

PHOTOS BY MATTHEW FERRELL

The 21st-Century Library

As with other campus spaces, fostering collaboration is a decisive influence in the design and function of today's campus libraries.

BY SCOTT WILLYERD

IF YOU HAPPEN TO STOP BY ANY COLLEGE OR university campus and visit the library, you might find something a bit unrecognizable. Visitors will see everything from students rearranging the furniture to a barista whipping up a medium half-caf, no foam, non-fat vanilla soy latté for a student who needs a caffeine fix.

While the stacks still remain — albeit in a diminished form — today's libraries are more than just places where students check out books or recluses themselves in study. They have become collaborative learning environments where much of the information has been accessed in a digital form.

While today's libraries aren't all about social studying and collective problem solving, there is more of that happening.

"I generally use the library if I'm going to study with other people or if I need print assignments," says Teresa Taylor, a senior nursing major at Otterbein University in Westerville, OH. "Students do use the library for group study, but there are also a lot of us that need the quiet study space as well."

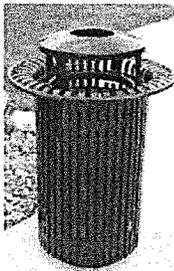
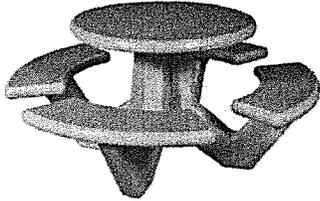
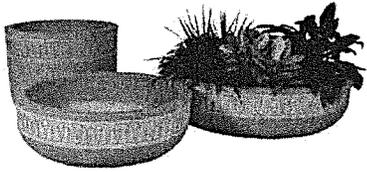
The Rise of Social Spaces

A growing number of libraries are being built with open floor plans to appeal to the uptick in "social studying." The Peter

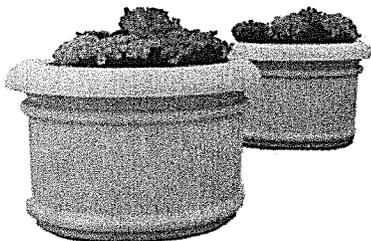
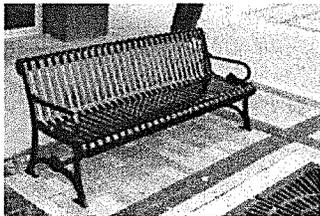
Petersen Mfg. Co., Inc.



Concrete & Steel
Furnishings



Planters
Bollards
Tables
Benches
Ash Urns
Drinking Ftns.
Waste Recept.



2471 Hwy 30, Denison, IA 51442
www.petersenmfg.com
800-832-7383

THE 21ST-CENTURY LIBRARY



CLOSE PROXIMITY. Advancing and enriching the educational experience has long been the campus library's primary role. However, by both cutting across and encompassing all disciplines and functions, the library also serves a significant social role. It is a place where students come together on levels and in ways that they might not in residence halls, classrooms, or even off campus. When they enter the library, students become part of a larger community. Today's campus library encourages a variety of both interactive and solo activity for students gathered within.

H. Armacost Library at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, FL, dedicated in 2005, created a space both conducive to quiet study and social studying. It offers ubiquitous wireless Internet access (even outside), soft furniture, and abundant windows, as well as various sizes of study spaces.

In March, the University of Denver in Colorado opened the Anderson Academic Commons, a 154,000 sq.-ft. academic service center that replaced Denver's old Penrose Library. The new facility, which has a 75-seat café, a 200-seat event room, and two fireplaces, was built with student study space in mind.

"Penrose was designed to house collections on the top and basement floors, and we crammed in seating where we could find space," says Michael Levine-Clark, associate dean for scholarly communication and collections services at the University of Denver. "The fundamental reason for the transformation to the Anderson Academic Commons was to improve and create more varied study space for students."

To do this, Denver drastically reduced the number of books in the stacks. Half of the books, and all government and journal collections, were moved to an offsite facility, which turns around faculty

and student requests within two hours. Levine-Clark estimates that there are currently 450,000 titles, less than half of Denver's available collection, available on the shelves.

With the addition of space on campus, students have been checking in. Carrie Forbes, associate dean for student and scholar services at the University of Denver reports that visits to the library are up.

"The highest count we saw at Penrose was 3,500 students during the height of finals," says Forbes. "Now the average count is around 4,000, and we don't have the data from finals week yet." She adds there was recently a surprising headcount of 400 at midnight.

The Not-So-Common Commons

Texas Christian University in Fort Worth is currently building its "Intellectual Commons." It is made up of a \$25M reestablishment of the library and construction of the adjacent Reese Jones Hall, which will be the catalyst for the Academy of Tomorrow and other interdisciplinary space. The library will shed itself of collections that will be housed in an offsite location to make room for more collaborative space for students and quiet space specific to graduate students.

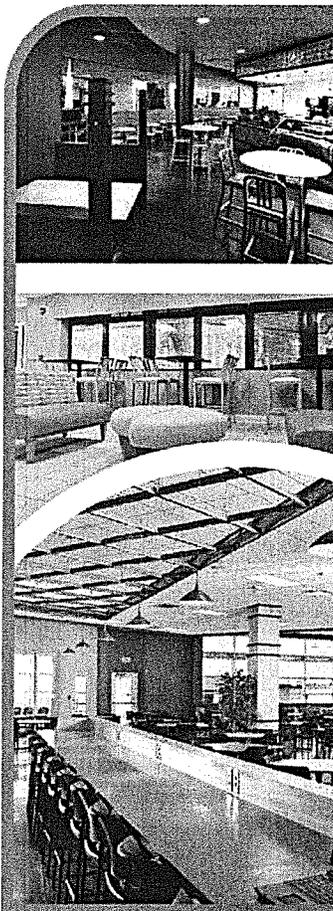


TEAMWORK. Librarians and library designers understand that the success of the academic library is best measured not by the frequency and ease of library use but by the learning that results from that use. Students anticipate and expect collaborative learning opportunities across all campus spaces. Providing these social learning spaces should be part of the plan for a 21st-century library.

“An ongoing request from our students has been more informal learning space,” says R. Nowell Donovan, provost at Texas Christian University. “The universities of tomorrow are going to be about tackling big questions and focusing on pragmatic approaches to solving those tough questions. And collaborative space is required to tackle these challenges.”

While some colleges and universities are making wholesale changes to buildings housing libraries and collaborative workspace, others are making minor changes to current buildings that give students the space they need and demand.

When the library at Birmingham-Southern College in Alabama was built in 1976 it was a destination for research, where students thumbed through volume after volume for valuable information. With all of that information — and much



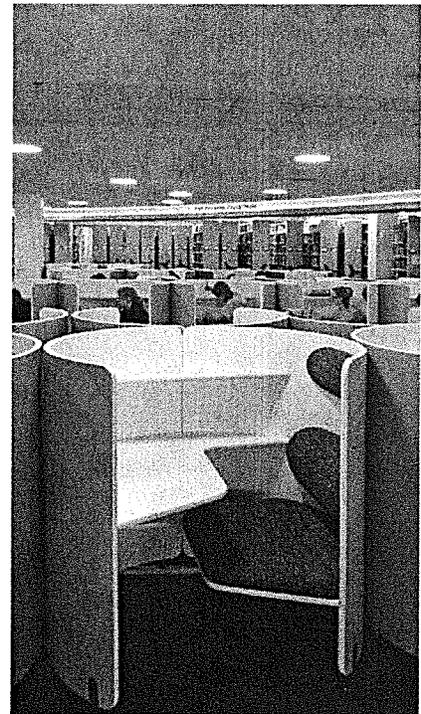


palmerHAMILTONDesign

Turn-key dining,
collaborative space
design



800.788.1028



PHOTOS © WAYNE ARMS TRONIC

I WANT TO BE ALONE. As with changes caused by technology, collaboration requires flexibility: furniture that can be rearranged. This will include large table areas for students to spread out and work in groups. Yet, campus librarians also recognize the need to include typical private reader carrels for traditional thinkers.

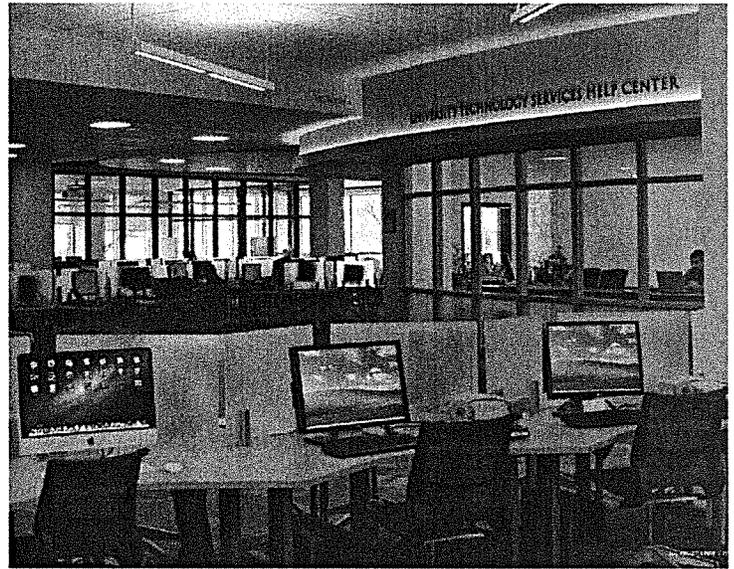
more — now accessible on a single screen, once coveted materials now sit nearly untouched.

Charlotte Ford, associate professor of library science and director of the library at Birmingham-Southern College, noted that by just spending roughly \$400 on power strips the library was able to handle all of the rigors of the digital age, allowing students to charge phones, tablets, and laptops without needing to travel to various corners of the building to find an outlet.

“The computer labs are also more collaborative than ever before,” says Ford. “Birmingham-Southern has changed its emphasis from quantity to quality, upgrading to fewer, but higher-quality machines with bigger screens that are more conducive to group work. Several flat-screen TVs are also mounted throughout the library that are capable of connecting with laptops to appeal to even larger groups.”

A Plan to Secure Success

The same holds true at Messiah College in Mechanicsburg, PA. Messiah recently spent roughly \$3M to upgrade its Learning Commons, effectively bringing other student support services, such as the Writing and Learning Centers and Disability Services, under one roof.



A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME. Library or learning commons? In recognizing how technology is used to enhance the learning process, academic libraries are beginning to realize the possibilities of what a library can be. Whether the facility is called a learning commons, information commons, knowledge commons, or simply “library,” new spaces and new partnerships are supporting the integrated service needs of the digital generation.

Find Your Way...

APCO

apcosigns.com

Corporate Headquarters
388 Grant Street, SE
Atlanta, Georgia 30312
Tel: 877-968-APCO, Fax: 404-577-3847
Email: sales@apco.com

ClearSpan
fabric structures

Whether playing, training or growing
ClearSpan keeps you covered.

MADE IN USA

Sustainable Design-Build Solutions

Low in cost per square foot.
Natural daytime lighting.
Easy to relocate. Expandable.

Call one of our ClearSpan specialists today at
1.866.643.1010 or visit www.ClearSpan.com/ADCPM.



“Learning Commons have been springing up over the last 10 years at colleges and universities across North America,” says William Strausbaugh, associate provost at Messiah College. “They are part of a response to and reflection of the changing nature of information and its dissemination.”

Much of the change for librarians has been due to the new ways information is received in today’s digital world.

“The role of the library in the 1970s was to assist students, faculty, staff, and the public in finding information. That hasn’t changed, although the way we do it is very, very different,” says Lois Szudy, library director at Courtright Memorial Library at Otterbein University.

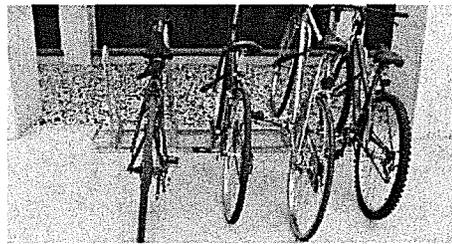
Mary Ann Mavrinac, who was named dean of River Campus Libraries at the University of Rochester in New York in December, recalled in her installation speech that when the World Wide Web was born in 1989, change was coming for libraries.

“The formal, traditional roles of librarians as information specialists and information gate-keepers who unlocked the mysteries of knowledge contained in the library’s collections began to erode,” says Mavrinac. “Where before, libraries occupied a privileged role of selecting, acquiring, organizing, making accessible and preserving information — roles we still perform and value — the web has become a major conduit to knowledge production, dissemination, and communication — one we cannot live without.”

Mavrinac further says research libraries are experiencing both dynamic yet disruptive times, and have choices to make.

“I believe there is no option but to fully embrace a digital future, focus on collaboration, and serve the academic mission,” says Mavrinac. “Our students and our faculty require this for their success. In so doing, this will secure our success.” **EBL**

Scott Willyerd is president for Dick Jones Communications. He can be reached at scott@dickjonescomm.com.



High Density Bicycle Parking
Solutions

 www.madrax.com | 1-800-448-7931