Building a library in leased space

The Daniel Morgan Graduate School of National Security





The Daniel Morgan Graduate School of National Security, established in 2014 and located in Washington D.C., prepares its students for careers in national security and with the intelligence community. Although high-tech gadgets may come to mind when thinking about such careers, one of the institution's first priorities was establishing an on-site library filled with hard-copy books and journals. The niche collection includes a variety of materials in the fields of intelligence, recent military history, espionage, and covert operations.

"When I promote the library during orientations, I actually promote the books first," said Library Director Hannah Walters. "For instance, in the back of many of these books, there are concentrated bibliographies that are great starting points for further research, and I explain that trying to use Google to get those resources in one spot is very difficult."

With Spacesaver's help, the graduate school has built a library that's open and spacious, with well-organized stacks and separate rooms allocated for calls or study groups.

THE CHALLENGE: LEASED LIBRARY SPACE

The institution is still leasing its space, which added a layer of complexity to the new library's planning and design process. Before the current space was established, the library occupied a room adjacent to a maintenance room, with inadequate shelving and no room for growth.

Establishing a working library was a top priority. Because the space was not designed to bear the heavy load of library books, the building's weight restrictions figured prominently in the planning and design process. "We needed to go with the five-high stack so that we could maintain the weight limit restrictions," said Britain Jacobson, Director of Facilities and Auxiliary Services. "That was a priority. And then after that, initially one of the main considerations was being able to make it as large as possible within the 7,200 square feet that we had."





THE SOLUTION:
HIGH-VALUE SHELVING AND LOCAL SERVICE

The planning team wanted to create space not only for books and journals, but also for study and collaboration. "We wanted a library space that we could expand as needed, and then also give students places to study, private rooms for smaller conference calls, and conference rooms where students could meet and go over group projects," Jacobson said.

After the planning team determined the scope of the project, they reviewed proposals from a number of shelving vendors, ultimately deciding that Spacesaver offered the best value. "We went for high quality and a reasonably priced solution, and that was Spacesaver," Jacobson said. The fact that a local Spacesaver consultant was available to assist with planning efforts was a major bonus. "He was involved in multiple meetings, he was able to come to construction planning meetings, he was able to turn things around really quickly," Jacobson said of the local Spacesaver consultant. "That was very important because we were trying to get the library going as quickly as possible so we weren't paying to lease space before we were even able to use it."

THE RESULT: 'A SOLID FOUNDATION'

The new library can hold approximately 40-45,000 volumes. "We don't anticipate having to go beyond that," Jacobson said, adding that the library planning team foresees acquiring more digital materials. "It gives us a solid foundation for the more historical aspects of the books and the research that students need access to."

"The service that Spacesaver provided has made the books more available for the students, and the students are definitely taking advantage of it."

Hannah Walters, Library Director

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