

Westminster College Information Commons Executive Summary

Definition

We envision a facility within the Giovale Library's main floor that integrates the services and support of librarians, information technologists, and instructional technologists to serve a wide range of student and faculty needs in a collaborative learning environment. Within the Information Commons, students and faculty will work together in an open space, enjoy a relaxed atmosphere, be able to partake in a coffee bar within an area designated for food, have access to high-end technologies, and receive centralized assistance for both research and technology. We hope to foster a social culture of learning and to increase information literacy among our students. Please refer to page two of this document for a proposed floor plan.

Need and Fit

Since 1997 Westminster's Giovale Library has served as an excellent resource for student research and an access point for computing services. What is now needed is to make the library the true intellectual center of the campus. The proposed Information Commons will be a place for Westminster students and faculty to engage in discussion, collaboration, and active learning as well as a place where they can find support for their research and technology needs. Several other campus initiatives that stem from the Strategic Plan such as a Writing Center dovetail well with the proposed Information Commons.

Where We are Now

- An Information Commons is listed as an initiative in the draft Strategic Plan.
- July - Library and IT staff hold an initial meeting to brainstorm ideas.
- September. - Begin talks and demonstrations for MuseSearch, a common user interface for our print catalog as well as our electronic databases and books. Demonstrations were attended by representative faculty, staff and students.
- 9/25 and 9/26 - Richard Meyer, Dean and Director of Libraries, Georgia Institute of Technology, meets with representative faculty and staff to discuss Georgia Tech's Information Commons and give us some suggestions.
- IT and Library staff are researching model Information Commons, working on a draft budget, and working with Institutional Advancement on funding possibilities.
- October – Contract is signed for MuseSearch, and the process of implementation has begun.
- Discussions are taking place with faculty regarding writing and the Information Commons.

Next Steps

- We intend to send a librarian and two faculty members to visit a model Information Commons.
- We will discuss the Information Commons with the faculty Library Committee at the December meeting.
- We are in the process of hiring a space consultant to work with us to look into remodeling possibilities and costs.
- We will continue Westminster community involvement and solicit feedback and ideas from our faculty, staff, and students.

Proposed Information Commons Floor Plan

