaces.

Key Takeaways:

- There is wide variability between how campuses accommodate the needs of breastfeeding mothers.
- Most colleges and universities are doing something to accommodate breastfeeding mothers; some schools have model programs.
- Most institutions reported two to six different campus entities involved in the planning of their lactation spaces.
- Most survey respondents were in expansion mode with their programs (adding rooms, policies, or building support).
- Several schools stated they have experienced an increase in lactation accommodations only within the last few (five or less) years.
- Schools want to comply with the law, but focus on compliance may limit sensitivity to user needs.
- Campus and physical planners are essential to the planning teams that identify and create lactation spaces.
- Some schools responded they have a lack of need to formalize or expand their lactation program due to low numbers of requests/use or women figuring out their own accommodations (for example, using empty offices). NOTE: Reliance on culture, or sensitivity to individuals presenting a need may not be sufficient, equitable, or sustainable.
- Few used expertise of women's health/breastfeeding experts or diverse groups of potential users.
- Some incorporated lactation planning into other sustainability or diversity initiatives (e.g., gender neutral bathrooms).
- Better communication about the location of dedicated lactation rooms is essential so faculty, staff, students, and visitors to the campus can find them.

The three-page infographics that follow includes:

- frequent design amenities and hardware in lactation rooms
- who plans for lactation space
- funding for creating and/or maintaining lactation spaces

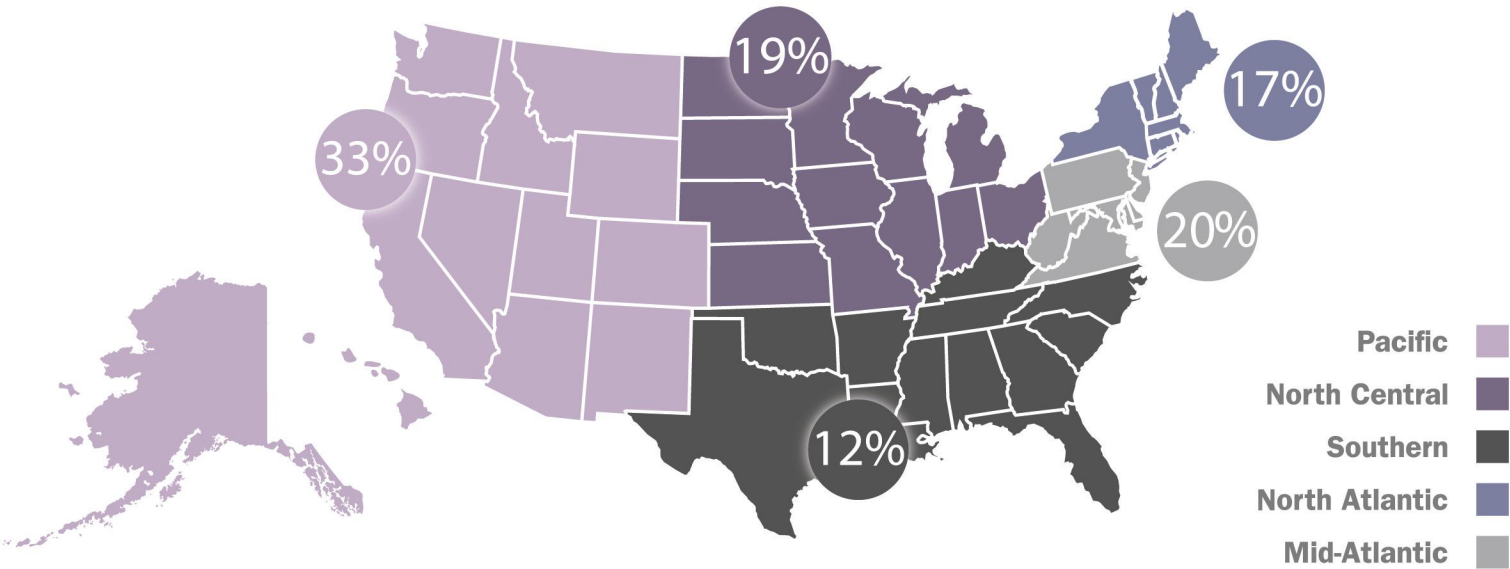
Visit www.scup.org/wellness

An Exploration of Lactation Policy and Lactation Facilities Across US Higher Education Campuses (Wellness Rooms)

Society for College and University Planning (SCUP)

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS % BY SCUP REGIONS

RESPONDENTS: 114



BACKGROUND

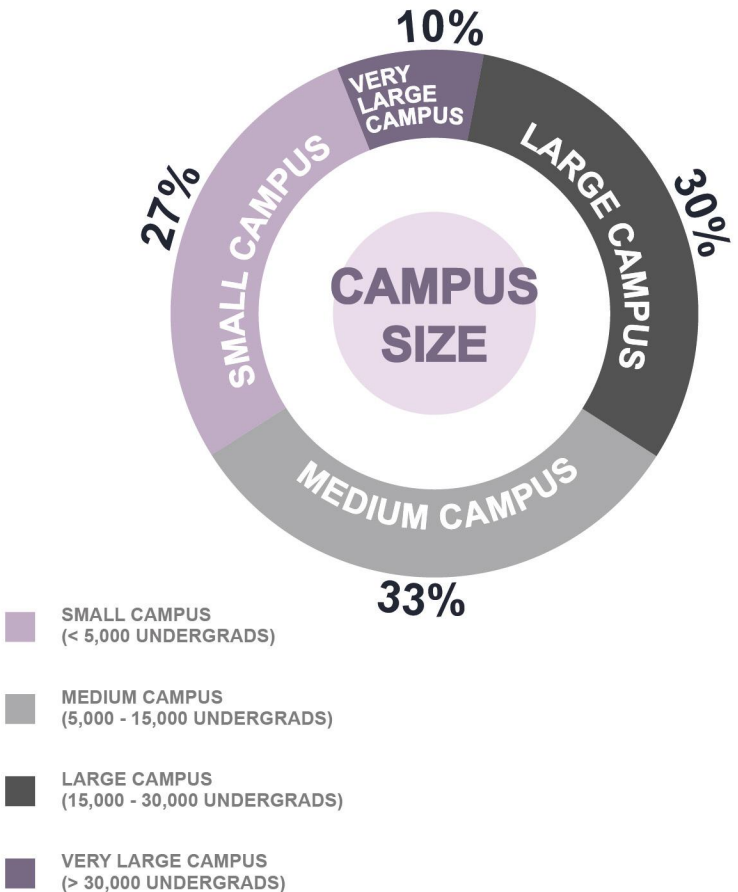
Access to appropriate lactation space is essential for new mothers to participate fully in work and study. The Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) and the University of Pennsylvania collaborated in a nationwide study to explore lactation policy and facilities in US colleges and universities. The Fair Labor Standards Act was amended in 2010 to require employers to provide reasonable break time and a private place for nursing mothers to express milk while at work. However, the levels, quality, and availability of lactation spaces and supports across campuses for staff, students, and guests have not been widely documented. This research is intended to help campuses identify best practices for planning policy, design, and amenities for lactation spaces. The American Institute of Architects also endorses a set of best practices for lactation space design and furnishings.

METHODS

An invitation to an online survey was emailed to 684 United States college and university campuses with one or more SCUP members. Campus representatives were chosen based on the most appropriate title for a response, but recipients could designate a knowledgeable colleague in any department to complete the survey. Individuals representing 114 campuses participated in the survey.

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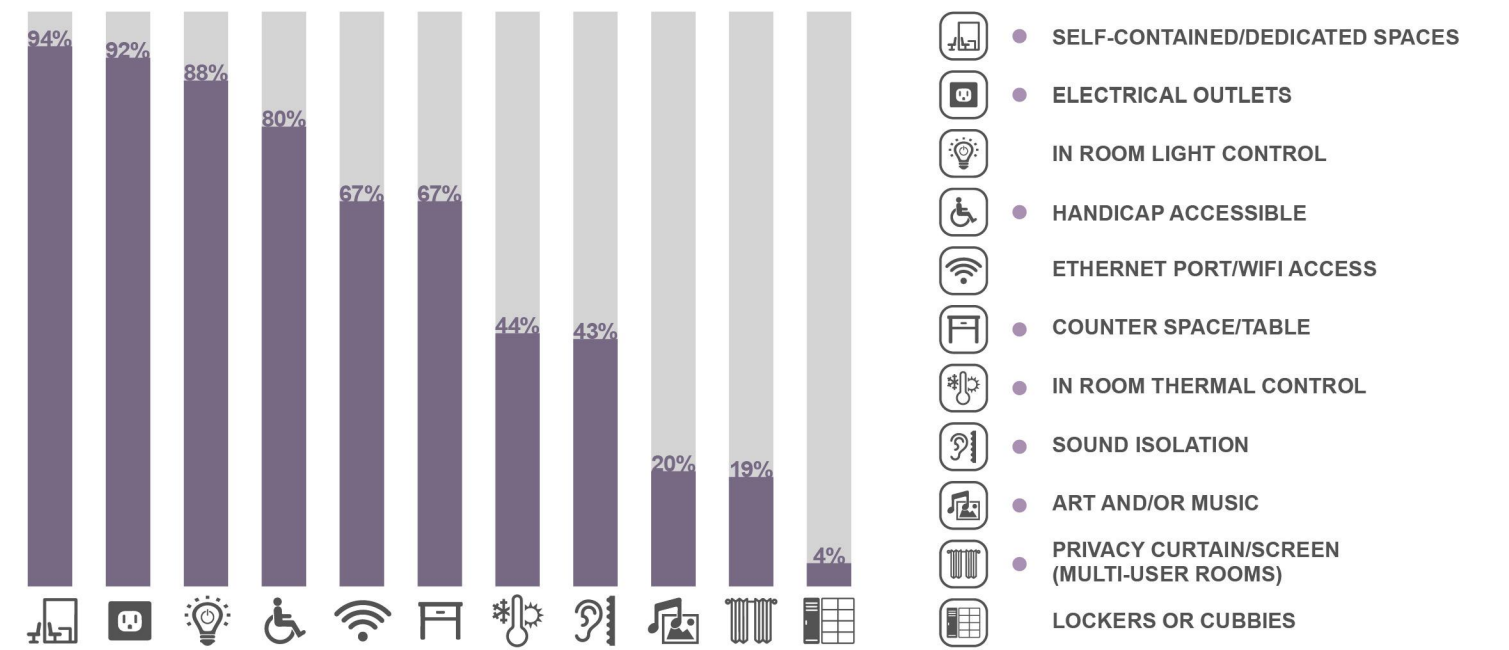
PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS % BY CAMPUS SIZE



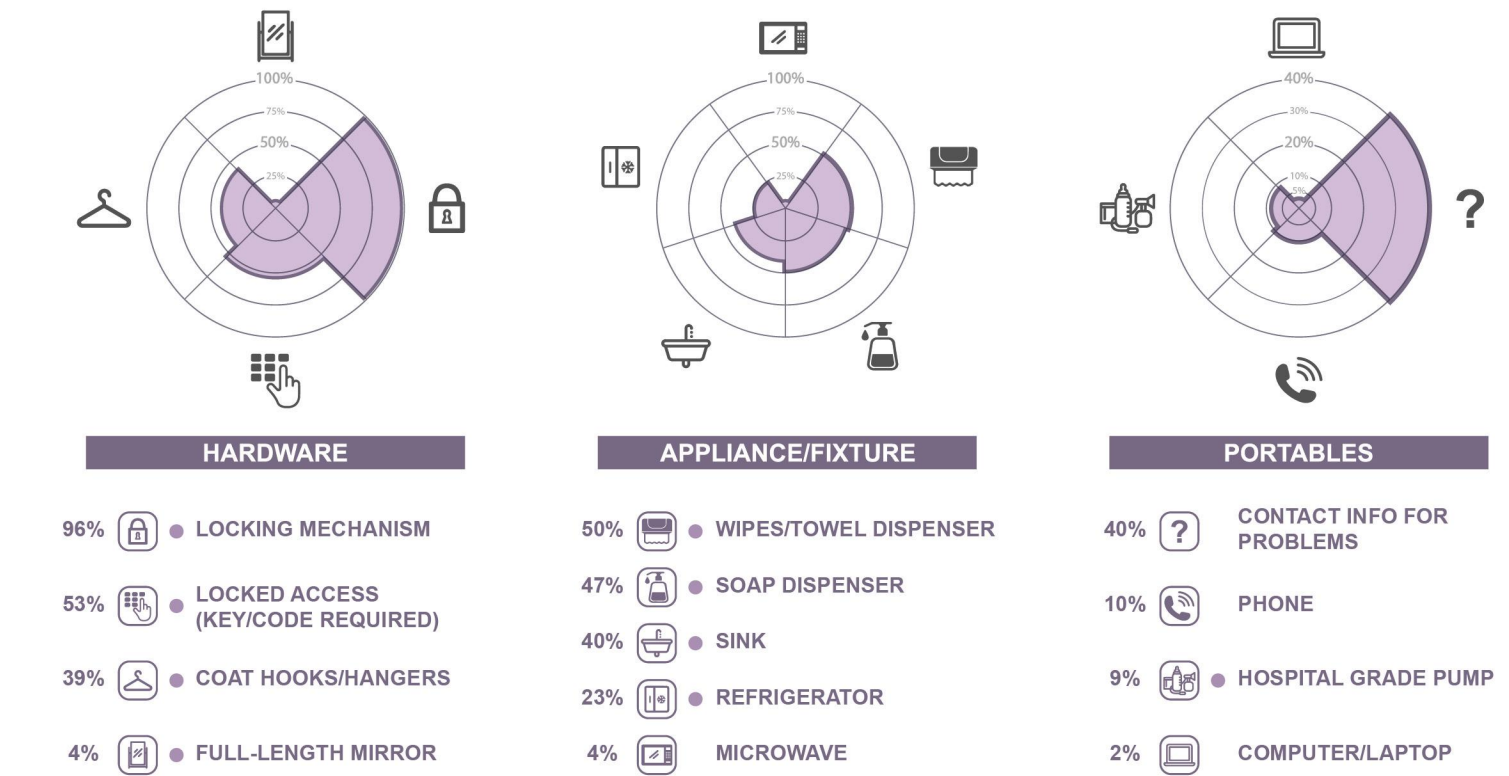
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Society for College and University Planning (SCUP)

LACTATION SPACES DESIGN AMENITIES



LACTATION SPACES

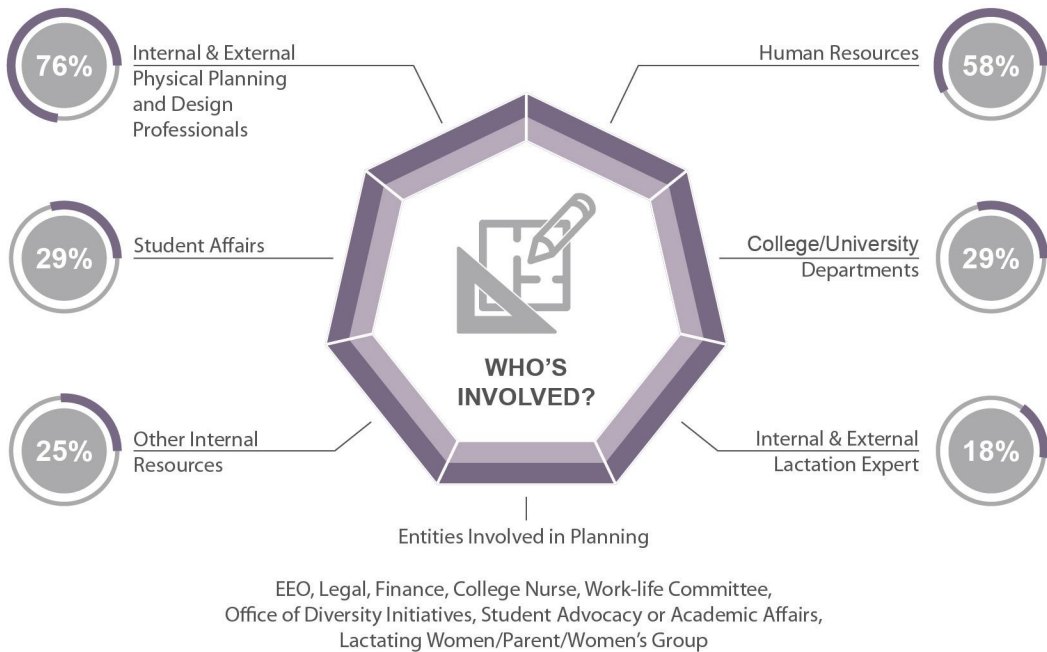


● RECOMMENDED IN AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS (AIA) BEST PRACTICE
<https://wellnessroomsite.wordpress.com/about/>

An Exploration of Lactation Policy and Lactation Facilities Across US Higher Education Campuses (Wellness Rooms)

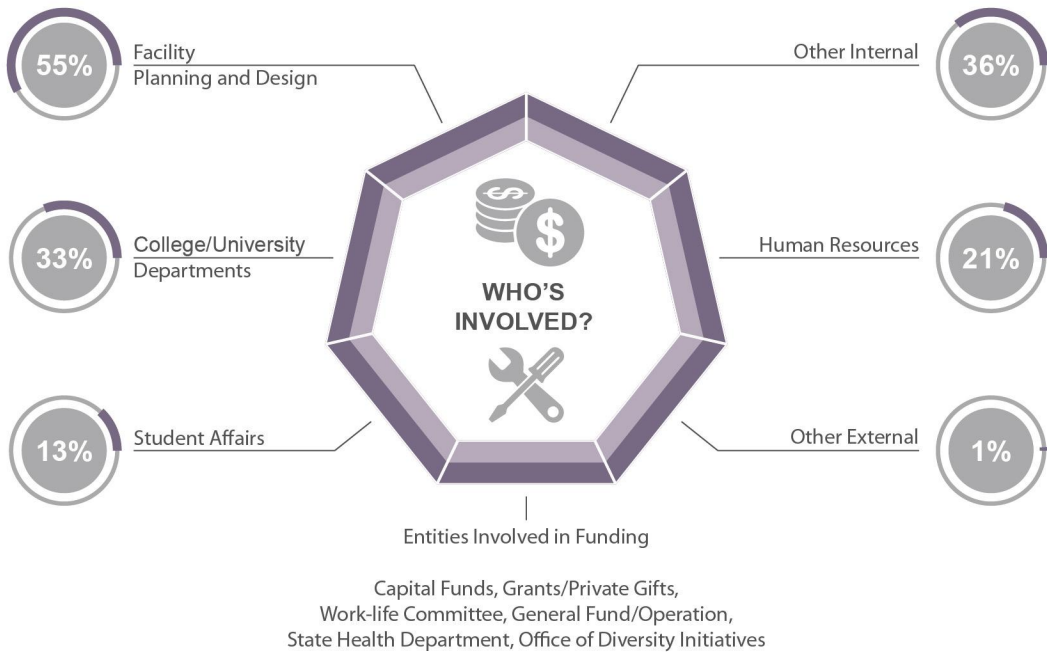
Society for College and University Planning (SCUP)

PLANNING FOR LACTATION SPACES



81% of respondents identified 2-6 of the entities above involved in planning lactation spaces.

FUNDING FOR CREATING AND/OR MAINTAINING LACTATION SPACES



52% of respondents identified 2-4 of the entities above involved in funding lactation spaces.