Library Showcase:
Lupton Library, Univ. of Tenn. at Chattanooga – Interview with Jason Griffey

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LOCATION ADDRESS

Lupton Library
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
615 McCallie Ave.
Chattanooga, TN 37403-2598

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The current Lupton Library building was built in 1974 and has 116,349 gross square feet. The original 1100 seats have been reduced to a seating capacity of 670 because of shelving additions, technology, and new learning spaces. When the original library opened enrollment at the school was 4,574 and it grew to 9,553 in 2007. The library's collection consisted of 170,000 books and periodicals; that has grown to over 1.7 million items today. The new library will have approximately 180,000 gross square feet and is expected to be finished in January 2012.

In the Project Facts section of the Website (under Project Background) it mentions that "Student learning styles and habits have changed significantly since the current library was first opened as have information research and scholarly practices." In what ways specifically do you feel that student learning styles and habits have changed?

The existing library was built in the 1970's. There's a ton of research/writing out there about how learning styles have changed in the last 4 years, but the primary driver for us was that there is less demand for solitary workspaces and more for group-based workspaces.

Do you feel that your new library will accommodate these changes?

Definitely. We are more than tripling our existing group spaces, and the vast majority of the building is dedicated to student study spaces instead of warehousing for the materials.

Do you feel that technology has had (is having) a big impact on the new library design? In other words, will the main focus of the new library be a technology center and/or information commons area? This seems to be the trend with many newly built or renovated libraries.

Definitely. Access to technology is a large part of modern library use. We are creating a sort of information commons that combines the Reference functions of the traditional academic library with a computer lab space with room for around 150 or so desktops. We are also ensuring that this space is built with access (raised) flooring, which will ensure that we have the flexibility to reconfigure as technological needs change.

I like the idea of the community involvement; that students and faculty have some input into the new library design. What has been the response toward the campus involvement? Is the planning committee using many of the ideas that have been suggested?

We had multiple levels of campus involvement, ranging from an External building committee that was composed of faculty, staff, and students to individual meetings with every campus group we could get scheduled. The Student Government had direct input that was taken into account, as did the Graduate Student Association. The campus was very, very involved in this building.

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