



Building and Equipment Trends: I

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THIS IS A VERY ACTIVE PERIOD for junior college library building. With the rapid development of new colleges, particularly community colleges, many new libraries are being constructed. This article will summarize the current status of junior college library building development, suggest certain trends existing in this field, and give examples of interesting new junior college library buildings. Both types of building programs will be covered, those in which the library has its own separate building and those in which the library shares quarters with other campus offices. Both public and private junior colleges will be included.

There is relatively little which is unique about the junior college; in most ways it is much like the four year college. Often campuses look almost identical. It is probably true, also, that there are relatively few trends unique in junior college library buildings. Most of the trends which exist in four-year college library buildings and in other kinds of junior college buildings no doubt exist also in junior college library buildings, so the serious student of such trends can be referred to them for helpful data.

Information on the essential steps in designing academic library buildings is covered in several pertinent titles listed in the references.¹⁻⁷ Furniture and equipment problems are covered well in two other sources.⁸⁻⁹

In particular, junior college library buildings and equipment have been covered by Ray Rowland in Chapter 4 of *Library Services for Junior Colleges*.¹⁰ This chapter includes A. F. Kuhlman's *Data Needed to Plan a New College Library*, adapted for junior colleges, as well as the ACRL *Standards for Junior College Libraries*, the latter being a document basic for new building design in this field.

Theodore Samore, using U.S. Office of Education data, concluded in

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1963 that the median age of public junior college library buildings in sixteen states was seven years, showing many relatively new buildings. In private junior colleges, however, the median building age was 33, a middle-aged figure, probably reflecting many cases of buildings shared with administration offices or classrooms or both.¹¹ Square footages per library were surprisingly small and thereby supported the previous conclusions of John Harvey concerning the inferior quality and quantity of the housing occupied by junior college libraries.¹²

Numerous academic library building trends exist, and some of those most pertinent to junior colleges are given in this section. Some of them are even, to a certain extent, peculiar to junior college libraries.

The history of many junior colleges shows the library to have been located in the administration building or else in a classroom building where it originally occupied a large room or a series of rooms. In 1958, a survey of a selected sample of smaller junior college libraries revealed that the library was separately housed in only 24 per cent of them.¹³ Such a location creates noise and traffic problems, but is economical and accessible whether in an old mansion such as the Baptist Institute in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, or at Mohawk Valley Technical Institute in Utica, New York, where the entire college is in one building.

Often such a location, especially in the public junior college, is one which requires sharing not only larger buildings with other offices and classrooms, but also the library itself with high school students as at Independence Community College in Independence, Kansas, where grades 11, 12, 13, and 14 share the library.

With advancing enrollments and better financing, there is a trend toward a separate library building in keeping with the typical college campus plan. Such a change usually results in considerable increase in library floor space although it may also bring inferior accessibility for faculty and students.

An unusually large number of new buildings are being constructed in colleges only recently established. Obviously, this provides an excellent opportunity to take a fresh and imaginative approach to the problems of such libraries rather than the more traditional approach of the liberal arts college. It has influenced these libraries in the direction of modern architecture, and many are built along very modern designs. Often the entire campus carries out such a design. On the other hand, in such new colleges the library must be built without knowledge of the particular preferences and habits of the faculty, student body, and

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administrative officials involved. Where pioneering approaches to library design problems are made, we can only hope that adequate testing procedures will be provided with which to judge the degree of success achieved.

Another trend is in the direction of the increased use of library building consultants and library planning committees to assist in planning and designing the building. While probably still not common in junior colleges, the consultant is making his influence felt in all kinds of other libraries. Recognition of the fact that building planning is a complex project has brought about the desirability of a coordinated approach to it which involves all major aspects of campus life.

Harriet Genung has indicated the interaction of a long-term planning committee at Mount San Antonio College, Walnut, Calif., with the library building architects.¹⁴ This committee, consisting of faculty, administration, librarians, and trustees, established the building requirements and followed through on the many sets of plans drawn over a period of years.

In general, the junior college library building is distinctive among academic libraries because of its small size. An excellent example of this is the architectural gem at Gwynedd-Mercy Junior College in Pennsylvania, only 10,000 square feet.¹⁵ Such smallness in size is not always true, however; a few libraries, such as those at Mount San Antonio College (California) with 82,000 square feet, Foothill College (California) with 38,000, York Junior College (Pennsylvania) with 37,000, and Flint Junior College (Michigan) with 65,000 are larger than the average four-year college library building.¹⁶⁻²⁰

The junior college library has become the central storehouse and service agency for campus audio-visual facilities. No trend is more pronounced in these libraries. Special space and equipment are usually provided for such facilities. The new Stephens College Library, the Chicago Teachers College—Northern Branch, San Mateo College, and Mount San Antonio College Libraries are examples in which a determined attempt has been made to establish a large audio-visual center.²¹⁻²⁴

At Stephens, the idea was to incorporate into the library every teaching device used in the classroom. Listening rooms, booths for tapes and records, film, slide, and filmstrip projection, microfilm viewing, closed-circuit television, and photocopying were all incorporated into the library. This is a major floor space and equipment item in many new libraries. Listening rooms, language laboratories, closed-

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circuit television, and production facilities require special space arrangements.

The entire ground floor of the San Mateo College Library is devoted to audio-visual use. Provision has been made for TV and FM studios, laboratories, preview rooms, faculty and student reading rooms, and extensive listening space. In addition, teaching machines, reading accelerators, and table model slide and filmstrip viewers are available for circulation.

The York Junior College Library provides an example of the trend toward the increased use of individual study carrels or stations. Their installation changes the appearance of reading rooms, but caters to the preferences shown by American college students for individual rather than group study tables.

Two additional trends relate to the use of furniture. First is the trend toward the use of carpet for floor covering; carpet controls sound and improves appearance. Second is the use of dark woods and furniture paneling which follows current fashions in industrial design. The lower reflections combined with the use of light wall paints and strong candle power give this furniture a desirable study atmosphere. Foothill has installed bookstacks of these dark woods, while San Mateo has used standard metal from one of the conventional suppliers.

Designers of new junior college library buildings should be alert to newer trends as well as older ones. In ten years, we shall see increased mechanization of library operations requiring certain space adaptations, for instance, at the circulation desk and in the processing departments. The Mount San Antonio College Library uses IBM facilities in circulation control, and the York Junior College Library contains the campus computer center. An IBM control circulation system is used for charging books with all items returned to a central area for discharging and distribution at Mount San Antonio; the system is integrated with IBM machines used in other offices on campus.

Flexibility is a characteristic of no little importance, if only because so many junior colleges have grown rapidly and have needed to enlarge their facilities. And a factor which must never be overlooked is the trend for junior colleges to become senior colleges. Apparently, the new buildings at Stephens and York were built with this change in mind.

It is hazardous to point out any junior college library buildings which have been influential, but probably the Mount San Antonio College Library has influenced the design and scope of other recent li-

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braries, especially in the West, and the Centenary College Library was probably influential a few years earlier in the East.²⁵

Undoubtedly, junior college libraries owe much to the helpfulness of the institutes and workshops on library buildings sponsored by the Library Administration Division of the American Library Association (ALA). In the years of their existence, they have contributed much to librarians' understanding of building problems.

There are many new and impressive junior college library buildings and buildings plans. Several were featured at the 1965 ALA Conference sessions on junior college library buildings, among the most impressive of which were:

- A. Henry Ford Community College, Dearborn, Michigan
- B. Los Angeles Valley College, Van Nuys, California
- C. Chaffey College, Alta Loma, California
- D. San Jose City College, San Jose, California
- E. San Antonio College, San Antonio, Texas
- F. Prince George's Community College, Suitland, Maryland.

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