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From the Field

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Abstract

The McGoogan Health Sciences Library at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) completed a 14-month renovation of two of its three levels, while its top-level remains under renovation. Besides standard library space for studying and collections, the library engaged with campus partners in bringing different services to the renovated library. The newly renovated space includes spaces managed by a range of faculty and student services, such as an E-Learning lab, simulation labs, Faculty Commons, Writing Center, Maker Studio, Reflection Rooms, and inclusion space. These spaces provide library users a suite of services for collaboration and consultation with the library serving as a central campus hub.

Introduction

The McGoogan Health Sciences Library at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) serves the information needs of University of Nebraska students, faculty, staff, licensed health professionals, and Nebraska residents. As one of the few areas on campus that serves the entire campus and community, the library plays a significant role in fostering collaboration. In July 2020, the library completed a fourteen-month renovation of two of its three levels, while its top level remains under renovation. The McGoogan Health Sciences Library building, part of Wittson Hall, was added fifty years ago as a 68,896 square foot addition on the top levels of the university's administrative and basic sciences building. The last major renovation, an update of two of three levels of the library, was completed in 2001. In 2004-2006 an extensive renova-

tion of the library's two rare book rooms improved air flow and integrated room and building security. Despite the renovations, the library needed an overhaul of its space so that it could continue to keep pace with campus changes and the growing needs of its faculty and students.

The results from multiple surveys of students and the campus community, conducted within the library and across campus during 2014-2017, showed that the library space continually fell short of students' expectations. The library aspired to exceed UNMC students' expectations by creating a space that enhances learning, encourages innovation, provides technology for users in a meaningful way, and is the model for an academic research library of the future. We recognized that our technology infrastructure could not keep up with student, faculty, and staff expectations of use of multiple devices, digitization of special collections by staff, and video

and audio production services offered through the university's E-Learning program. The library faced limitations in its ability to upscale its technology because of its brutalist building structure and lack of substantial funds to support capital improvements. We recognized a fast-approaching tipping point where technology limitations, user interest, potential for flexibility, and building code compliance would make the library a liability. To offer UNMC students and faculty a modern, full-service library and active learning center that embraces innovation and collaboration, the McGoogan Library needed to transform the existing space. Library administration garnered support from student and faculty senates, with the strong support of the Senior Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, to present the case for a new library.

In the years leading up to the renovation, the library provided space for multiple campus partners. Recognizing the value that those partners created, the library was determined to fully integrate those partners in the newly renovated library. Since reopening, students and faculty are utilizing the partner spaces for consultations and other services. Based on these successes, other campus groups are seeking partner space in the library.

Background

In 2012, UNMC Facilities notified library administration that within a year it would be losing its third level to faculty offices. The library had no choice but to begin planning to compress collections to accommodate the future loss of space. Library staff began work in earnest, deselecting several thousand volumes. When campus administration changed its mind about the third level, the library was left with half a level of empty shelves on the library's main level. In the fall of 2013, library administration created task forces to review options for what could happen with the available space from the now-empty shelves. One task force worked with a campus

group to evaluate the construction of a testing center for the second level, but a fire code issue blocked that from happening. Another task force idea for a writing center did not move forward because the campus was not ready to staff it.

Upon my arrival at UNMC in December 2013, I was charged with planning a library renovation. The library established an internal space planning task force in spring 2014. After surveying students and faculty, visiting renovated libraries, and attending library building conferences and institutes, the task force recommended a new library building to contain several proposed student and faculty services. While the need for improved library space was recognized, there was no available space on campus for construction of a new building. This was a disappointing realization by the task force, but we realized the existing library was in a prime location on campus with significant square footage. We turned our attention toward a complete renovation of all three levels of the library within the existing building.

In 2014, the library determined that through small enhancements and sharing our space, we could demonstrate to campus administration that the library was a willing partner and that we could attract students and faculty. We began inviting campus partners to relocate their offices to the library and use some of the underutilized spaces we had identified in areas that would not affect student study space. We made small upgrades in furniture to gather student feedback and make short-term improvements. One improvement resulted in turning a former training room into a new classroom with new furniture and technology. Despite these changes, we could not continue layering a patchwork of temporary fixes on the space.

In 2015, a committee looking at all University of Nebraska campus buildings placed the library and its home location, Wittson Hall, as the top

choice at UNMC for receiving deferred maintenance capital bonds. The use of bond funds would require support from lawmakers and the University of Nebraska Board of Regents. As Nebraska state legislators toured the building, we showed them the empty stacks and described our plans for the library of the future. Library administration presented a white paper on the library of the future to campus leadership looking at educational campus spaces. Students were extremely vocal in their desire for a renovated library space. In 2016, the legislature passed a capital bond bill that funded our renovation and another building on campus. The majority of our building's capital bond ended up allocated to the library renovation, while other enhancements were planned for other levels of the building.

In 2016, we conducted additional student and faculty surveys. In spring of 2017, Facilities hired consultants to work on the library's program statement for the University of Nebraska's Board of Regents, who would need to approve the renovation plan and proposed budget. We wanted to meet students' primary needs for natural light, more open hours, increase in quiet study rooms, better wifi, and availability of coffee. We also included all the partner spaces we wanted in a renovated library. The Board of Regents approved the program statement for the renovation in August 2017.

A significant feature of the new space is the natural lighting, gained by removing two large concrete panels from the façade. The architecture firm also upgraded lighting throughout the space. The library also designed the space for 24/7 usage. We increased the study rooms from 16 to 54 with the majority being individual study rooms – distinct from other campus buildings where only group collaboration rooms exist. Our first two levels were designed around the individual study rooms, which determined our plan for incorporating campus partners in the renovated library.

Campus Partners

During the program statement planning phase, discussions began with campus partners on library space use. Space was at a premium on the Omaha campus, especially for new programs and services. Our interest in space sharing opportunities came through the recognition that they brought people into the library and allowed us to work more closely with new collaborators. Partners who moved in between 2013 and 2019 would also have space in the renovated library. When we opened the renovated library in July 2020, we featured all of our original partners, plus new partners, in expanded spaces on our first level.

E-Learning Program

In 2013, the campus began planning for an E-Learning program. Such a program would be a resource for faculty to create learning materials for online and distance settings and would provide an opportunity to fund grants for special projects related to E-Learning. As campus moved toward a blended classroom model, faculty wanted direct assistance in developing, designing, and deploying E-Learning modules for their courses. The discussion of a new E-Learning program was led by the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and other key members of Academic Affairs, including the library, campus information technology, and college representatives.

In 2013, the library moved its student computer cluster from the third level to a location on its main level to accommodate an E-Learning lab. We added new furniture and technology, creating a setup that could enable the E-Learning team to host student interns, followed by a program director and staff. The space included developer workstations for faculty and students working on E-Learning modules. After these people were in place, we added some minor technology upgrades. The third level's overall

technology infrastructure plagued the E-Learning lab and other services: high-end connections were not conducive for data and graphic heavy work. The third level was low in foot traffic: it mostly housed library staff, special collections and archives, and two underutilized classrooms.

During their time on the third level, the E-Learning program grew in staff size and services. The E-Learning program issued a call for funding every year to faculty and expanded in its second year to students. Since 2015, the E-Learning program also held an annual showcase for grant recipients and their E-Learning modules. Between 2013 and 2014, E-Learning added a whisper booth to resolve background HVAC noise during audio recordings. The program director moved into a private office in 2017, after two years in an open cubicle space with other staff. One sustained collaboration project is the E-Learning gallery, where library faculty provide metadata for e-modules.

At the time when the library was starting its renovation program statement, a new campus building was also in its planning stages, the Davis Global Center. The main emphasis for the Davis Global Center would be the Interprofessional Experiential Center for Enduring Learning (iEXCEL). The Davis Global Center planners raised the question of whether the E-Learning program was better suited for the Davis Global Center or the new library space. The Director of E-Learning decided to stay in the library space because it suited their square footage needs for the lab.

The E-Learning space in the renovated library included planning to accommodate growth in the number of staff and increased use by students and faculty. We maintained space for the whisper booth. The current E-Learning lab is slightly larger in square footage. We recognize that it may reach capacity given its relocation to the main level and campus' ongoing creation and use of high-quality E-Learning modules. If

the lab does reach peak usage, users and E-Learning staff could use a nearby medium-sized study room for consultations or move to an appointment system for its developer workstations.

After completing architectural drawings and designs, the Director of E-Learning requested the library add an EZ Studio, sometimes referred to as a one-button studio, in exchange for a medium-sized study room. While the library supported the concept, we requested campus feedback on potential usage before giving up a study room. Because of set construction and technology budgets, E-Learning needed a new funding source to move forward with the EZ Studio. The Director of E-Learning met with various technology committees, the campus Education Council, and Faculty Senate, and solicited feedback from other users supporting an EZ Studio, plus other University of Nebraska campuses where similar studios are installed. The use case was presented to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, which resulted in full funding from Academic Affairs. Studio design help came from technologists at the University of Nebraska Lincoln, who had installed a similar studio at their library. The EZ Studio and whisper booth help the E-Learning lab further enhance E-Learning modules through advanced video and audio production options.

College of Allied Health Professions

In 2014, the College of Allied Health Professions planned on purchasing several Anatomage Tables for their diagnostic medical sonography program. The library was approached by the college to see if we had space for one of the Anatomage Tables in a small classroom environment. The library wanted to help provide new educational tools to students and was excited to welcome the college and their programs. With the college faculty, we evaluated a conference room space on our second level. The room was too small to accommodate the table, but college

faculty wondered if they could use it for ultrasound simulation equipment instead. We agreed to convert the space for no cost to the library or the college. Once completed, the lab contained two patient beds and ultrasound machines with two small tables and chairs for students and the instructor.

Although functional, this space was not an ideal location for the ultrasound lab because it was sandwiched between two study rooms lacking soundproofing. The library received frequent complaints from students in the study rooms when classes used the labs. Like the E-Learning lab, the College of Allied Health Professions considered moving this and another simulation suite to the Davis Global Center. Because of the limited interprofessional use of their simulation spaces and the library's willingness to continue partnering with the college, the library planned a special College of Allied Health Professionals suite on the renovated library's main level. The new ultrasound lab is larger and has room for one additional table and ultrasound equipment, more debriefing space for students and faculty during instruction, and distance technology for connecting to its students at the University of Nebraska Kearney campus.

Shortly after creating the sonography labs space on the library's second level, the college approached the library again to see if we could house its Virtual Environment Radiotherapy Training system (VERT). The VERT is used by students in the radiation therapy program to simulate targeted radiation therapy through 3D immersive technology. The VERT requires specific room dimensions and rear projection space for the theater-like screen. Library administration identified a storage location on our third level that could be the new home for the VERT. The college covered the costs of renovating the space by upgrading technology, updating finishes, adding enhancements to the flooring, and installing a card reader system on the door for security. As with other locations on the third

level, this space had its challenges with the HVAC system and technology infrastructure. It was also located next to an archival storage room, so we had to coordinate our usage of the storage room with the VERT's classroom use.

The new VERT space in the renovated library is custom-built. A rear projection room was constructed with the proper distance from the screen to students. Distance technology, made easier by abundant wifi and higher speed internet access, is also available for distance or online students. The location also allows the college better opportunities to bring patients and their families to see how radiotherapy will work. The VERT was primarily used for young patients, and it was an awkward fit when they would come to the third level of the library for a clinical meeting in an area used primarily by library staff. The new VERT location is closer to the library entrance, is in a more neutral looking space, and is away from study rooms and high-traffic areas where library users or library staff are found.

We planned on two small classrooms in the renovated library space. Because of campus space issues, the College of Allied Health Professions needed a new classroom. It made sense to prioritize one of the classrooms for their use and locate it near their simulation labs. College faculty designed the space and technology based on what has worked with them in delivering courses to multiple locations, including their college's students on the University of Nebraska Kearney campus.

Writing Center

For many years different colleges wanted a Writing Center for students. As mentioned previously, a formal review took place in fall 2013. As the Writing Center's needs grew, the Office of Academic Affairs agreed to fund a pilot program. The Executive Associate Dean of Graduate Studies began working with the Writing

Center Director at University of Nebraska Omaha on establishing a Writing Center at UNMC. In 2016, The Office of Academic Affairs requested space in the library because of our central location and student use. We had limited options because of already sharing space with our other partners. After reviewing several options, we settled on the former reference desk location as a temporary space. Located on the main level, the Writing Center had two small desks and chairs in an open area. The library funded the purchase of the new furniture as part of our furniture testing plan and purchased writing reference material for existing shelves. Writing Center staff saw immediate usage by students meeting with writing consultants. Unfortunately, the open environment frustrated other students who were studying in the area or using library computers adjacent to the space. Students using the Writing Center wanted more private interactions with the consultations. We quickly dismissed constructing temporary walls because of cost and the forthcoming renovation. Technology was a common complaint, too: working off a shared laptop was tough for productivity.

The new Writing Center now has a prominent location right off the entrance to the library. Its enclosed space offers flexibility for more simultaneous writing consultations. New wall-mounted monitors provide an ample workspace for in-person or online consultations. The soundproof room offers students a more private space to receive writing consultations and for consultants to conduct virtual consultations.

Student Engagement

Student engagement is always at the forefront of the library's service plans. In 2017, Student Senate asked if the library would consider a reflection space in the library. Due to our commitment to serving students, and because wellness is an immutable campus priority, we agreed to find a space. Work began in earnest to plan for a space

for reflection, driven by student input and funded by the Department of Psychiatry. With the head of the department's guidance, the library converted a former video conference room (previously used by the chancellor and senior administration) into a Reflection Room. We painted the walls a soothing color, placed special rubber flooring tiles on top of the carpet, and added yoga mats, a privacy screen, dimmable lighting, and a massage chair. The library mounted peaceful images with QR codes connecting users to soothing music. We also established a wellness corner in an open area of our main level. An additional massage chair was purchased by the Department of Psychiatry and placed near a window. Large-format images, coloring pages, and a selection of wellness books were immediately well received by students, faculty, and staff.

We now have three Reflection Rooms in the renovated library, which can be reserved via the campus reservation system. Two rooms house the massage chairs. A third room is sparsely furnished, but has soft flooring conducive to yoga, prayer, or meditation. The Reflection Rooms are located on our second level, designated as the library's quiet floor. We continue promoting these rooms with the campus Wellbeing Coordinating Committee and through the Office of Wellness.

Another collaboration with Student Senate took place in 2014 when students asked for 3D printing services. Students put together a business plan for the library and created a student 3D printing club with one of our faculty serving as an adviser. We installed two 3D printers in a former copy room, but we quickly realized that this space was insufficient, so we repurposed an office suite into a dual-purpose room for a makerspace and library administration storage area. Because of its location in the library administration suite, making, crafting, and gathering activities were not visible to users. We also had to consider security issues when granting access to this space during non-library administration

hours. We never had any issues, partly because students had to go through individual training before using the space. Following training, students could check out a key to use the space. The lack of proper ventilation and a sink limited the type of 3D printers and tools that could be used by students. Despite the inadequate space, the Makers Club started strong with committed students who led programs with high schools and conducted prototyping for UNMC researchers.

Planning a new maker space in the library, we designed a space for printers we had long-wanted to purchase for students. We worked with the architecture firm on a new ventilation system, sink, and other features to create an appropriate lab environment for several new high-end 3D printers. We hired a new technology librarian who is focused on working with 3D printing and building a community to invigorate the space. Located on the main level in a glass-enclosed open room, this visible location, with improved infrastructure, has already generated interest with a new group of students.

Faculty Affairs and Campus Information Technology

From the beginning of renovation planning, library staff envisioned a Faculty Commons space where faculty could consult with representatives from various faculty services. Prior to the renovation, these services were decentralized across campus. A Faculty Commons space would house staff from Faculty Development, the Interprofessional Academy of Educators (IAE), and Information Technology (IT) Educational Technology team in one location.

Designs for the Faculty Commons were developed by the Dean of the Library, Director of Faculty Development, the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Faculty Affairs, and the Director of the IAE. Space includes offices for Faculty Development and IAE staff, and a communications specialist

from Academic Affairs. IT Education Technology and other representatives from IAE use a touchdown space for consultations. A conference room is available for IAE or Faculty Development meetings. A living room/kitchen space is designed for informal discussions or for faculty to relax with coffee or a snack. The living room is equipped with technology for connecting with faculty located on four other UNMC campuses. The Commons' main feature is the faculty hotel offices where faculty can reserve an office for four hours at a time. These spaces were met with great interest from clinical faculty who work at UNMC and other hospitals during the day and lack a permanent office. A nearby classroom is a demonstration space for testing new classroom technology. IT Education Technology is available to help faculty become comfortable using technologies. Due to staffing costs, we dropped plans for a library-based "genius bar" near the library entrance. There, the IT Help Desk staff would have offered drop-in support for students or faculty needing help with their devices.

Design Process and Implementation

Beginning in early 2017, library administration worked with consultants (hired by Facilities) on the program statement for the Board of Regents. While the focus of the program was to meet students' needs and evolving spaces for library collections, we invited all of our key partners to meet with the consultants. All the partners described their programmatic needs, space requirements, and changes they wished to see, as compared to the spaces they had been occupying. These needs, such as improved technical infrastructure and HVAC system, and better lighting, sound proofing, and space layout were all in alignment with what the library required. Although all parties were enthusiastic about moving forward, negotiations became complicated when the consultants, Facilities, partners, and the library started working on square footage re-

quirements. With a major emphasis on increasing student study space, the library, as project owners, had to assert the library's primary role while expressing interest in accommodating our library partners.

Once the Board of Regents approved the program statement in summer 2017, we moved forward with the hiring of an architecture firm, HDR. The firm followed the same process as the consultants, meeting with the campus partners to better understand what each wanted in a renovated space. Library administration did set some parameters that partner spaces should be located on the first level in blocks, such as the colocation of the College of Allied Health Professions spaces. We wanted the E-Learning lab near the Faculty Commons because they share a common user population. As the design process continued, library staff deferred communication from the partners to HDR or Facilities. Leads for each area worked with HDR on furniture, the layout of their spaces, and with campus IT on their technology needs. There were times when the library became involved, such as the proposed EZ Studio because it involved a change in the budget and loss of a study room.

Another issue that involved close coordination with the library partners was the relocation of everyone during construction. Library administration decided it was more efficient to close the library for a year so construction could proceed more quickly. Based on the last renovation, library staff knew students would not use the space for studying, nor would it be conducive to working during active construction. Because construction occurred in two phases, with the first two levels undergoing renovation before the third-level renovation would take place, we needed our partners on the third level to relocate temporarily. We needed that level for storage with limited access to campus users. Because of the technical requirements for the VERT and instructional needs, we made an exception for the VERT to remain operational. Facilities'

challenge was finding temporary space for library staff, the E-Learning program, and the Writing Center. While the library continued providing embedded services in different colleges located on campus, we provided all other services remotely from our temporary location in a research building.

Moving back into the library from the research building was complicated because of construction delays. Move-in dates were changed multiple times, which affected Faculty Commons because Faculty Development was planning a week-long event timed with the library's reopening. As construction delays continued to close in on opening day, Faculty Development had to quickly find new space on campus for their event. As it turned out, all groups moved into the renovated space at different times because of furniture or technology delays.

Another factor in reopening the library was coordinating library policies with the library partners. Moving to a 24/7 environment meant our partners had to consider their staffed hours and the type of access to their spaces they would permit after regular business hours. The responsibility of developing and maintaining user lists for access to a space was transferred from library administration to each partner group's leader. One of the areas that required greater coordination of policies was the Faculty Commons. Of the four groups in that space, two fell under the same administrative structure and two did not. Because the E-Learning program is adjacent to, but not inside Faculty Commons, we realized too late they should have been brought into the Faculty Commons' policy discussions. While the policy decisions were the responsibility of Faculty Affairs, the library was brought in to provide perspective on limitations of the space, where coordination could occur, and how to move forward. From the time the library began planning the renovation to its opening, leadership changes took place with some of the part-

ners who would be located in Faculty Commons. New leaders, not part of the initial design conversations, did not share the current vision. We had to restart some necessary conversations on access to the space and how it should be used, and revisit many decisions that we thought were resolved.

In March 2020, five months before our planned reopening, the COVID-19 pandemic caused campus to be shut down, except to essential personnel. As the campus recovery planning began for the fall 2020 semester, the library worked with its partners on how the pandemic would affect its opening and policies. The library established key policies, aligned with campus guidelines, that the library partners would need to follow. Masks are required in all parts of the library except for individual study rooms. Access to the library is limited to anyone with a UNMC ID badge or a badge from one of our clinical partners. We are not open to the public or to faculty and students from sister campuses. Campus guidelines set parameters for classroom and conference room usage. Each partner is free to determine individual policies and uses of their space. All our partners offer virtual consultations. The faculty hotel offices are open without any kitchen amenities offered. E-Learning staff and librarians are offering services by appointment only. The College of Allied Health Professions has in-person use of its spaces. The Writing Center is open for in-person consultations, although hours are reduced. Because they also check out materials, E-Learning and Faculty Development are following the library's lead in how we are isolating circulating materials. So long as the all library space users comply with masking and social distance policies, we will be able to stay open. If there are persistent compliance issues, we could be required to close to library users. Unlike other libraries, we may face challenges in closing because of our partners having programmatic and instruction needs in the library.

Lessons Learned

1) Communication is key

There is no question that improvements in communication were needed at multiple levels. The design process was fraught with communication issues, exacerbated by turnover in project managers. These issues were not limited to library partners' work but were a problem in almost every aspect of the renovation. While library administration was advocating for and receiving better communication, the library partners were sometimes left behind. Library administration relied on Facilities or HDR to communicate directly with the library partners. However, we would find out later that crucial pieces of information were not passed along.

It is important to set expectations for communication from the start. Individuals from each group should be assigned the responsibility for sharing information to their respective employees or partners in a space. Establish regular owner meetings so everyone has an opportunity to bring concerns and issues to library administration and the project manager. Do not rely solely on Facilities (or any other third party) to communicate with all the campus partners because they do not always track on reporting structures and responsibility assignment within units. To mitigate communication issues internally, library administration sent a biweekly email to library staff outlining construction progress, milestones, and issues. Looking back, partners should have been included in this email from the beginning. A communication plan, clear role delineation, and set expectations for escalation should have been agreed upon at project initiation.

2) Be ready to navigate budget changes

While the initial renovation budget was healthy for the things we had hoped to accomplish, some funds were redistributed after construc-

tion began. The library continued to focus primarily on what would meet student needs beyond square footage: technology and furniture. We ran into issues with technology when we looked at additional revenue sources from partner groups. There were differences in the budgets of the library, College of Allied Health Professions, and programs under Academic Affairs, including E-Learning, Faculty Commons, and Writing Center. The deficit for technology funding would not be able to be covered with equal contributions. We encountered a similar problem with the furniture budget. At times, the library was placed in the middle of these discussions, which strained some relationships with partners.

3) Demystify square footage

Set clear expectations around available square footage and how things might change when moving from the planning phase into the design phase. We had to reduce some of Faculty Commons' square footage because of a code issue requiring a new hallway. Simultaneously, the E-Learning program was experiencing increased use, yet their footprint was already determined. We had no options for increasing their square footage.

4) Be prepared for more success than you expected

Even after the design was completed and construction began, other groups approached the library and expressed their interest in relocating to library space. The Inclusion Office and Office of Student Success is interested in a multicultural center in the library. We plan to modify a study alcove and study room to create the Inclusion Space. The Office of Student Success also wishes to have a presence in the library to support students. The Student Success team will share a space with the Writing Center on alternate days. We continue to prioritize opportunities to serve students as a campus hub. These

newer partner opportunities meet a need on campus and complement our other student-focused resources, such as the Reflection Rooms.

Conclusion

While the library's renovation is a stellar update and meets the needs of students, the most significant contributions, realized after reopening, are its partnerships. As a true campus hub, the library is now a place where students and staff want to be. We credit a vision focused on collaboration and coordinated services. The McGoogan Library in 2020 is a campus destination and home for a multitude of programs and services, some yet to be born.