Library Showcase:
Manhattan Christian College, Kansas – Interview with Mary Ann Buhler

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PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The Manhattan Christian College Library is housed along with a chapel and classrooms, in Jolliffe Hall, the oldest building on campus. After gutting and renovating the 1927 structure, the size of the library doubled to 6,400 square feet and was made ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant. Additions included an elevator and an entryway with stairs.

Please describe the library renovation or new construction project to be featured in the American Libraries 2011 Library Design Showcase.

Built in 1927, Jolliffe Hall is the oldest building on the Manhattan Christian College campus. Facing a decision to either replace or renovate the building, the administration and Board of Trustees determined it would be best to completely gut the building and rebuild it. Ground was broken May 5, 2008 and the dedication was on September 24, 2009. Because some parts of the building were not completely done,

the library was not able to move in until the weekend of October 2-5, 2009. The college's chapel is on the first floor, classrooms and a "history" room are on part of the second floor, while the library is on the third floor and the rest of the second.

Why was the project needed?

When the library was moved to the classroom building in the early 1990s, it was to be a temporary move. We were crammed into three classrooms, with the tiny circulation desk in the hallway between them. Needless to say, we were not ADA compliant.

How did technology use or demand for technology influence the space planning for the new/ renovated library?

In the old library we did not have enough computers for students, so we tried to determine how many, with so many students' now having laptops, we needed. With an FTE hovering between 300 and 330, we determined that 12 would be enough. In order to provide more study rooms, we opted to place the computers along two of the outside walls of the main floor of the library.

Did patron needs fit into the planning/design process? If so, how?

Yes, we tried to provide enough room at each computer work station for them to be able to have ready access to their all of study materials. In addition, we wanted to provide more quiet spaces where they could study. In the old library the only places that were even halfway quiet were a few study carrels in the stacks. Our study rooms are now heavily utilized.

What has been the patron reaction to the new or renovated library?

Delight. Upon entering the library for the first time, many people exclaim, "Wow!" When we were in the old space, many students would go across the street to the library at Kansas State University to study. Now many of them come here because the space is much more conducive for studying.

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