Chapter 12
Re–Envisioning the Millersville University Library:
Center for Knowledge Creation and Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Marilyn McKinley Parrish
Millersville University, USA
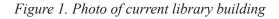
Greg Szczyrbak
Millersville University, USA
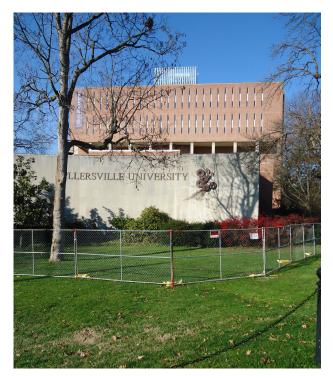
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A scheduled infrastructure upgrade to an academic library building offered the opportunity for library faculty and staff at Millersville University to consider and implement a vision of a re-imagined library for the 21st century. With dramatic changes in learning spaces in higher education facilities since the building was designed and built in the 1960s, education, advocacy, and collaboration became central components of the planning process. This case study examines the design process of a library renovation project at a mid-sized regional comprehensive master's-granting institution in south central Pennsylvania. The building of new partnerships, positive and persistent communication, and interdisciplinary collaboration strengthened the design process and set the stage for innovative uses of the new facility.

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

Millersville University was founded in 1855 in south central Pennsylvania as a normal school focused on teacher education. It is now a regional comprehensive master's granting institution with a strong education and liberal arts focus and over 8,700 students. The current university library building is situated at the center of campus and has been a busy location for study and research since its doors opened in 1967. The university is part of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE). Individual building renovations at member universities are scheduled on a once every forty years basis. The library building, a fortress-like structure made of brick and concrete with gun-slit windows, is overdue for the complete renovation currently underway (Figure 1). Technology needs of 21st-century learners could not be accommodated in this building due to insufficient electricity and technology infrastructure. In addition, inflexible spaces inhibited students' ability for innovative, interdisciplinary collaboration around existing and newly created knowledge. This case study focuses on the design process of the library renovation project at Millersville University.

Figure 1. Photo of current library building

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