

Library Showcase: Sterling C. Evans Library, Texas A&M University – Interview with Staff

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LOCATION ADDRESS

Sterling C. Evans Library
Texas A&M University
5000 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-5000

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The Sterling C. Evans Library renovation resulted in 70 additional seats in the café, 12 new study rooms created for presentation practice and collaboration, flexible study spaces and consultation workstations close to the service desk that allow for collaboration between patrons and librarians.

Why was the project needed?

Here are some key points.

1. Maximize, as well as, enhance our public spaces on the first floor to better serve our patrons. This included:
 - The merging of individual service points (Access Services (circulation), Interlibrary Services (ILL) and Reference Services) into one service point to better serve our patrons.

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- The creation of learning spaces that better allow for student collaboration (open spaces such as booths, large study tables, and computer workstations that can accommodate 2-3 students).
 - Attention was also given to areas for individual study and quiet reflection.
 - Finally, we also added a total of twelve new group study rooms to the first floor. We built five new group study rooms and converted seven staff offices into group study rooms and relocated the staff to another floor.
2. To support technology needs:
- Increase the overall number of power outlets on the first floor wherever possible, as well as add collaborative workspaces for additional public access computers.

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

Everything was planned with technology in mind:

- In particular, students asked for more public computer terminals and outlets. Overall, we added 55 additional public access computers to the main building and earmarked 10 of these to be added to the first floor where the renovations took place. Outlets were added everywhere possible throughout the first floor.
- Two new large digital displays were added to the front lobby area for marketing library services. One display features daily classes and workshops taking place in the library. The second display highlights different services and events.
- Four self-checkout machines were “reimagined” for better use. One was relocated to the first floor to go next to the coffee shop entrance for easy access. The other 3 were repositioned near the service desk for better visibility/usage.
- In our new consultation area, nearby the main service desk, librarians provide more advanced reference help. There are 3 consultation stations in total and they were designed to enable our students to play a more active part in the research/learning process with the librarian. The desks have rounded ends on them so patrons are not sitting directly across from the “expert” librarian. Two stations can accommodate one or two patrons with the librarian. A third station was designed to accommodate small groups. This table is shaped like an “amoeba” and configured so the students and the librarian can easily gather around together to view a large screen. A wireless keyboard is available to allow for a more collaborative consultation session where both librarian and student can take turns using the computer.

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

Yes, basically we worked with our patrons from start to finish to make sure they were part of the Reimagine project. We began by prompting them with a “If I ran the library campaign...” and solicited their feedback on floor maps and giant posters that were displayed in the areas where the renovation was to take place (We also posted these questions on the Website). After an initial question, asking them to draw on the floor maps and leave comments about how they would “reimagine” our first floor we then posted a series of questions based on their initial comments that delved into some of the themes that emerged (more comfortable seating, more coffee shop, more technology, more group study and quiet study space). Finally, we followed up with several focus groups to complete the process.

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