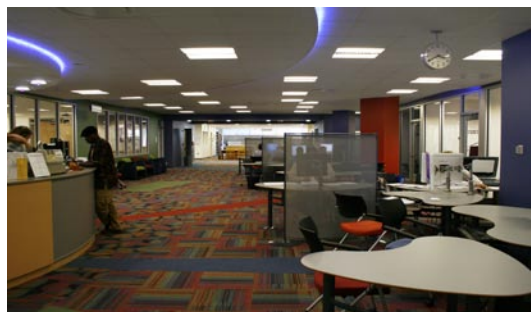


PARTICIPATORY

The University of Delaware
Student Multimedia Design Center
<http://www.udel.edu/smdc/>

Clark Design Group believes in participatory planning. It is only through an active and inclusive design process that a true Architecture can emerge. Each client enters the process with different needs, desires and apprehensions. At CDG, we believe that by integrating as many diverse users as possible into the process, we will demystify the design experience and the end result will be successful for all those involved.

With this in mind, CDG began preliminary design for the University of Delaware Student Multimedia Design Center. The faculty and staff at UD envisioned a multiuse, adaptable space that could



place them at the forefront of cutting edge multimedia technologies and collaborative education. The space was intended to be approachable and useful to a variety of students and faculty from all areas of expertise and study.

With such an ambitious spectrum of work, it had the potential to overwhelm both the university and the design firm, but Clark Design Group began with a solid framework

PLANNING

A Case Study

of user involvement. From the very first conceptual design meeting, representatives from numerous faculties were invited to share in the design process and express their vision of what the space should become. Tantamount to a successful design was incorporating all the crucial services that were preexisting in the space. This meant that while a student was reviewing a film from the Instructional Media Collection, another student would be able to work with a team to produce a short film, or perhaps a faculty member would be assisting a student doing research in the microfilm collection while another student records a personal narrative. All of these functions need to coexist successfully in a modern, open space.





(above) Glazing connects the studios with the main space while providing sound isolation.

(main) Moveable translucent screens allow for privacy at a moment's notice.



By working directly with the diverse collection of end users, CDG was able to create a cohesive, fresh design that satisfied the clients' needs. The final design included four high end audio visual studios, a sound booth, ample officespace, two computer

classrooms, microfilm and microfiche areas, a new glass partition for Instructional Media and numerous cooperative computer modules. Careful use of glazing and color opened and enlivened the space, while also organizing the various uses. Adaptable,

modular furniture was both attractive and economical and allows the students and faculty to redesign the space at a moment's notice to foster collaboration or individual study. By working carefully with the clients and creating an atmosphere of



involvement and inclusion, Clark Design Group was able to satisfy and exceed the University's expectations. As a result, the Student Multimedia Design Center offers the opportunity for students and faculty to broaden their educational experience

in an elegant, inviting functional setting. Participatory planning allows clients to take ownership of the design so that the finished space feels familiar as well as new. CDG relies on cultivated listening and communication skills in order to facilitate

the planning process. By listening attentively and asking thought-provoking questions, CDG can create a tapestry from many disparate yet essential strands of thread. ■