

THE Current

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[Andrea Estrada](#)

UCSB Library Breaks Ground on First Expansion Project in 35 Years

When undergraduates at UC Santa Barbara were asked in a recent survey where they spend most of their time on campus outside of class, the overwhelming majority named Davidson Library as their home away from home.

It's fitting, then, that UCSB today celebrated the beginning of the first major expansion and renovation the library has seen in more than three decades. With shovels in hand, UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang, Executive Vice Chancellor Gene Lucas, University Librarian Denise Stephens and others broke ground on the project that, when completed, will make the UCSB Library -- and its 3 million volumes and myriad collections -- an even more vital academic and cultural resource for the university and the Santa Barbara community.

"We are immensely proud of our university library," Yang said. "It is essential to research and teaching, and is a major resource at the center of our campus. UC Santa Barbara is in a time of exciting growth, especially in research stature, and the library is a critical part of that."

Said Stephens: "It's been 35 years since the library was last renovated, and during that time much has changed in how information is organized, delivered and utilized among scholars and students. With the addition and renovation project, the UCSB Library will continue its commitment to enduring forms of scholarship."

Bruce Tiffney, dean of the College of Creative Studies who served as chair of the Academic Senate's library committee from 1994-99, described the library as the heart of the campus. "When I first got here and saw the University Center, I thought, no, the center of the university is not where you have food and buy your textbooks. It's the library," he said. "I'm delighted that we're finally going to realize this [expansion and renovation project]."

The project, designed to Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Gold specifications, includes a three-story building addition on the north side of the library; a complete renovation and seismic retrofit of the original two-story building; a newly built paseo -- or grand walkway -- that connects all areas of the library; and a seismic retrofit of the eight-story tower.

Among the highlights are the addition and renovation of approximately 60,000 and 92,000 square feet, respectively; a new facility for the Department of Special Collections, with state-of-the-art technology for the preservation and digitization of its unique documents, books, and other materials; new art and music libraries housed inside the main library; 20 percent more study space than existed previously; expanded wireless access; naturally lit reading galleries; a faculty collaboration studio; and additional and enhanced group study and collaboration areas.

All this will go a long way to supporting the academic and scholarly endeavors of UCSB students, both graduate and undergraduate.

"Graduate students often find ourselves having to wear many hats and transition to various roles," said Gary Haddow, president of the Graduate Students Association. "We're students, but also teachers and maturing scholars, while the library acts as a central place that supports us in all our activities. As teachers, we bring our students to the library for research literacy training.

"As students, the library has dedicated quiet study rooms just for us; and as scholars, we have access to online collections, one-on-one research consultations with subject librarians, and the wonder of inter-library loans, which put most of the entire world of information within our reach," Haddow said.

Associated Students President Jonathan Abboud described the library as a "living room," a place where they can put their feet up in a quiet atmosphere. "So please forgive us if you see us taking a nap in there after pulling an all-nighter," he said. "Sometimes we need a place to settle in for the night and a place that cares about our academic success, no matter our department."

Construction on the \$76.4 million project started in August and is slated for completion January 2016. Some collections and library staff members have been relocated for the duration of the project, but the library remains open and fully functional while providing means to access all catalog material.

Questions can be directed to project@library.ucsb.edu.

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† Top image: From left, Jonathan Abboud, president of UCSB's Associated Students; Gene Lucas, executive vice chancellor; Denise Stephens, university librarian; Henry T. Yang, chancellor; and Gary Haddow, president of the Graduate Students Association, shovel dirt to celebrate the groundbreaking for the expansion of the UC Santa Barbara library.

Credit: George Foulsham

†† Bottom image: Jonathan Abboud, left, president of Associated Students, and Gary Haddow, president of the Graduate Students Association, were among the speakers at the groundbreaking ceremonies.

Credit: George Foulsham

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