

Fresno State opens largest library in CSU system

FRESNO

February 20, 2009 10:56am

- **Madden Library opens for students and faculty**
- **State budget problems delay complete opening**

The largest library in the 23-campus California State University system has opened for students and faculty at California State University, Fresno.

State budget difficulties have delayed the library's availability to the community, purchases of some of the building's furniture and the opening of one floor for university administrative offices, Fresno State says.

The Henry Madden Library, in the heart of the campus, features an elliptical design entrance that the university says visually represents a Native American basket and an entire north wall of windows overlooking a redesigned Peace Garden.

The \$105-million project included construction of a five-story north wing (one level is below ground) and renovation of the south wing. At 340,000 square feet, it is the largest academic building on campus.

The library's current collection of 1.3 million books and periodicals now is installed on 307 space-saving shelves (194,384 linear feet in all), electrically powered so each can be moved independently. The shelving has enough room to accommodate nearly double the library's current collection.

Fresno State President John Welty says the new library "provides our students and distinguished faculty a setting that encourages an even higher level of research and scholarship. It offers the equipment and technologies to make the best use of additional resources as we move forward.

"Our new library also is an investment in Fresno State's commitment to engagement with Central California as we partner to develop the people, strategies and products to meet this region's unique challenges and opportunities," says Mr. Welty.

In addition to the latest in library technology, the building includes a Starbucks Coffee café on the second floor that offers a full drink menu, sandwiches and salads.

Here, in the university's words, is the description of the building:

"The Madden Library's new design drew inspiration from Central California's natural surroundings and from the area's American-Indian heritage. A major gift to the university from Table Mountain Rancheria provided enhancements throughout the library and in the adjacent new Native-American garden. The garden is an outdoor laboratory showcasing grasses and tools used in basket-making, the names of which are etched in locally sourced granite stones and translated in three languages – Mono, Gashow and English.

"The library's interior also reflects Native American designs. At the main entrance is a stair-step basket pattern. The grand stairway is constructed of metal mesh that replicates a woven pattern, while basket patterns are incorporated in fabrics for furnishings. Rich earth-tone colors throughout the library evoke the spirit of the region's natural beauty.

"In conjunction with the building project, the university Peace Garden north of the library was renovated with new walkways, accessible pathways to monuments, enhanced seating and landscaping."

Most of the money for the library comes from a state bond measure, Proposition 55, approved by voters in 2004.

But the state's current fiscal crisis has prevented full completion of the project or development of a firm timetable for the new library's full use, the university says. Purchase orders for furnishings and other equipment are on hold, so only about 20 percent of the seating capacity can be utilized at this time, says Cynthia Teniente-Matson,



Madden Library (CSU, Fresno photo)

vice president for administration, which is overseeing the project.

The freeze on state funds for capital projects in December left the more than \$10 million short of the cash needed to complete all phases of the building. Study tables and chairs, "soft" furnishings for lounge-type areas, numerous specialty equipment items for the library and all the technology are not in place.

The move of the university's top administrators and staff to the fourth-floor Harold Haak Administrative Center was postponed, as was relocating the Learning Resource Center and the office of Services for Students with Disabilities into the library. Those moves await a state decision that there is enough money to furnish these areas.

To ensure the earliest-possible opening, campus funds of approximately \$30,000 were allocated to purchase 500 folding tables and 1,000 folding chairs to provide study space.

Copyright Central Valley Business Times © 2009

Central Valley Business Times is an online unit of BizGnus, Inc.

All rights reserved. No content may be reused without written permission.