The Leah Peterson Learning Commons has been open since October 2014, and we are eager for you to get acquainted with this wonderful building! The learning commons concept varies from one university to another; however, our desire is to provide a warm and inviting atmosphere for the NNU community that offers a variety of options for study and research including individual space, and group spaces and collaborative areas. The Learning Commons incorporates a wide array of academic resources, expertise, services and state-of-the-art technology to support and enhance student learning and to give strong customer service to all users. In addition, library space has been expanded to allow for better access and growth of our print collections.

There are several unique design features in the Learning Commons. The chandelier and coffered ceiling on the landing of the grand staircase, the window seat on the landing and four others in nooks on the east end of the building and the scripture verses on three walls are all worth taking time to enjoy. You will also notice a wide variety of seating throughout the building. The Quiet Reading Room on the second floor contains three unique artifacts: an oil painting of the first groundbreaking on campus in 1915, painted by Dr. Ruth Long, a former art faculty member; a Boston Common quilt pattern, machine pieced & quilted by Sharon and Ethel Bull (Sharon was the former Library Director and Dean of Academic Services); and the Learning Commons bell tower painting, a gift from the 2016 senior class, painted by Ben Atkin, a 2016 studio art graduate. The bell tower with the 25-bell carillon, located directly above the Quiet Reading Room, plays Westminster chimes progressing from the quarter hour until the new hour when the full melody can be heard.
35,000 square feet of new construction was added to the 22,000 square feet of the original John E. Riley Library building. The atrium links these two sections. The library building (to the west) was completely remodeled. The first floor and basement are now staff areas for several Learning Commons partners. All Information Technology staff and the campus data center are housed in this space. Information Technology Services (ITS) offers computer technical support to the NNU campus, and provides a wide variety of audiovisual services to the campus, area churches and the community. They provide rental of media and technology equipment for students and University employees. NNU Online & Instructional Design Services collaborates with faculty and staff to develop online courses, provide support in using a variety of technologies to enhance student learning and manage Canvas, NNU’s online learning management system. Administrative offices for the Dean of Academic Services, the Library Director, and Library Circulation are also located in this space. Other partners are located in the new side of the building and on the second floor. Tours do not provide access to office areas.

The Learning Commons Service Desk staff serve as the first point of contact in the Learning Commons and provide assistance with technology questions and circulation of library materials.

Several elm and maple trees had to be removed before construction could begin. Chaplain Emeritus Gene Schandorff handcrafted this beautiful ‘grandfather clock’ and the clocks on the fireplace mantels in the Bean and the Quiet Reading Room from one of the maple trees.

The Bean, managed by Sodexo Food Services, is very popular with students, staff and faculty. Photos of the original Bean, campus hang-out in the 1940s-1960s, can be seen in the seating alcove.

There are a total of 17 group study rooms, each equipped with a collaborative write-on wall. Many have large screens for display of laptop projects. Students can reserve select rooms online; others are first come, first served.

The Murdock instructional lab is designed and equipped for active learning. Its primary purpose is for teaching and training students, faculty and staff in research and technology.

The Doceō Center partners with the broader educational community to inspire learning through innovative practices in education. Doceō Center faculty work with NNU faculty and K-12 educators throughout the state of Idaho on the effective use of technology and are currently involved in a pilot project in the west African nation of Liberia. Just outside the center is a 10-foot wide interactive screen designed to bring multiple University students together in a hands-on learning environment.

The Center for Academic Success & Advising provides students with tutoring, writing consulting, academic coaching, testing, disability support services, and English language support services for international students. Students can schedule tutors and writing consultants online; some walk-in hours are also available.

If you are not familiar with the Leah Peterson story, take a few moments to learn about this remarkable woman at the Donor Wall. This building would not have become a reality without the individuals and organizations noted here. We are very thankful for their generous contributions!

The original letters identifying the John E. Riley Library were previously located on the outside of the building. They now have a new home here.

University Archives preserves the institutional history. Documents, photos and other memorabilia are stored in a climate-controlled environment. The reading room is furnished with refurbished tables and chairs dating from the R.T. Williams Library, 1942-1966. The desk and chair used by President Corlett and Riley are also here.

The library’s reference collection is on the first floor; other collections are on the second floor. The main circulating collection is in the new section on the east, while print periodicals and microforms, children’s literature and K-12 curriculum are in the renovated west side. Library Collection Management offices are also located here. The library’s print collections total about 134,000 volumes and there for growth. In addition, the library has over 140,000 electronic books and many full-text databases and online journals.

The Stroup instructional lab is designed and equipped for active learning. Its primary purpose is for teaching and training students, faculty and staff in research and technology.

More resources available at nnu.edu/learningcommons