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Anoka- Ramsey
Community College

CLIENT STORY

Research shows that when the COVID-19 pandemic hit back in March of 2020, academic libraries were among the last facilities to close on many college campuses, as they were viewed essential for students.



Coon Rapids Campus,
Minnesota







"Our goal was to help students learn better and faster, retain more, and ultimately help them become curious lifelong learners."

THOMAS DOBBS

PRINCIPAL, HAY DOBBS

When St. Paul, MN architecture firm Hay Dobbs was selected to redesign the Library and the College Services Suites on the Coon Rapids Campus of Anoka-Ramsey Community College, it became immediately clear to them – the new space should mimic a 'digital sandbox' – where all the tools students need to be successful come fully equipped.

"We engaged faculty and some deans and had an ideation phase where we thought outside the box a bit," explained Thomas Dobbs, Principal at Hay Dobbs, "We re-imagined what a 21st century library and resource center should be. Although we enjoy the tangible books and smells and tactile elements of a library, we understand this is about helping students to research, learn, study, and collaborate. So, from the beginning, we looked at how we can take this existing physical space and transform it into a place of collaboration, a place for peer-to-peer learning, and exploration."

Aiming to integrate the future of hybrid learning, Hay Dobbs designed a variety of work environments: from small, intimate spaces – outfitted with green screens – to help students bring their presentations to life,

PROJECT DETAILS

Library, College Services Suites
Coon Rapids, MN
16,500 sq. ft.
8,845 Students / 242 Faculty

Partnerships
Henricksen
Hay Dobbs

PRODUCT SOLUTIONS

Architectural Products
Beyond Demountable Partitions

Seating
Evo, Recharge

Workspaces
Stride with gallery panels

Tables
Structure, Aware, Harvest, Recharge Laptop

Space Division
Planter

to traditional large group study areas of tables and chairs, and flexible, technological touchdown spots for individuals and small groups.

To allow the varying spaces to work seamlessly, Hay Dobbs worked with Henricksen to choose a wide selection of furniture that would allow for flexibility. "The team at Henricksen were great partners," said Dobbs, "We shared our ideas and they were very good at finding furniture solutions that married up with those ideas, providing us sort of a toolkit to work from."

The result was a mix of tables and chairs, high and low seating, and spaces supplemented with whiteboards and video displays. "The majority of the furniture pieces throughout the space are movable in some way. I would say that the idea is that it's ultimately flexible, ultimately movable, but there are fixed components of the space too that provide order and some sort of regularity."

Of course, any interior within a college also needs to account for the technology students bring to the space. Throughout the Library and the College Services Suites, power is integrated into the furniture, allowing users to quickly connect when needed.

For Hay Dobbs, redesigning this space went beyond just providing a quiet environment to study. "The space should provide tools and technology students might not otherwise have access to," explained Dobbs. "The role of the 21st century library is to help students put those tools into practice to enhance teaching, learning, and retention. That was our goal here – to help students learn better and faster, retain more, and ultimately help them become curious, lifelong learners."





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