

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



Morehouse School of Medicine Library

Library Storage Redesign Helps Create Collaboration Space for Medical Students

CHALLENGE

You've no doubt heard the refrain: university libraries are changing. More and more, space that had been allotted for books and journals is being reclaimed for student seating, charging stations, whiteboards and the like. Like so many of those others, the library on the campus of the Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM) is transforming, too.

For the third time since 2012, Library Director Joe Swanson, Jr. was tasked with consolidating the school's collection as part of an initiative to

create more "usable space." Their nearly 100-foot long static shelving footprint needed to be reduced. In addition, a back room that had been used for tech services was overly crowded and yearned for a plan that might better utilize its 1,150 square foot imprint.

SOLUTION

In this case, planning – and a bit of collegiate congeniality – made perfect sense. During the library's second renovation in 2013, the existing shelving was condensed to make room for student collaboration rooms. Although compact shelving was on Swanson's wish list, budgetary constraints meant it had to wait. So, when the opportunity came around during a third renovation, it was finally time to act.

The plan that Swanson and Manager of Information Services Tara Douglas-Williams had come up with after consulting with faculty, students and staff was only slightly altered. The selection and installation of an electric, 12-carriage high-density storage system replaced their existing 16-range static shelving. A good portion of the library's existing shelving was reused, gussets added, and then placed inside the new system. The system, complete with Zero Force Sensor (ZFS), measures 30 x 15. Its footprint was lessened by nearly 80 percent.

During this portion of the installation, a team from Patterson Pope's Charlotte, NC headquarters helped remove the shelved items, purge some bound journals, and then meticulously and accurately return kept items onto the new high-density shelving according to established Library of Congress and National Medical Library standards.

Across town, Emory University was in the process of removing a smaller high-density system of its own. Patterson Pope Sales Representative Dick Beery was familiar with their desire, and after a few measurements, recognized that it would fit perfectly inside a back room at MSM, creating an ideal archival space for the medical school's library. Measuring 20' x 8' and boasting 24 sliding drawers, it perfectly housed bound journals and other historic documents.

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Joe Swanson, Jr.
Library Director
Morehouse School of Medicine Library

ACHIEVEMENT

By some estimates, the library at the Morehouse School of Medicine welcomes approximately 90,000 visitors every year. In the fall of 2017, that included 100 new medical students – the school’s highest incoming class ever. For many of those individuals, intense study requirements will mean that the library will be like a second home.

“At the end of the day, it’s all about functionality for our users,” said Douglas-Williams. *“We definitely accomplished that with this new system.”*

“Everyone loves the new high-density shelving system and the added comfort space it’s allowed,” added Swanson. *“This has become a popular spot for campus tours, too. The recognition is nice, of course. But what’s been most rewarding is seeing the area used as it is – for research, for teamwork, and even as a relaxation space for some.”*

Libraries are changing. In a time with so much flux, it’s nice to know that the reliability, consistency and diversity of products and services offered by Patterson Pope is a steady constant.

