

Stacks User Services: Circulation Desk Implementation Plan

Introduction

For several years, the University Library worked to re-imagine the Central Stacks with the intent of making the space a more accessible environment. Unfortunately, the biggest obstacle to that improvement has been the stacks themselves. Constructed as concentrated storage for books, the physical characteristics of the first five additions are highly utilitarian and lack the flexibility to be retrofitted into either code compliant or comfortable locations for extended use. The sixth addition holds greater promise, but the presence of compact shelving in that addition gives it the capacity to hold almost the same volume of materials as the other five additions combined. Consequently, eliminating shelving in that space carries additional significant costs. While these factors make a reconfiguration of the storage space impractical, they should not impede efforts to make the Stacks a more inviting space. The largest impediment to this is the Circulation Desk itself and the physical barrier that it poses to accessing the Main Stacks.

At the time this reconfiguration was initially proposed, the main service point dissuaded users from self-service and was a significant cost center – requiring the staffing of multiple service points (turnstile, Stacks circulation desk, and Main Circulation Desk) within a thirty foot radius. With the addition of centralized reserve services to this location the University Library must rethink operations and reconfigure the desk/entrance in order to maximize resources and provide better service to users. Moreover, such a reconfiguration holds the long-term promise of reducing the number of service points required to oversee CAS functions. In the long term, the potential may exist to consolidate some of the circulation, reserves, and billing operations, especially as demands for space in CAM grow. Central Access Services personnel believe that a new desk would improve the management of these service points and provide for more comprehensive coverage during the Library's operating hours. By reconfiguring the desk, the University Library could provide a more welcoming entrance, economize on personnel, and provide better wayfinding services to those entering the Main Stacks. To support the findings of the Stacks Services Planning Team Report and its endorsement by the Library's Executive Committee, we submit this implementation plan.

Proposed Floor Plan

The primary problem caused by the Circulation Desk is the circuitous manner in which it forces users to enter the Main Stacks. This reconfiguration proposes that the University Library open up the passage between the Information Desk and the Main Stacks, including the removal of a significant portion of the existing Circulation Desk. Given the University Library's ongoing project to create a Stacks Reference Collection, this would ease use of that collection for reference purposes. Opening up this passage will require the University Library to relocate the computers located immediately in front of the Circulation Desk and remove existing wiring from that location, a project long-overdue given the advanced age of the networking in that location. In order to make space for public computing that is arguably still necessary, the University Library must relocate those computers within the room. The most logical

location given the stated desire of making the space more accommodating for users and reinvesting in the aesthetic value of the room is the space currently occupied by portions of the card catalog. This will, in turn, provide space for additional storage lockers for users, updated wiring for all computing in the space, and the freedom to include additional comfortable seating in a room that will be visually much more open and accommodating for our users.

The New Circulation Desk and Circulation Services

Repurposing the current desk and location will be the most cost effective way to implement the reconfiguration. The current desk will be split into two separate, equally sized desks, with one side (to the North) for circulation services and the other side (to the South) for reserves. The swinging doors currently at the desk will be moved to allow staff to move easily from the circulation side of the desk to the reserves side. The entrance and exit to the stacks will be in the middle of the two desks. (see attached diagram), with the patron scan in station located on the right of this area. A security gate will also be located in this area. Computers will be located along the front of each desk to serve patrons as they arrive. Flexibility and the ability for growth will be built into each desk by allowing for additional computer ports. A lower, accessible section will also be built into the desk reconfiguration in order to ensure that the Library can adequately serve all patrons. The book drop will be moved from its current location on the North side of the desk to a similar location on the South side. A bank of self-service lockers with electronic locks will be located on the North side of the circulation desk and the south side of the reserves desk. Reconfiguration of the desk will include replacing the old laminate countertop with a countertop that matches the Information Desk's countertop.

Relocating the hold shelves from the current location into the area that presently serves as the entry to the stacks will allow for adequate space for all circulation and ILL/DD hold items. It will also enable better organization and ease of use to more efficiently serve our patrons. Unused, cantilevered shelving units from the Office of Facilities inventory will be used for this purpose, and the existing lockers will be relocated into the Main Stacks work areas for use by staff and student assistants.

While the back desk could also benefit from remodeling to improve functionality and was included in the ongoing discussion until recently, , it is the recommendation of this group that the desk not be modified as part of this initial renovation in order to control costs. The two existing computers will be used to check out items to patrons exiting the Main Stacks, and the call slip station will remain in its current location for now, until it can be relocated to a more functional position behind the back desk. More adequate shelving and storage space is needed in this location, but due to space limitations this will be addressed at another time.

Construction Associated with the Reconfiguration

The circulation desk in room 204 Main Library will require substantial renovation to implement the relocation of the Main Stacks entrance. A four foot section in the main north/south counter and cabinet will be removed to provide a new 4' entrance into Main Stacks. All data and power conduits and wiring

will need to be removed and rerouted to the newly created north and south desks. The 3M security gate that will be removed from room 306 Main Library when the LIS Library closes will be installed in the opening by 3M technicians. The existing wood gates in the north and south sections of the desk will be relocated to the central corridor created with newly fabricated and installed wood shelving that will complement the existing desk design. The opening at the old gate locations will be filled in with newly constructed cabinetry to match the existing desk finishes and details. Finally, an accessible 6' service counter will be constructed in the north desk. The two newly created L-shaped desks will have new solid surface counter tops that match the recently constructed Information Desk within room 204. The old pneumatic paging system will be removed and saved for future preservation and exhibit. When reconfigured, the south service desk will provide two walkup stations and one small processing station. The north service desk will provide three walkup stations and one accessible station. Each desk will retain direct access to holds shelving – patron holds on the north and reserve shelving on the south.

The check-out desk located toward the north end of room 207 will remain in its current configuration. However, the Reserves Services area behind the check-out desk will require some demolition and shelving reconfiguration. The existing metal enclosure that currently blocks site lines and consumes a major portion of room 207 will be demolished. The ceiling, wall, and floor will need to be patched and brought back to an appropriate level of finish for a shelving/processing area. As noted earlier, cantilever shelving will be repurposed from the Office of Facilities' inventory, and metal bracing will be installed in order to ensure that the shelving remains secure. The current entrance to Main Stacks through room 206 will be reconfigured with the same style of cantilever shelving in order to house patron holds. Existing metal patron lockers will be repurposed for Central Access Services staff needs. The shelving in 206 will create a barrier to keep patrons and staff from exiting Main Stacks through 206.

Room 204 will receive substantial reconfiguration to provide an enhanced patron services area. The implementation team concluded that the Information Desk should stay in its current configuration and location in room 204. The removal of the card catalog from room 204 will require that cabinets in the 2nd floor north and south corridors be reorganized and the catalog will be properly sequenced on the 2nd and 3rd floor corridors. The public computers currently located in the middle of the room will be relocated to the northeast and southeast corners of room 204. The current 30" x 144" tables will be switched with some of the 30" x 72" tables to provide approximately ten computer stations in the northeast corner and twelve computer stations in the southeast corner. The printer will be relocated to the northeast corner area across from the Information Desk. The existing data lines in the middle of 204 will be removed and the power redistributed for the lounge seating arrangement. Lounge furniture from LIS Library will be repurposed in the center area between the Circulation Desk and the Information desk. The large round tables and chairs will be divided evenly between the north and south sides of the room 204 adjacent to the windows. New half height wood patron lockers with electronic locking hardware (72) will be purchased to be installed; half on the south side and half on the north side of room 204.

There will need to be a medium level of housekeeping performed as the room is reconfigured. The wood paneling that lines the walls in room 204 will be evaluated for extensive cleaning and oiling. The window blinds will be cleaned on the south side and the north side of the space. The existing lighting fixtures will

be cleaned and re-lamped to provide improved lighting levels in the space. There will be interior signage upgrades for the space to improve the clarity of patron service points within the room.

IT Aspects of Project

The proposed reconfiguration of the stacks entrance will require substantial changes in power distribution and computer networking in the existing central circulation desk. All power and data for the circulation desk is fed through the floor at the center of the existing desk. Since the proposed design calls for this portion of the desk to be opened as the main entrance to stacks, the existing power and data will need to be relocated. CITES provided a cost estimate for the relocation of data, telephone jacks, and associated cabling. F&S will need to remove existing infrastructure and install new conduit and boxes for the data and telephone jacks. F&S will also need to install new electrical distribution for the reconfigured circulation desk.

There are twenty-one public access machines and one public printer in Room 204. Most of these machines are located in the center of the room on tall tables. Proposed reconfiguration of the room calls for these machines to be relocated to the sides of the room in a roughly symmetrical layout. Providing data and power for this move would require the installation of flush mounted boxes in the floor as described in the CITES estimate. F&S would need to install the new boxes and associated conduit. They would also need to distribute power to these locations.

CITES will pull all data and telephone cabling as well as terminate and test all jacks. No additional network switch equipment will be required.

Library IT WNS plans to reuse the existing computer equipment in this area after the reconfiguration is complete.

Project Budget

At present, this implementation team believes that all expenses detailed can be covered from existing NSM and Office of Facilities allocations.

