The Hunt Library at Age Three: Lessons for Your Library Spaces

Patrick Deaton, Associate Director for Learning Spaces and Capital Management, NCSU Libraries
Architects: Snøhetta (Oslo and New York) and Clark Nexsen (Raleigh).
225,000 square feet gross area (20,900 square meters).
1,750 user seats within Libraries-controlled space.
$115 million total project budget, not including private donations and corporate partnerships.
What have we learned since Hunt Library opened in 2013?

- Big lessons
- Small lessons
- Lessons that apply to
  - major projects and minor projects
  - new construction and renovation
  - public libraries and academic libraries

Before we begin our walkthrough, let’s start with a few big lessons.
Lesson #1

Develop a strong, clear vision for your project. Promote that vision as much as you can.

Goals for the Hunt Library included:

- provide additional space for seating and collections
- create a centerpiece for Centennial Campus
- define the research library of the future
- put the latest technology in the hands of students and faculty
- inspire great work with bold, adventurous spaces and furniture
Lesson #1

Develop a strong, clear vision for your project. Promote that vision as much as you can.

“We plan for the Hunt Library to be nothing less than the best learning and collaborative space in the nation.”

Susan K. Nutter, Vice Provost and Director of Libraries
Lesson #2

Hire the best project team you can find. Be creative in the selection process.

The six design firms selected as finalists.
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A one-hour interview is not sufficient!

Images from the weekend charrette, November 10-12, 2007.
Lesson #3

Question assumptions, especially the ones that seem the most obvious, accepted, and fundamental.
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Massing studies for alternate sites.
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Library site as shown on Master Plan.

Library site as selected.
First floor lobby.
The bookBot (automated storage and retrieval system). 9,100 square feet (845 square meters).
Second floor lobby.
Cascade
2013
steam bent White Oak
17' x 6.5' x 3'
(5.2m x 2m x 1m)
NCSU - Hunt Library
Raleigh, NC

Second floor lobby. Custom bench by Matthias Pliessnig.
Lesson #4

Use experts and artists for special aspects of your project.

Graphic designer Alex Isley and his work on Hunt Library.
Lesson #4

Use experts and artists for special aspects of your project.

Furniture designer Matthias Pliessnig and the “Cascade” bench commissioned for Hunt Library
Lesson #4

Use experts and artists for special aspects of your project.

Artist José Parlá and “The Nature of Language” painting commissioned for Hunt Library
Ask Us service point below MicroTile video wall.
Lesson #5

Use mockups and testing to assist with decision-making.

Ask Us service point. 430 square feet (40 square meters).
Lesson #5

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Use mockups and testing to assist with decision-making.
Ask Us branding on signage and control panels.
Technology Showcase.
Technology Showcase.
Immersion Theater. 365 square feet (34 square meters).
Immersion Theater.
THE FARM AT BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE:
A HUNT LIBRARY HAPPENING

with Visiting Scholar David Silver
University of San Francisco

Two Performances
Monday, August 4
10:30 a.m. - noon
and 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Starts here
Immersion Theater.
Rain Garden Reading Lounge.
Mural by José Parlá.
Rain Garden Reading Lounge.
Lesson #6

Use bold colors and a variety of furniture to create unique places.

Our furniture strategy:

Design classics
(such as the Egg chair)

+ 

Newer designs
(such as the Knoll SM1 chair)

+ 

Furniture manufactured in North Carolina
(such as the Bernhardt Design B.3 chair)
Rain Garden Reading Lounge.
Rain Garden Reading Lounge.
Quiet Reading Room. 6,300 square feet (585 square meters).
Quiet Reading Room.
Lesson #7

If you can’t find what you want, have it custom built.
Quiet Reading Room.
Quiet Reading Room.
Lesson #7

If you can’t find what you want, have it custom built.
Quiet Reading Room.
Quiet Reading Room.
Quiet Reading Room.
Group Study Room.
Lesson #8

If your project includes markerboard walls and/or writeable glass, avoid white-painted walls and white tabletop surfaces unless they are protected by glass tops.
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If your project includes markerboard walls and/or writeable glass, avoid white-painted walls and white tabletop surfaces unless they are protected by glass tops.
Lesson #9

Rooms with frameless glass are not soundproof, no matter how well-insulated the other walls are. Consider sound masking technology in these rooms.
Group Study Room and Idea Alcove.
Game Lab. 670 square feet (62 square meters).
Students develop software in the Hunt Library Game Lab.
Study Pod.
LESSON LEARNED DURING THE DESIGN PHASE

Study Pod precedent. University of Edinburgh.
6. Consider building full-size mockups of key areas such as service points to determine size, configuration, furniture, technology and staffing.

LESSONS LEARNED DURING THE DESIGN PHASE

Full-size mockups in three different sizes, 2012.
LESSONS LEARNED DURING THE DESIGN PHASE

6. Consider building full-size mockups of key areas such as service points to determine size, configuration, furniture, technology and staffing.
2,946 new books were added to the Libraries in the last month.
MicroTile video wall.
MicroTile video wall.
Teaching and Visualization Lab. 1,470 square feet (136 square meters).
Lesson #10

A/V equipment installation and programming can take much longer than anyone predicts. Consider including this work in the general contractor’s scope.
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A/V equipment installation and programming can take much longer than anyone predicts. Consider including this work in the general contractor’s scope.

Also, plan extra cooling for audiovisual equipment (more than the manufacturer recommends).
Mary "Molly" Gregory arrived at Black Mountain College in 1941 as an apprentice teacher of physics. In 1942, she became faculty of woodworking. From 1942-47, Molly Gregory served as faculty member, wood shop coordinator, college secretary, work programs director, and farm manager.
Creativity Studio. 1,900 square feet (176 square meters).
Creativity Studio.
Makerspace. 150 square feet (14 square meters).
Lesson #11

Include some unprogrammed space, to accommodate future needs.
Video seminar Room. 385 square feet (36 square meters).
Entrance to Graduate Student Commons. 5,770 square feet (536 square meters).
Media Production Studios.
Music Room.
Fishbowl Classroom. 465 square feet (43 square meters).
Fishbowl Classroom with Perceptive Pixel display.
Faculty Research Commons. 4,610 square feet (428 square meters).
Skyline Reading Room (East). 2,410 square feet (225 square meters).
Skyline Reading Room (South). 3,245 square feet (300 square meters).
Skyline Terrace.
Staff areas.
Staff areas.
Staff areas.
Staff areas.
Staff areas.
Staff areas.
Lesson #12

Details matter.
Lesson #12
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Artwork
Donor signage
Trash/recycling receptacles
Clocks
Freestanding sign holders and brochure racks
AED cabinets
Indoor plants
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