Gumberg Library “Refresh” Project Updates 4th Floor

By Maureen Diana Sasso, Director, Information Services Division

Our vision for Gumberg is a library that provides not only the intellectual content and professional expertise that students need, but is also a welcoming, comfortable and inspiring place where they can work in ways that best support their learning. In 2011, the Duquesne community, particularly students, provided input for a long term plan that would completely transform the 4th floor of the library. This floor is especially significant because it is the entrance to the library for all visitors. Last updated in the late 1970s, it is the location of the library’s main service point, computers, classroom and administrative offices. Students use this floor for collaborative learning.

Given the $4 million price tag for the total renovation project, we did not want students to have to wait for improvements until the fundraising was completed. We adopted a phased approach to renovation using funds from the Gumberg Endowment.

The first phase began in summer 2012. The barrier-like desk was removed. The new service desks feature an open design that is ADA compliant and provide a more comfortable consultation space for library users seeking research assistance. Thirty-plus year old carpet was replaced, along with the outdated floor tile. In response to students’ comments about the “dungeon-like” atmosphere of the library, colorful pillars now provide visual interest. The pillars are also home to new charging stations—electric outlets with built-in USB ports for charging mobile devices. Renovation of the library’s elevators began in October 2012 and will be completed by May 2013.

In the next phase we would like to improve the 4th floor seating and tables. With support of the Student Government Association, we asked students about what type of seating they would be most likely to use. While our survey attracted few respondents, the results supported comments of the larger LibQUAL Lite survey from March 2012. Consequently, we will develop a proposal that includes various sizes of tables that can easily be moved to accommodate larger groups and some comfortable seating such as chairs with tablet arms and sofas. We hope to identify funding for this proposal for FY14. We will work with Facilities Management on a proposal to install additional charging stations, not only throughout the library, but also in other campus locations.

Longer term we will continue to work with the Advancement Office on a fundraising plan for major renovation to replace the HVAC system, ceiling and lighting, and to create additional instruction spaces and an exhibit space. Renovating will further extend the useful life of the building that is already in its second life as a library. We hope it will help in recruitment because the 4th floor is toured frequently by prospective students and their parents.

The key to the success of the total 4th floor renovation project is flexibility—enhancing and repurposing space to meet today’s needs and allowing for future reuse as opportunities arise.
Scoring Big! Sports Films Digitization Project

By Thomas White, University Archivist

Beginning in the spring of 2012, the University Archives and the Gumberg Library launched a new initiative to preserve Duquesne’s sports history. The University Archives is home to hundreds of reels of 8mm and 16mm film that document various games and seasons of both the basketball and football teams.

In recent years, due to the nature of the film itself, some of the reels have started to deteriorate, making it necessary to take action to save this part of the University’s past. During April and May of this year, two batches of films that contain games from the 1920s through the 1990s were digitized by Video Masters of Pittsburgh for long term preservation. DVD copies were also created for easy viewing.

Starting with the 1955 NIT Championship basketball game, the films will be added to the library’s digital collections so that former players, alumni and their families can watch the games online. Approximately two-thirds of the film collection has been digitized so far. Anyone, including alumni who would like to assist with the preservation project in any capacity should contact University Archivist Thomas White at whitet@duq.edu.

Coach Dudley Moore is held aloft by jubilant players following their 1955 National Invitational Tournament win.