



HIGHER EDUCATION

Campus Design Trends

Making space for what matters most.





As universities pursue innovative ways to teach and learn, facility design trends are changing to create new learning environments. Rapidly changing technology, combined with evolving preferences for quiet study and collaborative meeting spaces, have created demand for flexible spaces that can adapt to a variety of needs.

Here at Spacesaver, we've worked closely with architects, designers, and campus clients for nearly 50 years, and we continue to anticipate the needs of the campus community. Here are some trends we're seeing in higher education facility design.



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Student Center Design:

Creating a Flexible, Forward-Thinking Campus Hub

Creatively integrate storage and collaborative space into student centers and other campus spaces.

Student centers: they're often a major focus of campus tours, and they're the places where students can go to study, socialize, meet, and get the resources they need. According to an EAB Facilities Forum study, campus environment is the number one reason students choose one institution over another, so it makes sense that more universities are investing in new services and amenities for these prominent campus hubs.

So how can you design a space that's innovative and reflective of your university's mission, but also functional and adaptable enough to stand up to the rapid pace of change in higher education? Here are a few ideas to get you inspired.



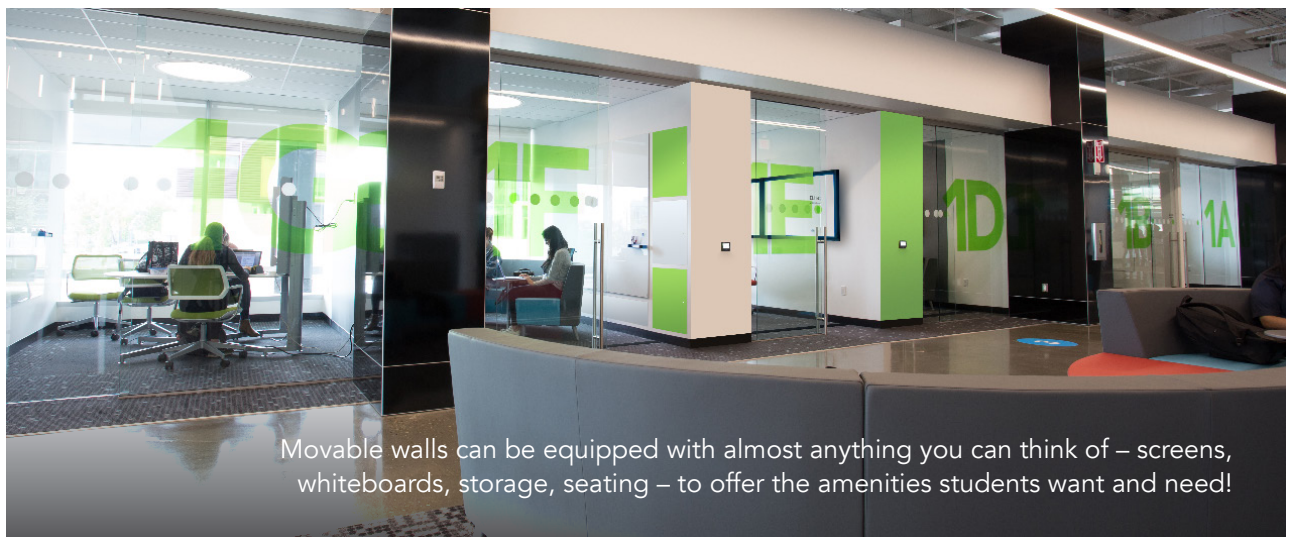
According to an EAB Facilities Forum study, campus environment is the number one reason students choose one institution over another.

Create Custom-Sized Meeting Spaces On-the-Fly

Whether they're for student org meetings, group projects, or campus events, meeting rooms are often in high demand. But it can be challenging to predict what room sizes will be most requested and no one wants to waste the square footage for a huge presentation room that will sit empty most of the day.



Moveable walls allow students, faculty, and staff to quickly divide up a large room space in just minutes. This is made possible by walls mounted onto a floor rail system. Host a large group presentation in an open room, then easily slide out the walls for breakout sessions. The room can be set up as multiple small study spaces during the day and then all the walls can be slid to one side for an event in the evening. Practically speaking, this kind of flexibility allows you to utilize one space in a multitude of ways to improve space utilization. But it also creates a fun and engaging collaboration environment for students and faculty.



Moveable walls can be equipped with almost anything you can think of – screens, whiteboards, storage, seating – to offer the amenities students want and need!



Offer a Spot to Stash Belongings

On large campuses where students might not have time to stop back at their housing between classes and activities, or at commuter schools where students don't have another place to store belongings, Day Use Lockers provide a convenient spot to drop gym bags, books, a change of clothes, or even to charge a laptop while they run to get lunch. RFID-enabled locks make it easy: a quick ID swipe provides secure access.

Designed to incorporate branding and complement the overall look and feel of any space, Day Use Lockers can:

- Divide a large room into smaller work areas as part of stand-alone wall partitions
- Create a storage island with workspace on top
- Be integrated into a wall to maximize functional storage



Accommodate a Variety of Work Styles

Like many modern offices, campuses are breaking from the traditional rows of desks and offering a wide variety of different work environments to accommodate different preferences and types of work. Although collaborative environments have become increasingly popular in student center design, it's still important to include plenty of quiet personal study space where students can get into a deeply focused mindset and nooks where they can get a moment of respite from a busy day.

Even though technology integration is an important consideration, be sure you can easily change out equipment as technology evolves over time. And keep in mind that whiteboards are often just as desirable as a shareable screen in many meeting spaces.





Academic Libraries:

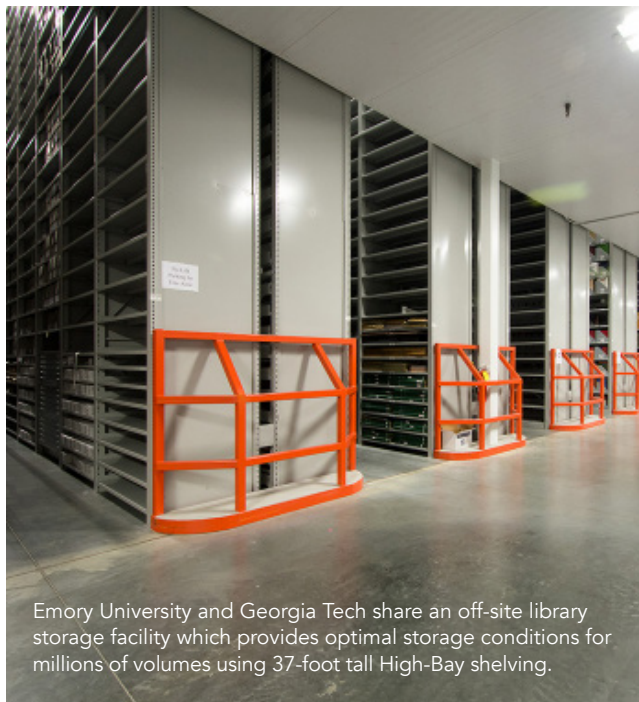


How Their Changing Roles are Influencing Design

Academic library design will continue to trend away from long rows of shelves and more spaces that are intended to inspire new ways of learning.

In an era when technology is dominating the conversation in higher education, it's easy to assume that campus libraries could become irrelevant. But as we're seeing, the opposite is true: academic libraries are alive and well – perhaps even more popular than in the past - but for new and ever-evolving reasons.

From individual study space and group project meeting rooms to technology, software, and space for unique learning environments, the physical library space has been shaped by new student expectations. While helping students navigate information is still central to academic libraries' missions, that practice now involves less physical books and more digital reference materials, software, and hands-on learning. Though these changes are sometimes unpopular among faculty who wish to keep physical collections on hand, there's no doubt that academic library design will continue to include fewer long rows of shelves and more spaces intended to inspire new ways of learning.



Emory University and Georgia Tech share an off-site library storage facility which provides optimal storage conditions for millions of volumes using 37-foot tall High-Bay shelving.

Collections on the move

To make room for all these new library functions like tutoring, media, meeting space, cafes, and even active learning classrooms, something has to go - and that something is usually books. Most libraries opt to pare back on items that don't circulate often, reduce duplicate copies, and offer digital versions whenever possible. Some books are moved to other libraries on campus, but many are moved to off-site storage facilities, which may even be shared with other nearby institutions.

Flexibility is Paramount

With the uncertainty surrounding the COVID crisis and the rapid pace of change on campuses, it only makes sense that academic libraries are looking for flexibility in their space, furniture, and equipment. Flexible spaces not only help prepare for unknown future needs, but also allow students and staff to reconfigure spaces based on current events, activities, and personal study preferences.



On a small scale, this can mean adding casters to all your shelving to make it mobile, allowing you to rearrange the space as needed.

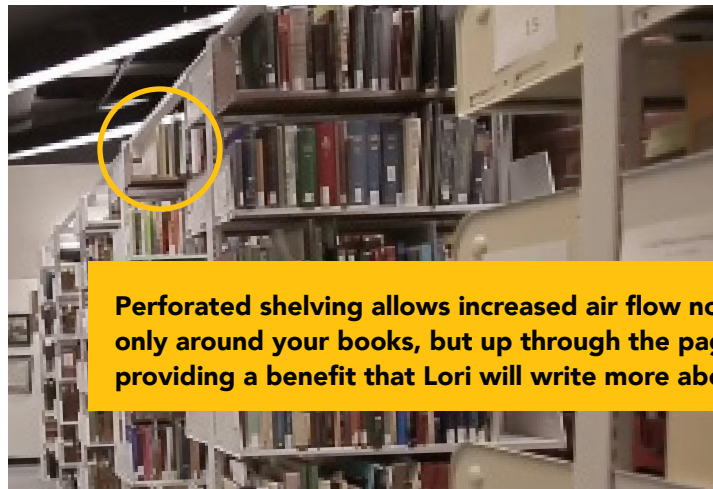


On a larger scale, this could look like incorporating large multipurpose spaces, like a Learning Commons that can be used for events, private study, or conversation. These spaces can be even more effective if they offer temporary dividers, such as moveable walls that slide on floor rails to create custom-sized meeting rooms on the fly.



One Thing that's Not Changing: Special Collections

For all the evolution that academic libraries are experiencing, one thing that hasn't changed is the importance of special collections. Many university and college libraries pride themselves on the historic books, documents, and even 3D objects that they care for, whether they stay in the library or get moved to an off-site facility. These collections are usually one-of-a-kind and therefore offer unique opportunities for exhibits, research, curricular involvement, and even fundraising efforts.



Perforated shelving allows increased air flow not only around your books, but up through the pages, providing a benefit that Lori will write more about.



These collections often require special conditions when it comes to ventilation, temperature, humidity, and even security. Rather than typical library shelving, it's best to think of these special collections as you would museum collections. Using museum-grade cabinets for larger objects, maps, and architectural drawings can help keep them secure and protected from day-to-day damage and large-scale disasters like flooding or fire.





Innovation Labs & Makerspaces:

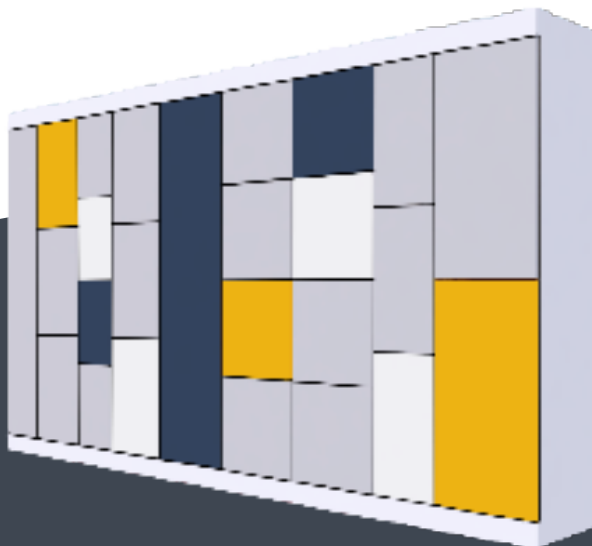
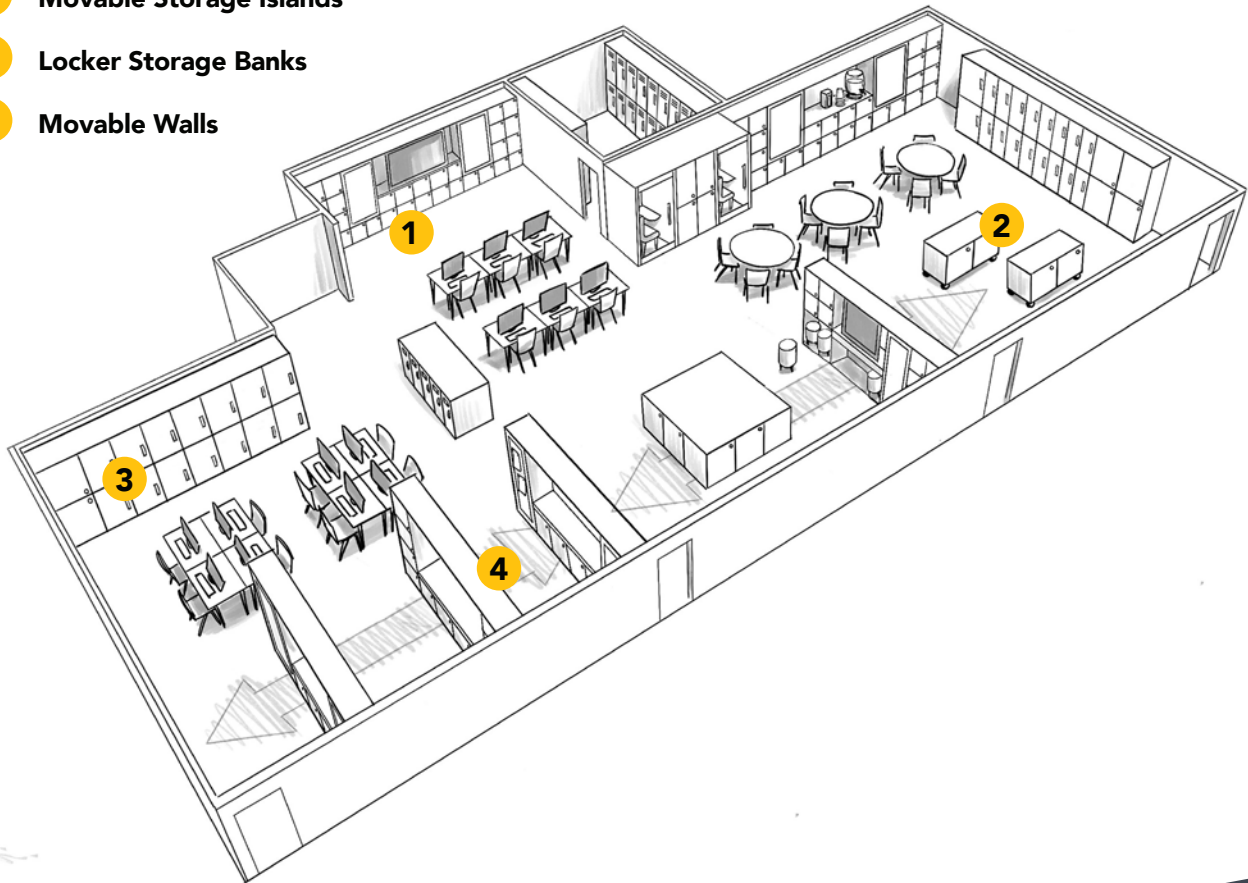
Considerations for Maximizing Integrated Storage

Sufficient storage is crucial for makerspaces. Here are a few areas to keep in mind as you design storage into your innovation center or makerspace.

Spaces in Motion

Makerspace, Innovation Center, Fab Lab - whatever you call it? These creative, hands-on learning spaces are proliferating on college campuses. Sometimes they exist as a corner of a library or academic building, but we're seeing more and more makerspaces being created as stand-alone facilities where students can build, engineer, experiment with prototypes, collaborate with other makers, and gain access to advanced technology.

- 1 Media Display Wall**
- 2 Movable Storage Islands**
- 3 Locker Storage Banks**
- 4 Movable Walls**



Built for Change

Makerspaces are exciting fast-paced environments for innovation and change. So how do you actively plan for what storage those changes will bring? Our storage systems are not only completely customizable, but they are built to be forward compatible, ready to be added to, moved, changed, and upgraded to serve your long term needs, keeping your focus on your students.

Tool & Supply Storage

Much of your equipment, such as laser cutters and 3D printers, will have permanent homes on the shop floor. But how do you plan to provide access to smaller tools and supplies like drills, hand tools, electrical components, soldering supplies, or resin for 3D printers?

1. Centralized Storage:

The most common way to store supplies is to offer a central tool area with a check-out window where students can temporarily rent the supplies they need. This method comes with many perks like security for rented items, the ability to control the organization of tools, and visibility into the types of projects students are working on - but it also means you need a large, dedicated storage space and enough staff to make it feasible. If you go this route, be sure this storage room is adjacent to all work areas of the makerspace or even in the center of the space with multiple check-out windows. Ideally, a student shouldn't have to walk through a computer lab and a laser cutting lab to get the supplies needed for their 3D printing project.

Within your centralized storage room, shelving with a colored bin system is a great way to keep small parts organized while providing space for larger items like tool kits. Bins also make it easier to move supplies into the space and rent them out as students can simply take the bin to their work station.



Rolling carts provide convenience and flexibility. Central storage areas are useful, but it's important to think about how tools and supplies will be transferred to and from storage. As new supplies come in, or when you host workshops and events, you'll likely want carts to move items into or out of the storage area. Carts in a variety of configurations can be used to safely and securely transport everything from large tools to bins of small parts.

2. Workstation Storage:

If a central storage room isn't feasible for all your tools and supplies, you can consider integrating supply storage into workstations. If you know that a certain area typically requires the same supplies for all projects (for example, an electrical/circuitry zone or a soldering area), you can equip workstations with drawers and cabinets to hold kits of supplies. This is an easy way to ensure students have what they need right where they need it.





Project Storage

Most students aren't going to finish their project in one session, and in some cases, they might keep working on a project for an entire semester. Rather than force students to transport their work back and forth from the makerspace to their dorm or apartment and risk damaging their projects, offer students temporary project lockers. These lockers should be configured in a variety of sizes to accommodate different sizes of projects, and they can be used with traditional locks, digital locks, or even RFID/student ID swipe.

Miscellaneous Storage Considerations

Here are a few other things to think about as you design your makerspace:

3D Printed Items:

Can students leave while their projects are printing? If so, you'll want a project pick-up station or project pick-up lockers.

Make it Mobile:

Add casters to cabinets, shelving, and other furniture. As you host events and rearrange for future needs, you'll be grateful to have furniture that's easy to move around.

Personal Belongings:

For areas where potentially dangerous equipment is being used, students will need a place to stash their backpacks so they don't create a tripping hazard. Day-Use Lockers are a great way to offer temporary, secure storage.

Scrap Supplies:

Will you be saving scrap materials or discarding them? If you're saving them, be sure to have a dedicated storage area to keep them organized.





Storage on Display:

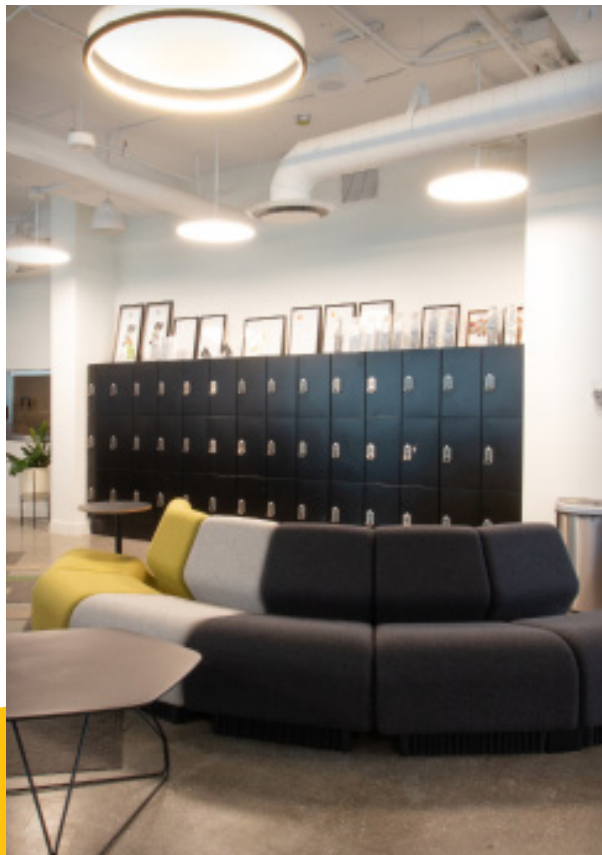
How campuses are saving space by putting storage in plain sight.

Here are four ways that campuses can use storage to save space and maintain aesthetic appeal.

Storage in Plain Sight

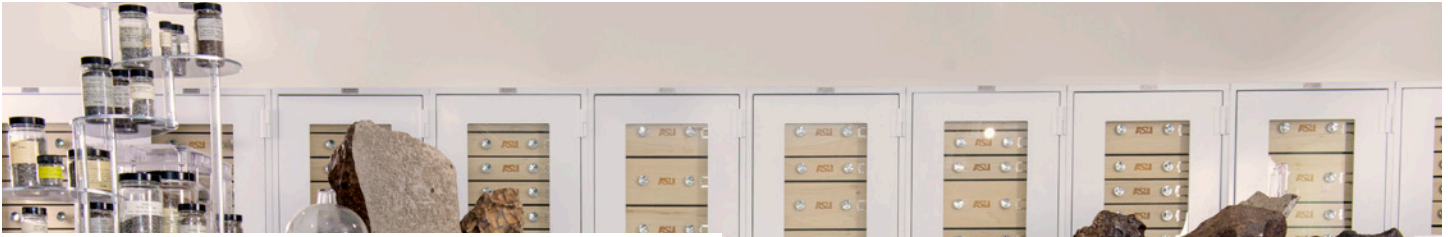
The word “storage” typically conjures up images of dark rooms full of clunky, utilitarian shelving. Storage is the kind of thing most campuses want to hide away in a back room so that no one has to look at it. But every cubic foot that’s taken up by backroom storage is space that could be used for teaching and learning. It also means items might not be stored in the most convenient locations for those who need access to the storage, especially because storage is usually the last consideration when buildings are designed.

The solution: Storage in plain sight. Here are four ways that campuses can bring storage front and center without sacrificing aesthetics.



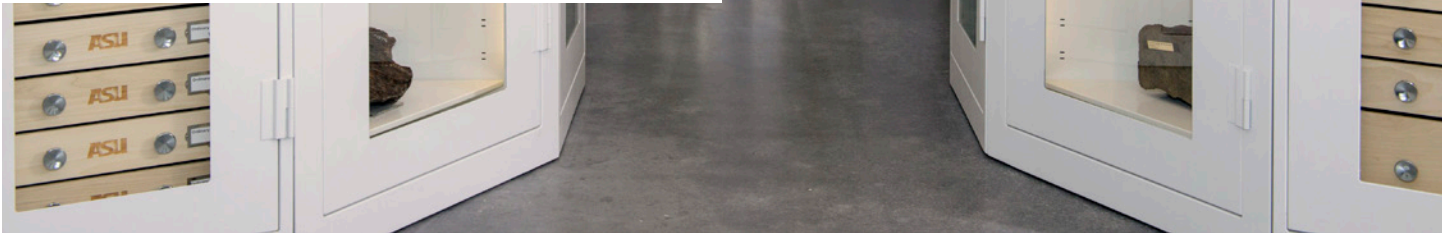
1. Day Use Lockers

Day Use Lockers can help make better use of underutilized hallway or atrium spaces by offering students a place to stash their belongings and charge electronics. Durable and easy to clean, lockers can be integrated with seating or a work surface to encourage informal gatherings and spontaneous meetings. Digital screens can also be incorporated to display scrolling announcements or university branding. Choose an RFID-enabled, ID-swipe lock and a finish that blends with the vibe of the space to create a sleek, low-maintenance, and multi-functional way for students to store belongings.



2. Research Collections as Display

Sure, you can store research collections into a lab back room that'll quickly become disorganized and overcrowded - or you can integrate display into the storage and show off the incredible work of your faculty and students. At Arizona State University, these unique, museum-grade cabinets serve the dual purposes of keeping meteor collections protected and secure while allowing visibility into the unique collection. These are a great option for wide hallways or atrium spaces in academic buildings.



3. Incorporate Lighting

Studies have shown that lighting greatly affects learning, productivity, and memory, which makes it a powerful factor in campus building design. But how can you bring light into inherently dim spaces without knocking out walls? With shelving! Hear us out. Although shelving is often a large fixture blocking natural light, it can actually be a great way to bring a light, airy feel to a dark library.



Mount Royal University Library tackled their dark shelves by installing raceway frames directly onto the library shelves. Not only did this lighting solution provide adequate lighting to illuminate the shelf contents, but the design of the shelves kept the aesthetics of the library top-of-mind.

4. Branding & Design Details

Like the lighting in the example above, other design details can help integrate storage with the overall style and architecture of your campus or even make it a centerpiece of your design.

Lockers and end panels can be customized in myriad ways. Customize your look with materials such as wood to match a historical building, recycled materials to help achieve sustainability goals, or branding to help convey your institution's values.



Your Partner in Innovation

For nearly 50 years, Spacesaver has been a trusted partner in helping higher education architects, administrators, and others understand the complexities involved in planning and designing effective learning spaces. Our network of local distributors offers space planning services, product installation, and ongoing service and maintenance by factory-certified technicians.

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