Changes are coming to the first floor of E.H. Little Library this summer as some library activities are relocated to make room for a new Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). The idea behind the CTL is to bring together teaching- and learning-focused services that exist around campus to enable greater collaboration and visibility. According to the planning document, the CTL will:

- Provide integrated resources enabling faculty and students to create an enriched and progressive education community. These resources will focus on process (writing, speaking, information and digital literacy), on coursework (math, science, economics, film and media studies), on student development (learning approaches and differences), and on faculty development (instructional technologies and teaching pedagogies).
- Foster a vibrant and engaged environment that enables faculty and students to create, access, and utilize the most innovative and significant teaching and learning resources.
- Become a locus for continued discussions and activities that encourage excellence in the liberal arts across Davidson’s campus and beyond.

I am excited to be welcoming this new center to the library. Although there are many teaching and learning centers in college libraries, most of them don’t include librarians, and the relationship between the center and the library is more coexistence than collaboration. Our vision is different. The librarians in the Information Literacy and Content Selection department will be housed in the CTL, putting them in prime collaboration space with other professionals dedicated to the support of teaching and learning.

Librarians will contribute to the work of the CTL, and the library’s work will be facilitated in several ways:

- Reference work is teaching. Academic librarians strive to make each reference encounter a learning experience for the student. Drop-in or scheduled consultations can run from 30 minutes to two hours, and the librarian is not just teaching tools (“push this key now”) during the session. Instead she is using a specific example or problem to teach students to navigate an increasingly complex information environment.
- Academic needs relate, but geographic separation imposes artificial sequencing. Librarians often refer students to the Writing, Speaking, or Math/Science Centers. Co-location will allow more effective referral, from librarians to others and from others to librarians, and the ability to work simultaneously with these tutors instead of serially.
- Librarians want to be partners with faculty in educating students. The CTL will give us the opportunity to participate in workshops and to proactively design learning collaborations.
- When we all labor alone, we work unnoticed. People haven’t necessarily thought of librarians when they’ve thought of the academic support the college provides. The CTL can help to change perceptions others have of us.
- The library should be common academic space on campus. There isn’t a great deal of academic space that isn’t “owned” or at least occupied by someone, usually departments. The library should be the place on campus where all students, faculty, and staff, from all disciplines come together in pursuit and celebration of the life of the mind. The CTL is likewise academic space for everyone. The library and CTL belong together.

Watch for updates in upcoming issues of Columns!

–Jill Gremmels
The Leland M. Park Director of the Davidson College Library

North of the library entrance, students and professors take advantage of nice weather and outdoor classroom facilities.
The Library has a New Mission Statement

The library has a new mission statement! Over the last semester, the library’s Management Council and the faculty Library Committee strove to define the fundamental purpose of the library. Together we answered the questions, “What principles should guide our actions? What are our goals? Where should we be concentrating our resources? How can we best meet the needs of faculty and students?” In doing so, we crafted a statement that departs from previous missions and those of other colleges in several key ways:

• By quoting the college’s Statement of Purpose, the library mission statement evokes the unique nature of Davidson College. Ours is not a generic liberal arts college library but one that reflects the specialness of the institution it serves.
• The library’s direct contribution to student learning is highlighted.
• The library still claims a mission of providing resources and study space, but it is not all we do.
• The importance of technology is noted, with a pledge to remain in the vanguard.
• The library acknowledges its partnerships with other campus entities in fulfillment of its mission.

Mission statements have a way of being written and subsequently ignored, but Jill Gremmels promises that won’t happen with this new statement. “I believe a mission statement should be a star to guide the library. It helps us make decisions and shows us the right path to follow,” she said.

New Library Mission Statement

“The primary purpose of Davidson College is to assist students in developing humane instincts and disciplined and creative minds for lives of leadership and service.” In so asserting, the Statement of Purpose recognizes that these goals are complementary. The library contributes directly to their achievement:

Disciplined minds must be information-literate: able to find, reflect critically upon, and use information wisely for scholarly purposes. Davidson’s information literacy program, led by the library and enacted primarily but not exclusively through the college’s curriculum, participates in teaching students “to think clearly, to make relevant and valid judgments, to discriminate among values, and to communicate freely with others in the realm of ideas.” (Statement of Purpose)

Creative minds need room and resources for experimentation, inspiration, and collaboration. The library provides and organizes information sources (purchased, licensed, borrowed, and locally developed), as well as tools, expertise, and space for students to become intentional, self-directed learners and faculty and staff to pursue their goals.

Leaders exemplify critical engagement with the world. The library helps the college community navigate the complex and rapidly developing information environment by adopting an experimental, future-oriented approach to new technology for the dissemination, interpretation, and preservation of information.

The library does not work alone in these endeavors, but collaborates with faculty, the Center for Teaching and Learning, ITS, and other members of the college community in pursuit of its mission. Library staff model collaboration and professional development by engaging with the local academic community and the broader library profession, as leaders and as learners.

During the Trustees’ recent visit to campus, they took a self-guided library tour that took them to various locations including the Electronic Classroom, a Video Viewing and Group Study area, and the Rare Book Room. Here, Susanna Boylston, Assistant Director for Information Literacy and Content Selection, leads an informational session in the Electronic Classroom.
STUDENT THOUGHTS ABOUT THE CURRENT AND FUTURE LIBRARY

During the first week of March, Henry Myerberg, architect for the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), presented the plans to campus. As part of his presentation, he discussed trends in libraries such as infusing them with technology, making them more conducive to collaborative work, and making them more hospitable (i.e. comfortable, flexible furniture and café offerings like coffee). He concluded the presentation with a video montage of interviews he conducted with Davidson students. They had many insightful observations that will not only influence and guide the implementation of the CTL, but also future Library renovations. Here is a transcript of some student responses to Henry’s questions.

Are there too many books in this library?
• I don’t think there are too many books. It’s a library and that’s what you use.
• The only time I go to the Library is when I have to look at a book that is on reserve and I’ll spend a couple of hours to work on a project.
• A lot of people think that there is something nice about the tangible book and that they’re irreplaceable but if kids are exposed to things like Kindles and other e-readers in high school, they might be used to that format and think of a book as a strange, unwieldy object.
• Sometimes you come in to get books but most of the time you come in to study with groups or use the computers.
• I don’t really like looking at all of the rows of stacks that no one uses.
• It seems that most of the books are not used by anybody and if you need articles, you just log onto a database.
• I like having access to both the library database and stuff online but also being able to and see what books are near other books. Sometimes I’ll go to find a book and realize that there’s an even better book I hadn’t known about that’s on the shelf right next to it.

Why do you come to the library to use the computers here? What do you think the library needs mostly?
• There are software programs that are too expensive for me to buy…like thousands of dollars…and I need them for my classes.
• I think it needs more computers, more group study spaces, and more places where you can use technology.
• UNC Chapel Hill…they have a technology library and the same at NC State…it is just computers and study rooms and I know a lot of my friends use those study locations a lot more. It’s a much more positive environment.

Where do you go to study by yourself?
• I usually like to work around friends but not in a real noisy group.
• Every time I’m here I work with colleagues.
• In my library carrel or I study with a friend in one of the study rooms so that we can do problems on the board.
• I’m not sure because the library is supposed to be quiet and I need just a little bit of noise to be comfortable with the environment to study.
• I think I like to have tables because I like to be able to spread out and have the option of having other people working at the table with me.
• I really love the fact that there is the basement where you can get a place that’s a lot quieter and then come upstairs and have a place that is much more social because it’s really nice to have a place to study and then a place where you can take a break.

Talk about the library’s environment.
• I feel like as soon as you walk into the library there’s a wall of stress that hits you emanating from people. I don’t know if there’s anything that can be done to change that.
• Sometimes there can be a negative atmosphere, especially in the basement. I don’t like to go there.
• The environment in here could use improvement because sometimes when you’re studying, there’s a lot of negative feelings.
• It is not a comfortable place to study…not very open…really quiet.
• I feel like it is a time warp from the 70’s.

If there’s one thing you could change about the existing library, what would that be?
• I would definitely put a station for coffee and hot water.
• If it’s possible, to create even more window space. More natural light would be good.
• I feel like the colors are very institutional.
• More color, or activity, or the coffee shop…that would be a good idea.
• One thing I would change…maybe have a small café type thing if that’s possible or have a coffee station, something like that.
• I like to do a lot of work in coffee shop environments.
• Coffee shop...
• Café...
• It needs to be much more happy and brighter or it needs to be more old-time-library-ish…one or the other. But it is this weird middle ground like 70s/80s architecture…it’s really dark, very square, with weird tiles in the ceiling…it’s not a happy place to be.
A new technology implementation in a library can always be news, but when is it really big news? When the product is not just new to this library but new on the market. Davidson’s E.H. Little Library is proud to announce that it has been selected as one of 33 Early Adopters of the Web-Scale Management Services (WMS) integrated library system from member-owned library cooperative OCLC.

The idea behind an integrated library system is to use each bibliographic record for multiple purposes (ordering, cataloging, circulation). These systems have been in libraries since the 1960s, typically installed at individual libraries, with an on-campus server holding local data and sending it to workstations in the library. The products have evolved over time—notably adding Web-based catalogs that provided knowledge about the library’s materials anytime and anywhere, and growing to support some consortia as well as individual libraries—but their fundamentals have remained the same for 40 years.

WMS is different. It takes advantage of “cloud computing,” where data are stored on remote servers (think of those TV commercials where people solve their data-sharing problems by going “to the cloud!”), eliminating the need for libraries to manage and support server hardware. Taking the one-record-many-uses concept to the next level, WMS fulfills the promise of the 200-million item WorldCat database, as libraries collaborate by sharing those master records instead of downloading records into their own databases.

The library is showing its technology-forward commitment by migrating to this new system. Other early adopters include Pepperdine University, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Oregon’s ORBIS Cascade Alliance and Linfield College, and North Carolina’s Craven Pamlico Carteret Regional Libraries and High Point University.

Craig Milberg, assistant director for Discovery Systems, said, “One exciting aspect is, as this service combines our catalog and Discovery system in one, and vastly streamlines cataloging efforts, that post implementation, we will be able to focus our energies on enhancing other information systems and developing new services.”

“This will improve library staff workflows and make it easier for patrons to find things,” Milberg added. “We also anticipate that this transition will support OCLC’s stated commitment of creating system efficiencies by continuing to integrate their extensive portfolio of library systems and services with Web-Scale Management Services. This will enable us to create new and innovative services for Davidson.”