

The Rhodes University Library Renewal Project

Current Library Situation

- Built in 1961 and designed for a 20-year projected growth, it is the only university library in South Africa yet to be upgraded.
- In 1983 it could seat 26% of the 2,500 registered students. Currently only 21% of the enrolment of 6,000 students can be accommodated - the lowest of all South African universities. There are only 483 reader seats available.
- Designed to house 100,000 volumes, it currently stores over 350,000. The bulk of stock is held in less than optimal conditions – the greatest problem being lack of easy access. Additional stock has also had a negative impact on space available for students. Small, uncontrolled satellite libraries have been established as the only means available to cope with the excess holdings.
- The design of the current library inhibits evolving study methods – e.g. inter-active and group learning.
- Exceptionally poor access for people with disabilities.
- A recent comparative survey showed that the Rhodes library was ranked second worst of all South African academic libraries and worst as far as its physical space is concerned.
- The library is clearly showing increasing usage:
 - Gate counts in 2002 were 300 000 and in 2005 this had increased to 470 000;
 - Book withdrawals have shown a similar increase from a monthly average of 120,000 in 2004 to 150,000 in 2005.
- Apart from catering for our own students, the Rhodes library is the *only* open university library in South Africa and therefore an important city and regional resource.

Books Versus Computers – The Impact on Library Space

- An international study of 354 recently completed library building or renovation projects (1995-2002) showed that 80% of these enjoyed greater facility usage:
 - Eight had gains of over 200 percent
 - 92 had gains of over 100 percent
- On average these libraries increased seat availability by up to three times with *more* space being allocated to print material.
- These improvements show the 'new' library is seen as a gateway to information. This is achieved by interactive instruction and group study, the use of the Web and electronic databases.
- These changing study methods have resulted in increased space needs in university.

The Rhodes Library Upgrade

- The requirement has been evaluated and the space designed by a leading academic library architect.
- The rejuvenated space will be built adjacent to (and include) the existing library. It will take approximately three years to complete.
- The new space will provide capacity for at least the next 15 years.
- The space will be flexible and easily adaptable as needs change.
- Total current cost is estimated to be R108 million.
- This project is the University's most important and urgent capital expansion development and will be funded as follows:
 - The University recently was given R80 million by central government to assist with capital development projects. R50 million has been allocated to the Library with the balance of R30 million being allocated to help build additional residences
 - The Investment Committee of the Board of Governors has indicated that they would be prepared to release funding from the Foundation for this project of up to R35 million
 - The Development office has been asked to embark on a major fundraising campaign to raise the balance of R25 million.
- Timetable: The project manager has indicated that construction could start as early as July 2008 with completion then scheduled for May 2011. The experience from other fundraising campaigns is that the bulk of the donations towards the project will need to be confirmed prior to starting construction so, in effect, we are working on a timetable of less than a year for realisation of the major gifts.

Mobilising Fundraising

In order to cope with the demands of the campaign, a number of changes have already been implemented and approaches made:

- A fundraising project officer has been assigned to this project – Chantal Bates. Chantal will work alongside the Development team to ensure that the momentum of the project is maintained
- A list of 'top-prospects' is currently being finalised. This list is drawn from various sources including our own research, the Rhodes Development Committee (RDC) and also includes past donors. This will be circulated to our volunteer groups (UK and USA Trusts and the RDC) for their own input. Once we have a 'top 10' we will develop specific approach strategies for each.
- One donation of R500,000 has been received from the Barloworld Group and 'asks' have been put to Mick Davis and Nicky Oppenheimer

- Under the leadership of Messrs Derek Jacobs, Donovan Neal-May and Andre Jensen, the volunteer groups will be asked to assist us in various ways. These may include helping us strategize our approaches to specific donors; identifying potential donors; opening doors and even accompanying us to meetings etc.
- We have employed a proposal writer to write a comprehensive outline of the project. This will then be edited to meet the specific requirements of any particular donor.
- We have provisionally broken the project down into fundable spaces and are now assigning 'values' to these spaces.
- We have identified specialised 'product' supplies such as IT and Shelving as it is our intention to encourage our purchases to leverage suppliers to the project.
- We are developing a comprehensive campaign plan

Within the next few weeks we will be in a position to provide:

- A comprehensive proposal
- Detailed floor plans with outlines of the major spaces
- A 'costing' for each space
- Confirmation of naming opportunities
- A list of possible key donors
- The campaign plan