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Construction and Updates to the Calvin T. Library and Mitchell Center

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In late 2022 the Calvin T. Library and the Mitchell Center partially closed and went under construction to update the building and fix the heating, ventilation and air condition system. The construction will be complete by May 2024.

Since parts of the library are closed, the library has adapted to the changes.

“We’re slowly feeling out how best we can keep providing services while the mess continues around us,” said Evan Boyd, dean of the library. “We still remain open for folks to use us. We still have all our online resources, and in the spring, we will have some different looking spaces.”

The project will help modernize the library. There will be more student services, wheelchair accessible bathrooms and doors, meditation and prayer rooms, better lighting, updated furniture and an updated mother’s room for nursing.

The basement is closed and is being demoed. In January, 2024, the first floor will be closed to allow renovations on the main level. Hours in the parts of the library that are open will continue to change until renovations are complete.

The library isn’t the only thing that is going through changes. The Mitchell Center, that is in the library but had been separated by a wall, will also be updated. The wall will be taken down to create an open concept. The classrooms will also be updated. Because the Mitchell Center is being worked on, the Communications Department has moved across campus. One of the only rooms left open is the radio.

Some complications arose with the radio station when construction started in the library.

“When they decided to redo the library, I don’t think they realized the Federal Communications Commission requires that before you do any type of construction with a radio facility, you have to have permits, first, through the Federal Communications Commission,” said Ford Clark, UNK senior lecturer and general manager of KLPR. “That can take quite a bit of time, so by the time that they have decided that they were doing to do all the reconstruction of the library, it was pretty much too late to get those.”

Due to these complications, the radio will stay in the Mitchell Center through the entirety of the construction.

Another problem with the library is the air quality. Most of the focus of the library construction is on the new heating, ventilation and air condition system.

The improvements on the air quality are a necessary change to upgrade the library.

“The air in the library has been bad for a long time, and some people even have a hard time breathing in the library,” said Nannette Hogg, UNK Communications Department Chair. “And the humidity is way off the charts in the library, so that’s the kind of stuff that needed to be fixed.”

Dr. Hogg says that the library construction is being done to ultimately benefit the students with the new HVAC system, improve student resources and have better classroom quality.

“They’re doing the best they can, and it will be an improvement for a common area for our students,” Hogg said.