

Anoka-Ramsey Community College

CLIENT STORY

Coon Rapids Campus,
Minnesota



According to a Pew Research Center survey conducted in early 2021, 43% of adults in the U.S. with a household income below \$30,000 do not have home broadband services and 41% do not own a computer or tablet.

Post COVID-19 research indicates students from low income families are more strained by remote learning due to not having adequate tools at home, forcing institutions to work harder to provide access and close the digital divide among Americans.

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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

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.

PRODUCT SOLUTIONS

Architectural Products

Beyond Demountable Partitions

Seating

Evo, Recharge

Workspaces

Stride with gallery panels

Tables

Structure, Aware, Harvest,
Recharge Laptop

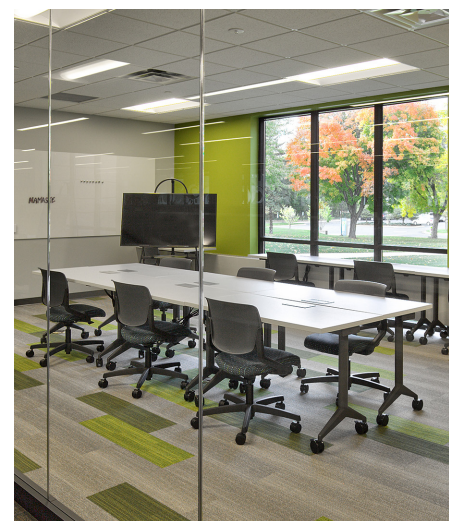
Space Division

Planter

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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Vogells, E (2021, June 22). Digital divide persists even as Americans with lower incomes make gains in tech adoption [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/06/22/digital-divide-persists-even-as-americans-with-lower-incomes-make-gains-in-tech-adoption/>