

Hokudai Connect Hub

Building stronger connections through an interactive shared community hub

Team 3: Bram, Hansani, and Mizuki

Nitobe College

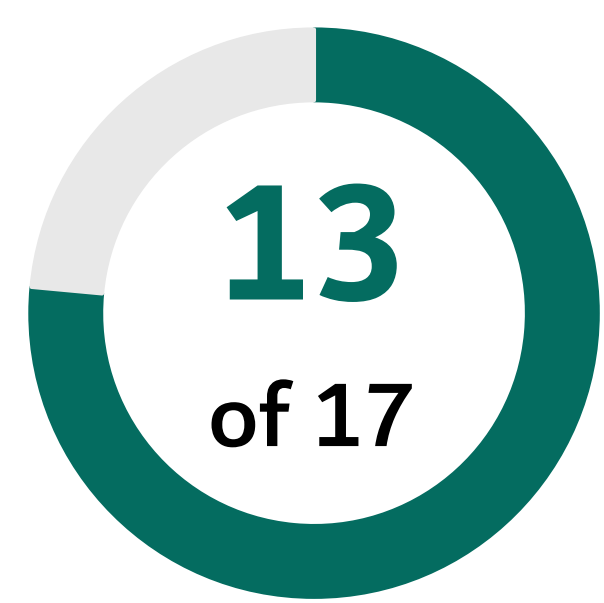
1. Research Question

How could Hokkaido University support more natural cross communication and public-facing research exchange through a more interactive shared community hub?

3. What We Found

Litany (Form)

13 of 17 supported a more open, informal space. Yet 15 of 17 rated interdisciplinary opportunities at the midpoint or below.



- Need for More Open and Informal Spaces
- Not sure / maybe
- No need

Systemic Causes (Interviews)

The strongest barriers were lack of time (7) and difficulty finding collaborators (6), not space alone.

Worldview (Interviews)

Busy academic staff need a clear reason to enter. Space can enable contact, but purpose and continuity make it meaningful.

In Their Words

"A low-threshold space alone is insufficient because an event or activity is still needed to initiate conversation."

"Posters alone are unlikely to attract attention. Research exposure needs accessible events, explanation, and follow-up conversation."

"Public research exposure must be adjusted to its audience because highly specialized research may be difficult for general visitors to understand..."

"I can't really explain...but I just don't feel like I belong there"

From Finding to Pilot

1. Weekly Research Coffee

One five-minute research introduction, then informal conversation.

2. Monthly Open Forum

Workshops, food events, public talks or prototype demonstrations.

3. Research Match Board

What I study / what I need / what I can share.

4. Shared Calendar + Curator

One visible schedule and a person who connects people and follows up.

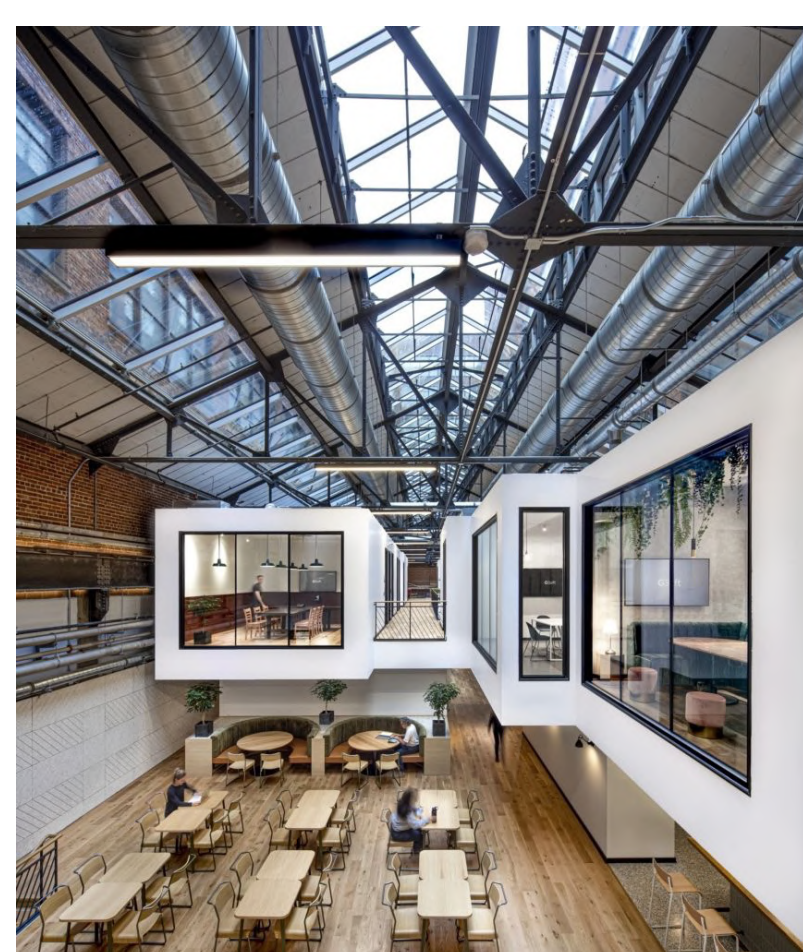
4a. Future Scenario 1



Activity Led – Adaptive Hub

Primary

One centrally located, low-threshold hub combines open social areas, research displays and private follow-up rooms. Recurring programs give busy staff a reason to enter.



Dream_Square

2. How We Studied It

We analyzed the problem with Causal Layered Analysis (CLA), then tested it with a broadly distributed form and a smaller set of layered interviews.

Litany

Existing shared spaces are rigid and hard to access for casual cross-faculty networking. They currently favor established official projects over spontaneous, early-stage collaboration.

Systemic Causes

Strict 30-day booking procedures, user-borne costs, and rigid allocations prioritize management over community building. This system heavily restricts flexible and exploratory use.

Worldview

Space is viewed as a heavily managed resource requiring a pre-defined project before access is granted. It is seen as a tool to support existing collaborations rather than a spark to create new ones.

Myth and Metaphor

"Shared space is a resource to manage, not a commons to grow."
"The door opens only after justification."



Form

17 responses, testing the surface claim



Interviews

5 layered conversations on causes and beliefs



Confirmed

each interview tested our draft scenario

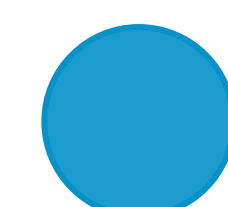
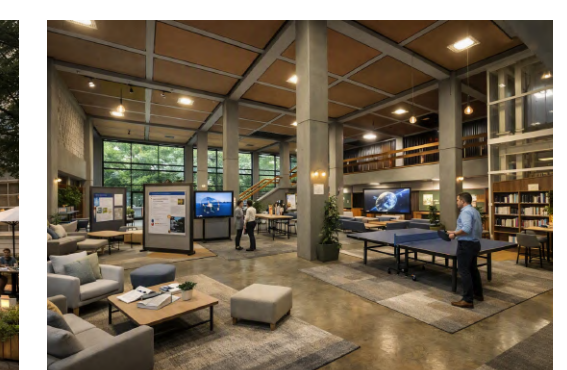


4b. Future Scenario 2



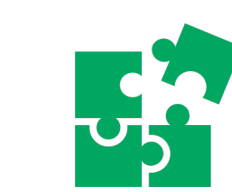
Distributed Network

Existing cafés, museums, lounges, classrooms and outdoor spaces host rotating interdisciplinary events, linked by one calendar and collaborator matching system.



Revival – Pilots

4c. Future Scenario 3



Public Research Commons

Selected research is translated into accessible exhibitions, small conferences and conversations for local and international visitors, with privacy where needed.



Hokudai Pods

5. Transformation Conditions for the Primary Future



Access Policy

One simple, low-cost booking system; exploratory use does not require an already-defined project.



Awareness

One shared calendar, clear signage, recurring programs and visible information on who may enter.



Physical Space

Central, visible, flexible, barrier-free, and able to shift between open and private use.



Cultural Assumption

Informal contact is recognized as legitimate research development, but space alone is not treated as the solution.