Thanks to our generous Friends, the library now has:

- 234 endowed book funds worth $7,834,832
- Access to over 40,000 online journals
- 630,349 books
- 67 public access computers plus 15 laptops for checkout and wireless Internet throughout the building

And these materials get used! In 2007:

- Davidson students, faculty, and staff viewed 116,031 articles on JSTOR (an online full-image archive of 773 premier scholarly journals—a student favorite)
- Davidson people made 2,092,916 prints on the library’s laser printers!

Thank you, Friends!

DID YOU KNOW?

The time finally came in 2007 to replace the dated and duct-taped, gloriously, garishly green carpet in Davidson’s E.H. Little Library. The main and upper levels now sport handsome blue and gray tile carpeting, complemented by taupe walls.

Many lamented the end of the “Brady Bunch green staircase” era—the carpet was original to the building’s 1974 construction date. A Harvard psychologist speaking on campus during the 1974–75 academic year commented in writing that this green was, in fact, an ideal color for carpet for a library: It was restful but did not put you to sleep, it satisfied the senses, and it was pedagogically perfect. While one might take issue with any one of those three points, the carpet worked its way, indubitably, inexorably, into the psyches of the owners of some 9.6 million pair of feet who trod its loops from those days forward. But the updated look is a winner in 2008, too: today’s students, faculty, and staff have told us so!

Improvements to come in the next year: additional electrical outlets for all those laptops and iPods so essential for today’s student, and a facelift for the lower level in summer 2008, which will bring the end of the vintage gold carpet there….

(above) As the carpet was being removed from E.H. Little, young Davidson minds began inquiring: What benefit might come from the passing of the iconic carpeting? The answer came with a Student Government Association carpet sale to raise money for Habitat for Humanity. (below) (l-r) Allison Ruhe ’10, Wes Fiser ’07, and Scott Lester ’10 clean and cut carpet to sell as remnants, doormats, even mousepads.
TIME ROLLS ON
FOURTH DIRECTOR IN 100 YEARS BRAKES FOR BOOKS

Jill Gremmels took office last summer in E.H. Little Library as only the fourth library director at Davidson College in the 100 years the position has existed.

Davidson’s library was historically administered by faculty members and students from its 1837 founding until 1907, when the trustees hired Cornelia Shaw as director. She retired in 1936, when the mantle was accepted by Chalmers Davidson ’28, a professor of history and collateral descendant of the college’s namesake, Gen. William L. Davidson. Thirty-nine years later “Dr. Davidson” retired upstairs in the library building to become college archivist, and handed the reins of library management to his former student worker Leland Park ’63, who retired in 2006.

Gremmels has lots of experience in following the footsteps of legendary academic characters. She’s a direct descendant of Georg Grossmann, who founded Wartburg College, a private, undergraduate Lutheran school in 1852.

She grew up on the Waverly, Iowa, campus as the child of two Wartburg professors. She graduated there in 1980, and spent thirteen years as director of its Vogel Library immediately before coming to Davidson.

“It used to be hard to find information outside of libraries,” she says. “Now it’s easy to find information, but it’s hard to find good information. If libraries focus on teaching students how to find, evaluate, and use information—rather than just serving as information warehouses—they’ll continue to be relevant institutions.”

Gremmels was involved with helping the Association of College and Research Libraries develop its recommendations for information literacy programs, which were issued in 2001. (Notably, Wartburg unveiled its own initiative two years earlier!)

Now in her second semester at Davidson, Gremmels feels she has a strong sense of Davidson’s core values as she moves nimbly with the administration to effect President Ross’s “change to stay the same” vision.

“I want to see this library be a harmonious home for every kind of learner,” she said.

CHANGING TO STAY THE SAME

President Tom Ross’s commitment for Davidson to “change to stay the same” is nowhere more evident than at the library.

Soon after arriving on campus, Ross authorized the creation of a Library Space Planning Task Force, co-chaired by Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty Clark Ross and Library Director Jill Gremmels, who arrived at Davidson in summer 2007. The task force includes representatives from the faculty, the library staff, physical plant, student life, information technology, and development.

The group first met with consultant Scott Bennett, who offered six provocative “first questions” that focus on the library as a learning space, not just as home to Davidson’s 600,000-volume collection.

Bennett challenged planners to come to grips with the enormous changes brought by the Internet and increasing digitization. The task force polled faculty and staff about their ideas for the building (a student survey will follow early in the new year) and worked on a set of principles to guide space planning.

In early 2008, the group will make site visits to other colleges with new libraries, to see different approaches and learn about their planning processes. The Davidson task force hopes to make its recommendation in fall 2008.

“If we get the principles right,” says Gremmels, “then we can be flexible in how we achieve our specific goals while staying true to Davidson’s core values.”
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