

Unused Library Space Becomes Campus Hot Spot

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A Kansas university reimagined an existing library space to create an active, energizing campus center. Watch the video to see the transformation take place.

The University of Saint Mary in Leavenworth, Kansas wanted to breathe life back into its underutilized library. Campus leaders had a big goal — take an existing space and make it a campus hotspot. Now, instead of being a place where students simply study or check out books, the library is a vibrant in-between space where people are able to connect like never before.

“I have heard from faculty and staff that they have been able to do activities here that they never had the space for anywhere else,” says Danielle Dion, library director.

With the help of the Steelcase Active Learning Center grant, the University of Saint Mary reimagined a library space to encourage learning and collaboration while improving connections between students, faculty and the community. The library space is now able to host a wide range of learning opportunities including formal classroom discussion, private study, collaborative small group work and community events such as chess and even yoga.

“The whole concept of the Active Learning Center and how we use it at Saint Mary is that it’s adaptable. So, we can change from one set of tables to a different setup in an instant,” said Blake Vajgrt, student activities coordinator.

To see how the university transforms their new space day-to-day and proves learning happens in many forms, watch the story above. If you are interested in learning more about the ALC grant or applying for this year’s cycle, applications are being accepted through February 10, 2017.



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Rebecca, an Emmy-winning journalist, reports on global research impacting the places where people work, learn and heal. Over her career, Rebecca spent 17 years covering local and national news events on television and a variety of digital platforms. She directed a digital news group in Kansas City for three years before becoming news director in Grand Rapids, Michigan for more than five years. Prior to Steelcase, Rebecca worked with one of the four largest media groups in the United States to coordinate news coverage among 48 newsrooms from the east to west coast.