



Clutch campus bathrooms when you have a shy bladder

UMass bathrooms can get crowded, but some hidden gems can help you avoid that restroom awkwardness.

By: Brian Choquet, Campus News Editor ~ September 19, 2019

A few days ago, a lost student unfamiliar with the weird layout of the Integrated Learning Center's fourth floor shyly approached me while I scribbled a few notes. She greeted me with a standard hello and asked where the nearest bathroom was. I pointed her down the hall, explained the eventual right turn and she went on her merry way.

It's always nice helping people, but I felt bad. I never liked the bathrooms in the ILC. They're too intimate for my liking in an area that sees an unrelenting flow of foot traffic during regular class times. But some people see a bathroom as just a bathroom. They won't have any objections to them as long as they're clean and don't have a line. These are the type of people who simply ask, "Where is the closest bathroom?"

I've never dug public restrooms, though. No one really does, but spending a lifetime with a shy bladder makes you resent them in a unique way. They're a source of awkward and embarrassing pain. I'm not alone on this either. Nearly 21 million Americans live with some form of a shy bladder. For us, we don't just want to find a close bathroom, we want to find the 'clutchest' one: a bathroom you can count on for not only privacy but for convenience as well.

While my bladder may have adapted to being on a densely populated college campus, I still hold a few clutch spots close to my heart when the campus is flooded with people and I'm in need of a quick pee.

1- Curry Hicks Physical Education Building

You know those buildings that you walk by a million times, but never step foot in? Curry Hicks is one of those buildings. It's mostly used as office space for the Fine Arts Center and serves no immediate value for a majority of students. Most probably know it as another building they pass while walking to and from Southwest Residential Area. Even a curious explorer like myself only ventured inside because I started working for the FAC.

The ugly exterior is slightly deceptive and juxtaposes the nostalgic architecture of its interior. The same goes for its bathroom located on the main floor. The design takes you back to an older generation of UMass Amherst. One that pre-dates automatic toilets and hand-dryers built into the sinks. Their little usage also means they remain clean and mostly untouched since their last cleaning depending on the time you visit. My only gripe is that the stall doors don't actually lock. They'll stay closed, but a random gust of wind could easily blow open the door.

2- 22nd Floor of W.E.B. Du Bois Library

UMass' 26-story library is the pinnacle of our existence at the flagship. No matter where you are on campus, it's there in the skyline. Back at home, I call it Amherst's North Star. It's central location also means you'll find yourself in, or around it, at some point during your college career. Sadly, that also means the small, dimly lit bathrooms are in constant use. However, I've found that the higher you go, the fewer people are around. That means the 22nd floor's bathroom takes the crown of 'clutchest bathroom' in Du Bois. Or at least to me.

During the making of this article, I discovered that the library is home to a number of single bathrooms. Technically those are safer options, but I still have a special place in my heart for the 22nd floor. While it's small and has the highest chance of being occupied by another person out of the three places listed, I have been able to rely on it countless times.

3- Private Bathrooms of South College.

While it's last on my list, South College's private bathrooms were the first set of 'clutch' bathrooms I discovered at UMass when I transferred here in the Spring of 2017. The recently renovated building hosts an assortment of chic restrooms that provide you with the comfort of modernity that people want from their bathrooms. Multiple medium-sized classrooms and a popular study area make the bathrooms on the second-floor a hotspot for human activity. This also means they get pretty gross later in the evening. So while they may empty, would you even want to use them?

If you take a trip up to the third floor, a pair of solo bathrooms are nestled in the building's northeast corner. They are the most spacious bathrooms I've had the pleasure of using and their obscure location lets you not have to deal with any lines.

These are only three bathrooms out of the dozens that are scattered throughout UMass. I know many more 'clutch' bathrooms exist that I haven't discovered yet, but I'm only one person. And like many, my campus life centers around a few central spots. Let these restrooms be your starting point as you find your own way to conquer bathroom shyness at UMass.

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