

# Library has More to Offer After its "Facelift"



FROM TOP LEFT CLOCKWISE: Media section, laptop area, media viewing room and reference counter are new additions users can enjoy. [Picture: Tan Bei Zhen]

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Students will be looking at a fresher and better-equipped library as soon as the refurbishment work on the third, fourth and fifth floors are completed in early August.

Library users can enjoy new features like plush sofas for easy reading. Single and double seaters as well as custom-fit sofas, reminiscent of Pacific Coffee Company in CitiLink, were added for the comfort of about 180 users.

Despite this, the library will be noticeably more spacious because about four full shelves worth of less-frequently used materials were shifted to the library office at Block 4. Students can still access these materials by requesting for them at the Circulation counter. The items will be ready for collection in half a day, or for urgent items, in two hours.

As many as 39 Project Rooms were also constructed specially for group meetings and project discussions. The third level of the Academic Library will have four rooms; the fourth level will have 20, and fifth level, 15. These rooms are equipped with individual study stations for students to use their laptops.

Now that more courses require students to own laptops, a new "laptop area" has been added on the third level to allow more students to bring in and use them. 61 study carrels have been equipped with power outlets to support laptop use. In addition, a custom-fit laptop counter providing seating for 14 users will be available.

In a move to be even more user-centred, the Reference and Information Counter has been relocated from the far corner of the Reference section to the entrance of the third floor. This will allow easier access to library users. The counter will answer all queries pertaining to library resources.

Mrs Lim Bee Ang, who is in her 30s, Reference Manager for the Academic Library, said in an e-mail reply that though plans for the refurbishment started a year ago, work began only after the semestral break from 10 May to minimise disturbances to the environment as far as possible.

"[There was] a problem of time. Despite the

workers working till almost midnight daily, the seven weeks of vacation was inadequate for the extent of renovation works required," said Mrs Lim the renovation project co-ordinator.

"Most of the hacking works were taken care of during the vacation. Despite this, some intermittent noise throughout the renovation is bound to be inevitable," she added, remarking on the remaining work on the fourth and fifth floors that spilled into the new semester.

The refurbishment at an undisclosed cost resulted from feedback from students regarding the library's facilities, services and resources. In their research, the team visited other libraries and read up literature reviews of the international library scene.

Students had mixed reviews about the upgrading of the library. Juni Amanina Suradi, 18, a second-year student from Logistics Engineering & Management (LEM), said that she prefers the new spaciousness of the third level of the Academic Library. She said, "I come to the library every day. [Now that] it looks better, maybe I'll stay longer."

Other students felt otherwise. Pauline Phay, 18, a second-year student from Early Childhood Education (ECH), felt that there was a "waste of space". She said, "I like the design and layout but it [the space] could have been put to better use."

Yoslin Sin, 18, another second-year ECH student, agreed. She said, "They should have included more of the Project Rooms. [The current ones are] not enough."

Mrs Lim hopes that with the refurbishment, the library will be able to meet the students' needs.

She said, "... if this translates into increased usage and loans from the Academic Library Collection, we would have achieved our objectives and this would help towards building up the reputation of our library."

In mid-August, students can look forward to a new virtual reference service called "Ask A Librarian" where reference librarians can be reached via the Intranet on campus. This allows for queries regarding the use of online resources without having to go all the way to the Information Counter. ☐