

Medical Library Unveils Newly Renovated Facilities

by Riley Davis June 21, 2019



Medical Library Renovation

The ribbon is cut to open the renovated space at the Harvey Cushing/John Hay Whitney Medical Library. (l-r): Catherine Chiles, MD, chair, Board of Trustees of the Medical Library Associates; Susan Gibbons, Stephen F. Gates '68 University Librarian and deputy provost for collections and scholarly communication; Michael Kashgarian, MD, past chair, Board of Trustees of the Medical Library Associates; Michael Schwartz, PhD, associate professor of neuroscience and associate dean for curriculum; Richard Belitsky, MD, deputy dean for education; John Gallagher, director, Harvey Cushing/John Hay Whitney Medical Library; Holly Grossetta Nardini, associate director, Harvey Cushing/John Hay Whitney Medical Library.

Photo credit: Terry Dagradi

Voices filled a space normally reserved for quiet on the School of Medicine campus yesterday, as the Harvey Cushing/John Hay Whitney Medical Library unveiled its newly renovated library facilities with a celebration to christen the space.

The renovation, which took approximately 10 months to complete, features a series of rooms and spaces meant to foster learning and innovation including a 125-seat classroom, eight 16-seat classrooms, four meeting rooms, 24 workstations, and lounge seating.

Many of the rooms come with adjustable walls and furniture and shareable monitors, giving them maximum versatility for different users' requirements.

The renovation reflects the medical school's commitment to fostering new and better ways of instructing students, says Richard Belitsky, MD, Harold W. Jockers Associate Professor of Medical Education, associate professor of psychiatry, and deputy dean for education.

"It is the kind of space that is flexible and can be adapted to new and evolving ways of teaching in the medical student curriculum," he says of the new home to many classes that comprise MD candidates' first 18 months at the medical school.

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The construction project involved moving millions of volumes and finding creative architectural ways to replace the book stacks, some of which were supporting the ceiling.

Many of the print volumes were moved to the University's Library Shelving Facility in Hamden, where library users still have access to them, says John Gallagher, director of the Harvey Cushing/John Hay Whitney Medical Library.

He adds that since 2004, the library has transitioned from actively receiving approximately 2,600 print journals to offering access to more than 30,000 electronic biomedical journals, reducing the need for stack space to house physical volumes. "We quickly realized the convenience of electronic was going to replace the demand for print journals," he says.

Instead of volumes, the library hopes that its new teaching space will attract students and faculty alike to engage in new ways of learning. "Libraries are community spaces first," Gallagher says. "So, we wanted to do something that would bring people into the library."

Gallagher's invitation is immediate. The newly renovated space is fully open and functional. During the two-hour unveiling reception, in fact, library users were already trying it out.