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Georgia State's library transformation project completed

by Laura G. Burtle

The Georgia State University Library Transformation is complete! Funded primarily by student fees, the transformation project allowed the library to renovate space in Libraries North and South (built in 1968 and 1988, respectively) to create a two-story Learning Commons, build extensive collaborative work spaces, expand technological services and provide better access to research resources.

Planning for the Library

Transformation began in 2001 with the development of a library master plan. This plan, developed with campuswide input, was presented to the library staff and university administration in 2002. At that time, the timeline for the project was projected to be at least 10 years. The president suggested that the students would be willing to fund the project, and in that way, it could be completed in a much shorter time frame. During 2003, the Transformation Task Force worked on a Campaign for a Student Fee, and in August 2003, the students voted for a fee to expedite the Library Transformation.

The next two years saw the fee approved by the Board of Regents, the hiring of design and construction firms, extensive programming and in 2005, the beginning of construction. For the next two years, construction proceeded, with the library open and the collection accessible. Books and staff moved and in some cases, moved again. The patience and understanding of library staff and our students were vital in moving the project forward smoothly and successfully.



The goals of the transformation included a variety of study spaces, one-stop shopping for help with resources and research, places for students and faculty to collaborate and increased access to technology and media.

The library now has compact shelving that will accommodate at least 10 years of collection growth; a renovated Media Services Center;

two "group media rooms" that are available for watching videos or DVDs, listening to music, or practicing presentations; a quiet study room accommodating up to 50 users; 53 group study rooms accommodating six to 12 students per room; and a Learning Commons on Library North's first and second floor and the second floor bridge.

Spotlight On CONSTRUCTION

The Learning Commons helps the library meet the informational and technological needs of today's students. In addition to providing traditional library services, the Learning Commons integrates technological and instructional elements often found outside the library, including technology, writing and ESL expert assistance. This integration provides the student with a comprehensive learning space in which he or she can research, analyze and process information into a presentable format. It creates a tighter bond between the library and the rest of the university and, ultimately, a seamless learning environment that promotes self-direction in learning.

The project was designed by the Leo A Daly firm, in collaboration with

library employees, students and faculty. The library was expanded by 11,217 square feet, primarily from expansions of the bridges that run between the two buildings and span Decatur Street in downtown Atlanta. The three existing bridges were more than doubled in size, and a new, even wider bridge was added on the second floor. These glass bridges provide a light, airy space for students and are extremely popular. Each bridge features group study rooms, study tables and lounge seating. The second floor bridge expands the Learning Commons in Library North, with ample computer seating.

The library offers classes that are held regularly to teach information literacy

concepts, research skills and library resources. The project created two classrooms: a large, 52-seat, computer-equipped classroom and a smaller, 25-seat computer classroom. The addition of a second classroom will greatly enhance the number and variety of classes offered by the library.

The student reaction to the transformed library has been enthusiastic. "The new library is so bright and inviting, and the design is very student-friendly. Even the bridges from one side of the library to the other are filled with group study rooms with big windows, computers and comfortable seating," said journalism major Sybil Davidson. Gloria Ramchandani, a sophomore

majoring in risk management, adds "Before, it wasn't bright, and it looked very old. I like it so much better. It's easier to concentrate."

In addition to Georgia State students, faculty and staff, the library welcomes visitors to our facilities. Legislators, state employees, visiting scholars and researchers, and students enrolled in other higher education institutions are among the various patrons who take advantage of our many resources.

The Georgia State University Library serves more than 1.5 million visitors annually, and we expect FY08's figure to increase substantially with the post-transformation popularity. ►►



Design firm Leo A Daly received a 2006 Building Information Model (BIM) Award from the American Institute of Architects' Technology in Architectural Practice Knowledge Community for its work on the Georgia State University Library.