THE GORDON LIBRARY

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Librarian

When George C. Gordon graduated in 1895 from W.P.I. the library facilities were described as such in the catalog:

"There is a library of books of general reference at the Institute and a beginning has been made of a library of special books of reference in each department."

That beginning has been going on for 70 years, culminating with the first centralized library building on the campus for which we break ground today.

What should a library provide in this rapidly changing twentieth century? Libraries are no longer "sacred cows" to be revered from a distance for they are costly luxuries and as such have to prove themselves or be left behind in this dramatic age. Libraries are no longer just a collection of books but a system in which material is dispensed when needed by whatever appropriate means are available.

Such means could be a computer, audiovisual equipment, microfilm readers, Xerography or the more traditional means such as hardbound book, journal or abstract. Other means are the unknown sophisticated machines of tomorrow.

Libraries are served by persons trained in the sciences to be able to think with the patron as to his needs and be able to guide him in the right direction.

Last, a library should be an integral part of the teaching brotherhood so that the student and the faculty know that where the classroom ends, the library is there to enhance and enlarge the continuing process of learning.

Today we break ground for a building which has had months of birth pangs. Students, faculty, library committees and consultants have given of their time to suggest a library best suited for W.P.I. needs. Thus we feel that this building may be somewhat unique for this was a cooperative venture. From the time a list of 33 requirements was submitted in April 1964 until Mr. Norman D. Nault, the architect, completed the final drawings, the mood of cooperation has been evident.

As for facilities:
The student will be served by individual reading tables or carrels for privacy and concentration.

Soundproof group studies with blackboards for discussions.

Individual studies for graduate students and faculty.

Lounge areas on each floor for relaxation.

Music room for both individual and group listening to tapes and records.

Browsing area for current books, journals and newspapers.

Areas to handle art displays including the borrowing of framed prints by students.

Archives to house the W.P.I. records and special collections.

Audiovisual facilities to handle the making and processing of slides and films.

A seminar room for lectures and conferences with equipment to show films and slides and to receive remote control television.

Space has been designed to handle a total automated information storage and retrieval system when the time and funds are available for installation.

Along with this thinking we will install separate relay stations to be connected with on and off campus automated facilities as they are developed to handle reference, processing and storage of information.

Yet it is not the library building but its contents that must meet the demands of an academic community. This must include a trained staff to operate the facility as well as a book collection to handle present as well as future needs.

The purchase of monographs, journals, technical reports, and reference material will be greatly accelerated within the next few years.

The George C. Gordon Library will be dedicated to service, and like the "library of 1895" it is only the beginning of greater things as was the life of its benefactor.

Last, to the students of W.P.I. I say, this is your building, use it to the fullest.

To the faculty I say, this is your building, help keep it alive and dynamic.

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