

6-27-2016

# Letter from Melvin J. Voigt and Robert L. Talmadge to Dr. M.C. Cunningham recommending construction of a new library

Melvin J. Voigt  
*Kansas State University*

Robert L. Talmadge  
*University of Kansas*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://scholars.fhsu.edu/library\\_bldg](http://scholars.fhsu.edu/library_bldg)

---

## Recommended Citation

Voigt, Melvin J. and Talmadge, Robert L., "Letter from Melvin J. Voigt and Robert L. Talmadge to Dr. M.C. Cunningham recommending construction of a new library" (2016). *Forsyth Library*. 80.  
[http://scholars.fhsu.edu/library\\_bldg/80](http://scholars.fhsu.edu/library_bldg/80)

This Correspondence is brought to you for free and open access by the Buildings and Facilities at FHSU Scholars Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Forsyth Library by an authorized administrator of FHSU Scholars Repository.

July 1, 1960

Dr. M. C. Cunningham, President  
Fort Hays Kansas State College  
Hays, Kansas

Dear President Cunningham:

As requested, we have visited the Forsyth Library at Fort Hays Kansas State College. In company with Librarian Paul Friesner we have inspected the entire Library and discussed with him all of its operations. The specific question before us has been whether or not there is a practicable solution to the Library's numerous and pressing problems through a building addition accompanied by remodelling of the present structure.

It is obvious immediately that the present building is woefully inadequate in its provision for any of the three primary aspects of college library service: reader accommodations, book shelving, and staff work space. Additional space for all three functions is critically needed.

We have concluded that remodelling, plus a building addition, would not provide acceptable library service to the students and faculty of Fort Hays State College. We firmly believe that the College should build a complete new library, converting the present library building to other purposes.

During the last two decades there has been a fundamental change in library service in higher education. The Forsyth Library unfortunately embodies the most undesirable aspect of the old philosophy, through its almost total separation of readers from books and journals. It is now recognized - and the benefits have been strikingly demonstrated by numerous new college library buildings erected since 1945 - that college libraries should provide maximum reader access to library materials through a physical integration of reader spaces with the books and journals on open shelves. Indeed, the objective is virtually to surround readers with books.

The most important considerations which lead us to the conclusion that a new library building is the only acceptable solution are: (1) the impossibility of bringing books and readers (either undergraduate or graduate) together in the present building, or by means of an addition to it. This is true generally throughout the building, but central to this problem is the storage of the bulk of the collections in a core bookstack which totally lacks cubicles or other reader spaces and cannot be modified

to provide them; (2) the expensive waste of staff time entailed in the unavoidable staffing of many separate service areas in the present building. This would continue to be the case after any enlargement of the building; (3) the inflexibility of the present building, making impossible, for example, the adoption of the subject divisional organization being employed so successfully by many libraries today; and (4) the difficulty of providing badly needed elevators and level access between library departments.

Even if a building addition were accompanied by a complete gutting and reconstruction within the shell of the present building (which might well be more expensive than a new building) we doubt that it would be possible to achieve an acceptably functional arrangement. This fact, combined with our awareness that the college will soon need additional classroom and office space, and that the present library building with only a moderate amount of remodeling can provide such space, leads us to recommend that from both the financial and the practical points of view, Fort Hays Kansas State College should construct a new library building. The serious deficiencies in the Library's physical facilities argue that this be accomplished with the least possible delay.

Sincerely yours,

Melvin J. Voigt, Director  
Kansas State University Library

Robert L. Talmadge, Acting Director  
University of Kansas Library