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DOVER LIBRARY

Renovations to John R. Dover Library Meet Needs of Gardner-Webb Students

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON MARCH 29, 2022



▲ Dover Library's third floor has more open space, study rooms and meeting rooms. Photo by Danielle Billups / GWU Photo Team

More than \$75,000 in Grants Provide New Technology

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Since December 2021, the Facilities and Maintenance staff has worked to significantly transform the third floor of Gardner-Webb University's John R. Dover Library. The floor recently opened to the delight and surprise of students. "They do love the space," observed Dean of the Library Pam Dennis. "The looks on their faces when they get to the top of the steps is priceless!"

The extensive renovations began as a result of requests made by the GWU Student Government Association (SGA). "The SGA talked to the president (Dr. William Downs), and the president sent me a message saying these are the things the students want in the library," Dennis elaborated. "I said, 'Yes,' because they were exactly the same things we wanted."



▲ A student uses one of the new study rooms on the Dover Library's third floor. Photo by Danielle Billups / GWU Photo Team

Built in 1974, the last update to Dover Library's first and third floors was new paint and carpet in 1998. More recently, half of the main floor (the entrance to the building and second floor) received a major renovation in 2010.

Initially, the plan for the third floor was brighter paint and carpet squares, but after meeting with SGA, Dr. Downs suggested to University staff that they apply for state and federal grants and to imagine renovations on a bigger scale. This is in keeping with the University's plan to increase engagement with external grant and funding sources.

Dennis consulted with the Library staff and student workers and wrote grants for new technology. David Wacaster, director of Facilities and Maintenance, offered COVID relief funds to provide monetary support for the structural improvements. Dennis and the staff began coming up with ideas, and Wacaster offered input and drew plans to meet their requests. Students also mentioned they would like to have more food options in the library, which is still in the works.

The first task was "right-sizing" the library's collection, which involved working with the faculty to keep books that support the University's curriculum. "We think this is the first time that has been done in this library to the extent that we did it," Dennis said. "A lot of resources were purchased in this library in the '50s and '60s."

After keeping the books relevant to the curriculum, the library's entire collection, except for its religious studies section, is now located on the first floor. The religious studies section will remain on the third floor. Moving the majority of the collection opened up space on the third floor for an archive reading room, large and small study rooms, two conference rooms, and an event space that will accommodate 100 people. The rooms are sound proof, so people using them won't be disturbed.



▲ A few photos of the work involved in transforming the library's third floor.

Dennis and Dr. Natalie Bishop, associate dean and University Archivist, envision the open event space could host not only library programs but various campus events, such as visiting authors, dinner theaters, lecture series, and other happenings. The conference rooms, which have space for 15 to 30, can be used for club meetings.

Wacaster observed that the theme for the renovation project became “not your grandmother’s library.” “When most people think library, it’s a place where you have to be quiet, no food or drinks, no talking, etc.,” he noted. “The spaces we created will allow students to work together and bring that same energy we find in the Tucker Student Center to the third floor of the library. We have also created some spaces where those who need to be alone and study can do so without the disruptions that they find in the housing spaces.”

The new technology purchased with a grant from the State Library of North Carolina includes a plotter, 3D printer, laminator, people counter and archival technology. Another grant will create a 3D printing lab with a 3D printer and 3D scanner, for faculty and students in the humanities. This award, from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Library Association, was made possible by a collaborative effort between the library and Dean Shawn Holt and faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences. After the grant period, the lab will be open to all students in all discipline areas.

“We have already printed a biblical temple for the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy and are in the process of printing braille room numbers for the library,” Dennis shared. “We anticipate working with the Department of Communications, Art, and Design and others to create resources that allow students a hands-on experience to enhance traditional learning.”

Bishop will keep her office on the third floor in the existing archive processing room but will have a new adjacent archive reading room where guests can use archive materials without disrupting the preservation work in the processing space. The room will also be available as a meeting space for local clubs, such as the Broad River Genealogical Society or Daughters of the American Revolution.



- ▲ This stained glass model, made as a sample for Dover Chapel in 1961, was once in storage and is now a permanent fixture on the third floor.

Bishop explained the need for an archive reading room. “We have more and more people who are interested in using archives—community members, donors, and alumni who come and want to see the collection,” she said. “We have classes that are making reservations to have an archives research day for the whole class. We really didn’t want alumni, researchers, and guests coming into the preservation and processing room, because every archive has one, every museum has one, it’s the nature of the

work we do, but it doesn't look appealing. Now, whenever friends and guests of the University visit, parts of the collection can be brought into this new space, where the items can be showcased properly."

The wall outside of the reading room features the stained glass model that was made as a sample for the Dover Chapel in 1961. This beautiful piece of University history, which had been in storage, is now on display. Exhibit cases will also be placed along the wall to hold items from the University archives as well as pieces on loan from the Cleveland County Historical Collection.

Grants received by Dover Library in the last year:

- COVID-19 Mini Grant, \$1,500 from State Library of North Carolina on April 2021 for hand sanitizer stands, digital signage, touchless thermometer.
- Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC): Focus on Small and Rural Libraries grant, \$3,000 from American Library Association on April 2021 for discussions with Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Association and event on October 21 and to begin digitization project of Ebenezer archives.
- NCPC (National Preservation), \$1,234.50 from NCPC Preservation Society on May 2021 to preserve Boiling Springs High School diplomas and to preserve old Bibles in archival boxes.
- LSTA EZ-1 Grant, \$37,525 from State Library of North Carolina on June 2021 for a new plotter, 3D printer, laminator, people counter, and archival technology.
- NC Adapts EZ Grant, \$23,176 from State Library of North Carolina on July 2021 to furnish new study rooms on the third floor and a conference room and make way for a new University Archives.
- American Rescue Plan: Humanities Grant, \$10,000 from American Library Association and National Endowment for the Humanities on January 2022 to create a makerspace (printing lab) in the library in conjunction with an interdisciplinary course, includes 3D printer, 3D scanner, teaching stipend, and supplies.

Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina's recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to six professional schools, 14 academic departments, more than 80 undergraduate and graduate majors, and a world-class faculty. Located on a beautiful 225-acre campus in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb prepares graduates to impact their chosen professions, equips them with the skills to advance the frontiers of knowledge, and inspires them to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of others. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.