

A NEW CONNECTION FROM THE NORTH CAMPUS TO CONVOCATION MALL



01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SFU has the opportunity to transform the W.A.C. Bennett Library into an inspiring learning and research hub for future generations of students and faculty.

Located in the centre of the Burnaby Campus, the W.A.C. Bennett Library is viewed by the campus community as a place of knowledge discovery, creation, and exchange; a central hub where students and faculty connect across communities to collections, research tools, and expertise.

Supporting faculty and students across all disciplines on the Burnaby Campus, the Library is open 350 days a year, 100 hours a week, 24/7 for exams, and averages 3,750 visitors a day, and nearly double-that at peak periods. Unlike other institutions, the Bennett Library is the only library on the Burnaby campus, serving all graduate, undergraduate, and faculty needs.

The SFU Burnaby 2065 Campus Master Plan has identified the W.A.C. Bennett Library as part of the historic campus core, and one of the ensemble of iconic buildings at the heart of the Burnaby campus to be celebrated and preserved.

Constructed over 50 years ago, the Library's systems and infrastructure are in need of a significant half-life upgrade to create a safe and environmentally sustainable building. With these upgrades SFU has the opportunity to transform the Library into an inspiring learning and research hub for future generations of students and faculty, one that enables discovery, enhances learning, engages research, and fosters, respects and sustains our community.

Enabling Discovery and Preservation

Electronic information and digital tools create an increasingly open learning and research environment. The Library connects the physical and digital world and makes it easy to discover, evaluate, analyze and share information. To ensure information is available to future generations, the Library preserves scholarly and cultural materials, encompassing both physical

and born-digital objects. The renovation will allow **modern displays, efficient storage**, and a state-of-the-art **digitization lab**. Space for Special Collections and Rare Books will be doubled, with **secure archival storage, a new conservation lab**, and a **dedicated teaching lab**.

Enhancing Learning

Valuing social collaboration and peer-to-peer contact, today's learners see themselves as authors of their academic journey, one they design rather than passively accept. Through hands-on exploration and peer-led experiential learning, students and researchers will develop the literacies needed to navigate complex digital environments. The renovated Library will be technology-rich and will more than double the current learning space with inviting **social spaces, many collaboration rooms, inspirational study spaces, expanded student learning commons, innovative media and maker commons, and new learning labs**. The landscape of unique spaces – quiet, loud, focused, dynamic – will support students in becoming highly qualified lifelong learners and engaged citizens.

Engaging Research

Emerging technologies, computational tools, and data have enabled researchers to ask new questions and explore new methods. The new **faculty commons, visualization lab, digital scholarship centre**, and a much expanded **research commons**, will connect emerging research agendas with the Library's expertise in data and information discovery, analysis, visualization, management, and preservation. These new research spaces will foster collaboration and interaction across disciplines, and support the development and dissemination of high-quality research and the exploration of new forms of scholarship.

Respecting Indigenous Cultures

At Simon Fraser University, we live and work on the unceded traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlilwətaɣ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. As a step on the path of Reconciliation, Indigenous communities will be consulted on how to best reflect Indigenous heritage and serve Indigenous needs in the building.

Fostering Community

The Library respects and values diversity, and engages our community by creating and hosting vibrant programs in interdisciplinary, shared spaces like the planned **learning and events room**. Using design, adaptive technology, staff presence, way finding, interpretive elements, and diverse workspaces, the revitalized Library will provide **universal accessibility**, connecting people with their own health and natural surroundings.

Sustaining Support

Inclusive, healthy and flexible support areas enhance Library operations. **Consolidating** support areas adjacent to service points will allow efficient use of space and save employee time. **Collocating** staff who work most closely together will encourage collaboration.

Planning Process

The planning process began with a high level feasibility study for the renewal of the W.A.C. Bennett Library to meet current code and safety requirements, address its deferred maintenance (see Appendix), and was continued by a master planning process to reimagine the functional layout of the building. An Advisory Committee of University stakeholders and a Working Committee of Planning and Library employees were established to guide the process. To imagine a possibility for a more innovative, forward looking library, the planning team undertook a robust stakeholder engagement process. They reviewed current best practices in the design of academic research libraries; analyzed community demand data; gathered input from faculty, students, and employees through stakeholder workshops, open houses, surveys, and focus groups; and developed a building programme and spatial organization.

Phased approach

The Master Space Plan has identified a first phase of work to include the necessary structural and systems upgrades as well as comprehensive programmatic renovations to the interior of the existing building. As the planned functional programme cannot be fully accommodated in this phase, a second phase expansion will consolidate the collection, increase space for research, and meet benchmark targets for student learning space.

