

Library Space Re-Design

P.H. Welshimer Memorial Library
Milligan College, Tennessee

BCLA Professional Development Day, May 17-18, 2012
University of Charleston, West Virginia

Does the College need to build additional library space? The College can probably avoid building additional library space if it can reduce the footprint in the building of both the print collections and the library staff.

What might the College do in the near- and mid-term to reshape experimentally the way the Welshimer Library is used. The report describes a number of relatively low-cost experiments in the use of library space. These experiments could guide a transformation of library programs over the next few years, [and] make the library a much more frequent and successful choice for study among students.

Scott Bennett, *The Future of the P.H. Welshimer Library*, March 2006



Library behind the glass (ca. 2006)
“Look but don’t touch. Please don’t feed the librarians!”



“The Squeeze” (ca. 2006)
Because it’s all about security.



Reclaiming dead space (ca. Summer 2007)
Circulation desk moves out into the entrance lobby.



Initial efforts to open sight lines (ca. Summer 2006)
Reference area on Main Floor.



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Architectural Plans (March 2008)

Open sightlines and more user spaces. But focus is still collection "heavy".



Main Floor (front) after remodel (Summer 2010)



Library Work Area and Offices on (back) Main Floor (Summer 2010)
Hey, what are you doing with all our stuff!



Main Floor (back) today
1,600 sq. ft. of prime real estate for users (work area moved to Basement).



Dismantling the Basement Floor "Labyrinth" (Summer 2011)



Same view of the Basement Floor today



Another view of the Basement Floor today
We can actually breathe down here now!



On to the Second Floor stacks (front) (Summer 2011)
Tight aisles and packed shelves in desperate need of weeding.



On to the Second Floor stacks (front) (Summer 2011)
Tight aisles and packed shelves in desperate need of weeding.



Second Floor stacks (front) today
New user seating areas!



Second Floor stacks (front) today
New user seating areas and wider aisles!

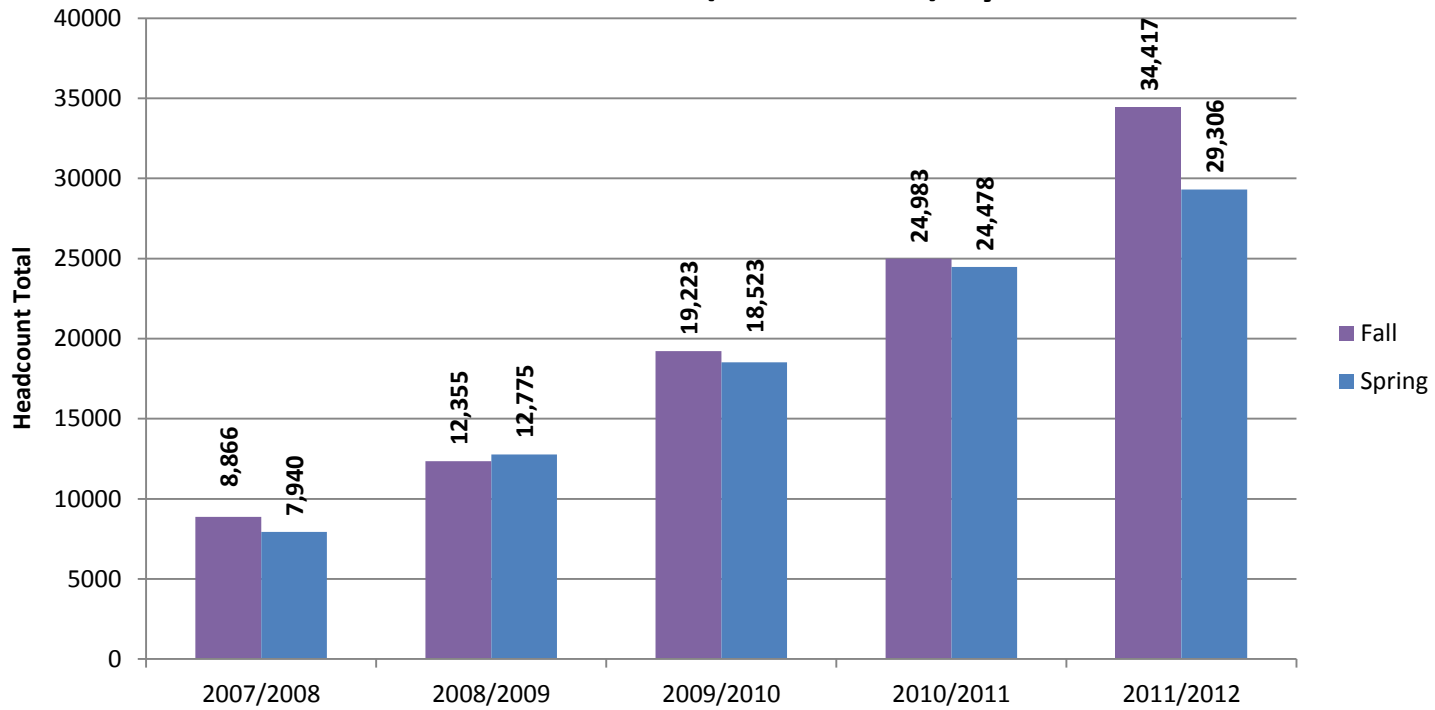


Second Floor stacks (back) (Summer 2011)



Second Floor stacks (back) (Spring-Summer 2012)
We now have space for some additional seating!

Headcount (hour-visits) by Semester



The proof is in the usage numbers!

- **Opening the view, and breathing life into dead spaces:** Reconfiguration of Main Floor Lobby, Circulation Desk and Reference areas beginning in 2006 to reverse the perception that the library was an unattractive and unwelcoming place, oppressively dominated (ironically) by books and shelving. The impact of just opening the space was dramatic. We also radically relaxed noise and food restrictions. (Low cost: Countertop and labor.)
- **Shifting the focus from “library-centric” to “user-centric”:** Re-prioritizing space by relocated library work areas to facilitate a significant increase in user space on the Main Floor. (This was accompanied, much to our delighted surprise by a re-decoration of the Main Floor—paint, carpet, and some casual furniture—in the summer 2010, funded by the President’s Office. Project cost \$45,000.)
- **Users invade the stacks:** Significant reduction in the library lending book collection to create new user spaces on the Second and Basement Floors. (Low cost: Tables and chairs and area rugs, labor.)