



Cr: Hedrich-Blessing

The Grinnell Library "amoeba table."

Grinnell College—America's "comfiest" academic library?

Although Lisa Birnbach's new *College Book* may have some academic administrators worried about their college or university's public image (at least until they read the entries for other institutions), Christopher McKee, director of the Grinnell College Library, Iowa, has no quarrel with her assessment of Grinnell.

Besides calling the college a "liberal and cultural oasis," Birnbach also gave Grinnell points for having the "comfiest" library of the 186 she surveyed.

McKee attributes Burling Library's comfort to the skill and sensitivity of the architectural firm that conducted the renovation and expansion in 1982-1983, Weese Hickey Weese Ltd., of Chicago. The firm insisted on pre-testing all of their furniture designs to ensure that students, faculty, and staff responded favorably.

The photo on the cover shows one innovation

called the carrel tower, a vertically-oriented configuration of carrels allowing for maximum utilization of space. Eight carrels ring the base, seven others (accessed by stairs) perch on top, and two others are sequestered inside. The library has two of these towers on its first floor.

Forty other carrels were installed in a sort of amphitheater facing windows which give an excellent view of the campus. Grinnell students call this arrangement "Mission Control." The total number of study stations was doubled to a total of 402 after renovation, with a strong emphasis on reducing background noise and using flexible rather than fixed lighting that makes it easier for students to switch off lights when not needed.

Another furniture innovation is the "amoeba table," shown above, which is comfy, well-lit, and conducive to study.

McKee said that there is virtually no noise problem in the new Burling Library because the prevailing atmosphere is one of quiet reflection and study. "Students just come to the library to study," he said. Birnbach herself listed the Grinnell Student Forum, not the library, as the best place for "social" study.

Ben Weese, partner-in-charge for the Grinnell project, has also designed Williams College Library and is working on renovation plans for the Knox College and DePauw University libraries. The best way to conduct the renovation of an older building, he said, is to "combine the best features of the existing structure with carefully tailored renovation/rehabilitation techniques. Achieving the

most effective combination of these elements takes the work of a team composed of architect, builder, and user, all in close collaboration. The strategy that results from this collaboration can be quick and efficient, producing results that not only surprise but delight."

Other notable features of the new library: rich red oak paneling, muted color tones, conveniently located reference and circulation areas, a print gallery on the basement floor, and more visibility along a central concourse.

One major task of bibliographic instruction is getting students into the library in the first place—Grinnell College seems to have at least half the battle won.—*GME*. ■ ■

BI tip sheet for academic administrators and support staff

Prepared by the EBSS Bibliographic Instruction for Educators Committee

Charles Thurston, Chair

Planning an instruction program for a neglected category of users.

College and university departmental secretaries, clerks, and administrative assistants are among the most frequent users of the library, yet their particular job-related library needs are rarely addressed. "BI Tip Sheet for Academic Administrators and Support Staff," an ACRL committee project, raises points the librarian should consider when planning instructional and informational programs for such clientele. The reader is urged to consult the seminal articles in the bibliography for descriptions of successful programs.

Members of the Bibliographic Instruction for Educators Committee of ACRL's Education and

Behavioral Sciences Section who developed the tip sheet are: Emily Bergman, Bobbi Collins, Tara Fulton, Laura Harper, Patricia McMillan, David Norden, Judith Pryor, Jean Thompson, Thomas Tollman, Joan Worley, and Charles Thurston (chair).

I. Needs assessment

a. Learn from others. Read the literature on the topic and talk with other librarians who have programs of this kind.

b. Review information needs of the target audience by analyzing statistics at the reference desk,