WHY RESEARCH CUBICLE DESIGN?
As an Architectural Studies student, the design of spaces has always interested me. Through my past two internships, I have begun to develop a sense of what I believe works well in office spaces, and what is limiting. The design of an office building can greatly affect the productivity, collaboration and efficiency level among employees. Within the two different work environments, I have encountered aspects that have limited my ability to be as productive and efficient as possible. As someone who will probably continue to spend the majority of her professional life working in an office space, I am drawn to researching what factors affect employees positively and negatively.

INITIAL QUESTIONS AT HAND
• How does the structure and design of the office affect productivity, collaboration, privacy and efficiency within Campus facilities?
• How do individual workspaces such as cubicles affect how employees interact with each other?

SUPPORTIVE FINDINGS

After each interview was completed I had discovered several themes and commonalities between the employees. Four themes stood out to me the most: office layout, collaboration, cubicle design, and job position.

OFFICE LAYOUT

Interviewee: Have you been with campus facilities your entire career?
Employee C: Home is my entire working career but with Flexo, yes. I've been with Campus Facilities, and I was over there with the energy management building, but the problem with that was it was kind of isolating from everything. This is more central to people (landscaping and construction) that I have to deal with, and other people that I would have to deal with in facility operations. I was in little offices down there, it was too isolating.

CUBICLE LAYOUT AND DESIGN

Interviewer: Were you working with walls that were the same height as your desk or walls that were slightly taller?
Employee D: I believe in an open door policy. If somebody needs to ask a question or if I need to ask a question, Jim is kind of at my fingertips we kind of work together – work issues out together. The disadvantage would be when I'm discussing something in length with a consultant or a contractor I feel that I might be bothering others around me so again there's usually a conference room open to where I can step in and have that discussion.

CUBICLE LAYOUT AND DESIGN

Interviewer: Did you feel like you knew people around you when you were in that space (previous cubicle)?
Employee A: Yes, absolutely.
Interviewer: Because you had to work with them or the cubicle also allowed you to know the people over there?
Employee A: Um both, yes.

Cubicle Layout and Design

Three out of the five employees that I interviewed stated they would prefer an enclosed office over the cubicle that they were currently in. The only design issue, other than having an enclosed office, was to have more desk space. There was still a sense that having a four wall, corner office signified that you had reached the top. For instance, employee E stated, "Most of the time your enclosed offices are for your managers and I haven't made that rung on the ladder yet." However, not every employee that I interviewed felt this way. Employee D stated that, "At first I did [feel that way], but it took me a while to get used to the open cubicle environment, but now, I'm pretty easy going when it comes to that stuff and I really don't matter to me. Actually, it has its advantages and disadvantages."

Overall the cubicles appear to be promoting a sufficient amount of productivity, privacy and efficiency among the employees with little layout issues.

JOB POSITION In Relation To Workspace

Every employee has different needs to successfully complete their job. Most of these needs are based on what the person's job title and duties are. Three of the employees said that they spend 50% or more of their time outside of the office. The needs of an employee who spends almost 100% of their day in their office is vastly different than someone who is on campus over half of the time. For the person who is at their desk most of the day, their top needs are probably being near the printer and the employees that they communicate with the most. As for the person who is mostly out of the office, their number one need may be having access to a phone and computer. The employee's productivity level will be affected by how quickly and efficiently they can communicate with people on job sites. What your position is within a work environment is important and each employee's workplace should be tailored to his or her specific needs.

In conclusion, I believe that I would need to interview more employees in order to reach a comprehensive conclusion to my observations regarding office cubicle space. Out of the five employees that I was able to interview, similarities were already being discovered that could be expanded upon if there was more time to interview a larger number of people. Based on my finding it is evident that the cubicles are, for the most part, working for many of the employees at Campus Facilities. I would conclude that my main suggestion would be to rearrange the building by department. Some of the departments are grouped together, but others are spread throughout. To create an environment that is highly collaborative and efficient, the employees that work together the most would benefit from being near each other.