

Changing Space Needs:

A First Floor Renovation and Assessing Its Impact on Designing the Electronic Library of the 21st Century

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Objective:

An increase in electronic resources, modification in both users' and staff's working space, and an internal initiative to create a single Service Desk, all resulted in a recent redesign of the library's first floor. This poster will demonstrate how completion of that project has affected users' perception of the library and influenced future plans to renovate other library spaces.



Old Circulation Desk



New Circulation Desk



Old Current Journal Area



New Journal Browsing Collection



Old Reference Desk



New Reference Desk



New Collaborative Study Space



Old Computer Area



New Computer Area



Old AV Circulation Desk



New AV Circulation Desk



New AV Leisure Area

Methods:

- Himmelfarb wanted a project that would have maximum student impact since part of our budget was developed with the use of student voluntary contributions
- A small renovation budget encouraged the Space Committee to solicit creative ideas from staff and each other and to do many of the approved changes themselves. Thanks to the efforts of many, the Committee:
 - redeployed library furniture
 - created a "Browsing Collection" area on the first floor
 - moved current journals, other than the Browsing Collection, to the second floor with the bound journal volumes
 - weeded and consolidated Reference Collection
 - designed new collaborative space
 - expanded quiet study areas
 - redesigned their work areas for staff
- A new User Service Desk was purchased along with some library furniture
- The Medical Center's Facilities Management team provided services, including the actual physical move of the furniture, and played an important role in the successful completion of the project
- Movers were employed to disassemble shelving and to move the heavier furniture and walls
- Several public relations efforts to market the new library focus were identified and implemented by library staff
- Plans were made to observe, collect and assess:
 - patron space utilization
 - gate count
 - anecdotal patron responses given to staff

CHALLENGES:

- Staff readiness for extensive change was addressed through:
 - participation in a change management session
 - involvement in work space design
 - input on preliminary plans
- Unexpected challenges were experienced in the following areas:
 - moving and relocating furniture and shelving required extensive repainting
 - data, telephone lines and electrical wiring were more difficult to arrange in the new office configurations
 - summer timeline seemed reasonable but actually required more time to accommodate delivery schedules
- Despite planned communication efforts, users were confused about journal locations

Results:

- Open, light-filled spaces have attracted more users
- Student collaboration using library space has markedly increased
- Parts of the staff were reunited in a single work space for the first time in years
- Positive acceptance of the first floor project moved a renovation project for the third floor which houses an AV Study Center and computer labs from the drawing board to reality:
 - Equipment checkout was moved to the first floor for patron convenience
 - A new leisure space was created in the AV Study Center
 - The AV collection was weeded, updated, and more fully integrated into the collection
 - The computer lab was redesigned to provide more collaborative space

Marketing Efforts

- A new bookmark was distributed
- New library directory signage was posted
- An article on the renovations was printed in "Progress", the Medical Center newsletter
- The Virtual Library Tour on the Himmelfarb home page was revised to reflect the space changes

Conclusions:

- Patron reaction has been overwhelmingly positive
- Observations have shown:
 - The renovations to library space with its emphasis on collaborative study areas has reversed the statistical trend toward a declining gate count
 - Observation of collaborative space usage showed that more students were working at tables and computers on a daily basis
 - Anecdotal responses shared at the Reference Desk have been overwhelmingly positive
 - The wireless network has been extended throughout the library, providing increased access to our electronic resources
 - Older buildings and spaces can be "modernized" without great cost by opening space and creating more inviting areas to attract students
 - Involving the entire library staff creates ownership of the new space and generates further ideas for improvement