A Clear Vision: The Paul Weigel Library of Architecture, Planning & Design has a new home

Kansas State University Libraries

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A Clear Vision

THE PAUL WEIGEL LIBRARY OF ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING & DESIGN HAS A NEW HOME IN THE HEART OF REGNIER HALL

BY SARAH HOYT

On October 13, 2017, a crowd gathered in front of K-State’s newly constructed Regnier Hall as donors and honored guests stood on the building’s rooftop terrace. When the honorees cut the ceremonial ribbons, purple and white streamers fluttered to the ground in front of Weigel Library’s new home.

Regnier Hall, a sleek, modern, steel and glass building, is a striking contrast to Seaton Hall, where the university’s first architecture library was established in 1921. The library moved to increasingly larger spaces in Seaton four times in the following decades.

Ultimately, the collection and staff served K-State students in Seaton Hall for 96 years, thanks to the library’s champions, professors and leaders like Cecil F. Baker, Paul F. Weigel and Emil Fischer, who paved the way for its growth. The university recognized Prof. Weigel’s support and leadership by naming the library in his honor in 1986.

Like his predecessors, Tim de Noble, the current dean of the College of Architecture, Planning & Design, has been an advocate for improved library space and resources.
Now, in its new 6,500-square-foot Regnier Hall home, Weigel Library is part of a modern glass nexus between two historic limestone structures. A movable glass wall bisects the library space so that students can still access the Pierce Information Commons—a spacious reading and meeting area with comfortable furniture—after Weigel’s regular hours.

K-State Libraries’ Maxine Ganske has worked in Weigel Library since April 2007. She’s excited that the library’s new location means that students will more readily see what it has to offer.

“When we were on Seaton’s third floor, we were maybe a bit ‘out of sight, out of mind,’ but this move brings us to the center of the college,” Ganske said. “The exterior glass walls both in front and in back provide abundant sunlight and transparency. Our space is a great visual connection highlighting Weigel’s integration into the college and the rest of campus.”

Jason Jirele, graduate student in architecture from Blooming Prairie, Minn., thinks that the visibility is already paying off.

“Weigel Library finally has a space that lives up to its quality as a resource for students,” Jirele said. “Even in this short amount of time, people seem to be taking advantage of it much more than before. The new commons has been a great place for groups and organizations to meet, but just like in old Weigel, there are still a few places throughout where students can find a quiet corner to relax between classes.”

There are also improvements that make Weigel’s holdings more accessible.
accessible. The library’s new William A. Stoskopf Special Collections room will include approximately 1,175 rare and fragile books, prints, maps and other items. The materials will be shelved in a pleasant, secure environment where faculty and students can safely examine them. Even the oldest item in the collection, a 1581 edition of “I quattro libri dell’architettura di Andrea Palladio,” will be available.

“The new special collections room features a glass wall, so our resources will be much more visible,” Ganske said. “Increased awareness and accessibility means that faculty members can more easily incorporate valuable—and even irreplaceable—materials.”

It’s yet another way that the theme of visibility plays out in the new space.

“Weigel Library now occupies a visually prominent and accessible place within the heart of the public realm of Regnier Hall,” de Noble said. “This reflects the long-established and continuing importance of library resources in the academic advancement of our students and faculty.”

De Noble said that Regnier Hall’s modern glass design is part of the school’s vision for transparency. Other classrooms, studios and labs also feature glass walls that reveal the learning, reflection and creation taking place.

“We are honored that Dean de Noble saw fit to place Weigel Library in such a beautiful location,” Lori Goetsch, Dean of K-State Libraries, said. “We are very proud to support the College of Architecture, Planning & Design in all aspects of their work.”

Weigel Library offers a variety of workspaces in which students can study in groups or in quiet solitude.