

HORIZONS

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*Student entrepreneurs
benefit from the new
L. William Seidman Center*

BUILT FOR THE FUTURE

New Library Designed For Student Learning



Thanks to 1400 donors, Grand Valley students have access to a national model for 21st Century Learning.

The Mary Idema Pew Library Learning and Information Commons provides an interdisciplinary and academic space that will evolve with students' needs. The library is flexible enough for changes in how students will learn in future generations. Research was conducted to discover exactly what students will need to advance academically and socially in the future. Results made it clear that students needed a space that would not only allow them private space to study, but also give them a chance to work and study with their fellow classmates to grow new ideas.



“In previous decades, it was very much a solitary act where students were essentially using their minds, gathering information, and digesting it. What we’ve seen evolve over the years is that learning has become much more of a community activity,” said Erin Fisher, Library Program Manager. “It’s not so much about gaining access to information, but taking information and growing it into something new. It is the difference between knowledge acquisition and knowledge creation.”

All of the features added to the new library allow for this knowledge creation to occur. Peer mentoring in the Hines Corporation Knowledge Marketplace and the creative environment in the DTE Energy Foundation Innovation Zone allow students to learn and expand their understanding of the world. Physical details like floor to ceiling white boards, technology enhanced presentation rooms, and movable furniture to accommodate teamwork, were designed to meet student needs.

“This building is for the students, so it’s not a static building. The library is a growing living organism. We want the building to adjust, grow, and change over time for

students, the way they study, and the way they learn,” added Carlos Rodriguez, Associate Dean of Technology and Information Services.

Students, like Andrea Czarnota, who use the Mary Idema Pew Library can now study in an enriched environment that supplements classroom learning. This remarkable space would not have been made possible without the help of the community that supported it.

“Grand Valley is definitely a fortunate community. We have an entire community from Grand Rapids to Allendale and beyond who want to see the university succeed. This library gives us a lot more to be a part of, and a place to study and do our work,” said Czarnota. “It makes us feel more included and a bigger part of Grand Valley as a whole. We owe it all to these donors.”

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- Andrea Czarnota