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from the editor

By Catherine A. Lemmer



The Place and Tools to Get Work Done

Already enrolled at a college or university, our next-generation law library user has developed a definitive opinion about the role of the library. The perceptions of libraries and their services held by our soon-to-be law library user are detailed in OCLC's report, *At a Tipping Point: Education, Learning and Libraries* (www.oclc.org/reports/tipping-point.en.html). A critical finding is that our future user has identified the library as both a place, physical and virtual, and as having the tools to get work done. In reading the report's findings, it quickly becomes clear that if we are to remain relevant to our users, we need to design our spaces, products, and services to support the user's goal of *getting work done*. As a person who continually wonders if we are responding quickly enough or implementing the best decisions to remain relevant to our users, I latched onto this finding as a guiding principle.

The construction and renovation stories of the libraries featured in this 15th annual *AALL Spectrum* architecture issue, which will be the final issue of its kind, focus on the importance of providing spaces and tools for users to get work done. Inviting and convenient physical spaces that promote communication and personalized support, work spaces designed for both individual study and collaboration, ready access to print and electronic materials, and training spaces are the hallmarks of these projects, which represent the work of indefatigable librarians and others who challenged perceptions of what a library should be and can be.

The authors of the OCLC report write, "Change creates energy. Energy conveys relevance." If this is valid, then it is indeed uniquely fitting that there is one library featured in both the first and the last *Spectrum* architecture issues—the Oklahoma City University School of Law Library. This library, similar to many other law libraries, again took up the challenge of change to ensure it remained relevant to its users.

In May 2001, Thomas French, now professor of law and associate dean at H. Douglas Barclay Law Library, Syracuse University College of Law, coordinated the first *Spectrum* architecture issue. He introduced the five law libraries featured in the issue with the following words:

Rather than display pretty, professional photographs with columns and statistics, our colleagues illustrate the trials and tribulations they experienced during construction at their facilities. The authors describe what they tried to accomplish; some of the problems encountered; and what their fellow librarians saw as successful, unique, or interesting about the building projects.

Dean French's words accurately describe the projects featured in this issue and our follow-up visit with one of the 2013 featured projects—the University of Baltimore Law Library.

Over the years the readers of *Spectrum's* architecture issues have enjoyed reading about and, in many cases, even admitted to envy the featured projects. More importantly, we have learned that to maintain our relevance it is critical that we continue to evolve and proactively manage and respond equally to our users' needs and perceptions. The same can be said of *AALL Spectrum*, which is undergoing its own renovation. We look forward to rolling it out later this year. ■

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