



photo credit: Sally McCay

True to Its Roots

UVM Bookstore - University of Vermont

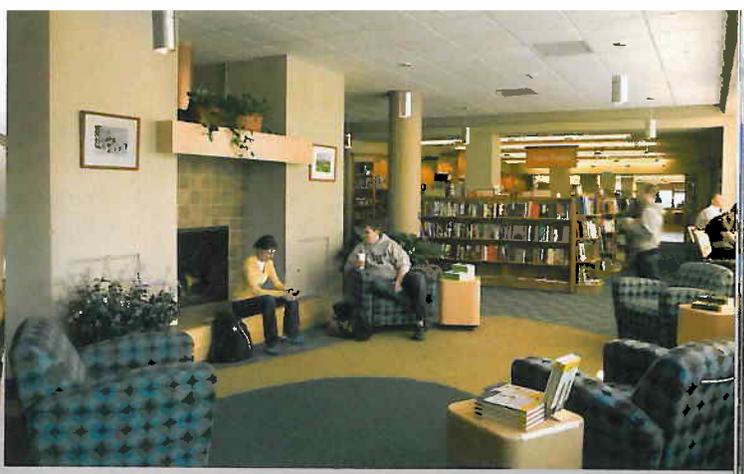
Jay Menninger

To those who browsed its aisles a few years ago, the UVM Bookstore on the University of Vermont (UVM) campus in Burlington was considered nothing out of the ordinary. It could have been located on any campus in any college town. With an aesthetic perhaps best described as “early 1960s concrete bunker” and a mish-mash of unmatched shelving and a lack of windows, the store definitely was missing a wow factor, one that identified itself as uniquely Vermont.

That all turned around in 2005 when the University announced plans to build the Dudley H. Davis Student Center on the current site of the UVM Bookstore. This 200,000-square-foot, environmentally friendly facility would be the hub for campus activity and bringing together a literal soup-to-nuts menu of UVM services.

Students and visitors would find campus food service, a bank, the campus radio station, lounges, a pub and bistro, a Ben & Jerry’s, offices for campus clubs and organizations, meeting rooms, and a brand-new bookstore.

A new design allowed the UVM Bookstore management and campus administrators to provide a wish list of features and facilities. At the top of the list were top-end, high-quality fixtures and finishes befitting the upscale Davis Center design, as well as plenty of windows and open space.

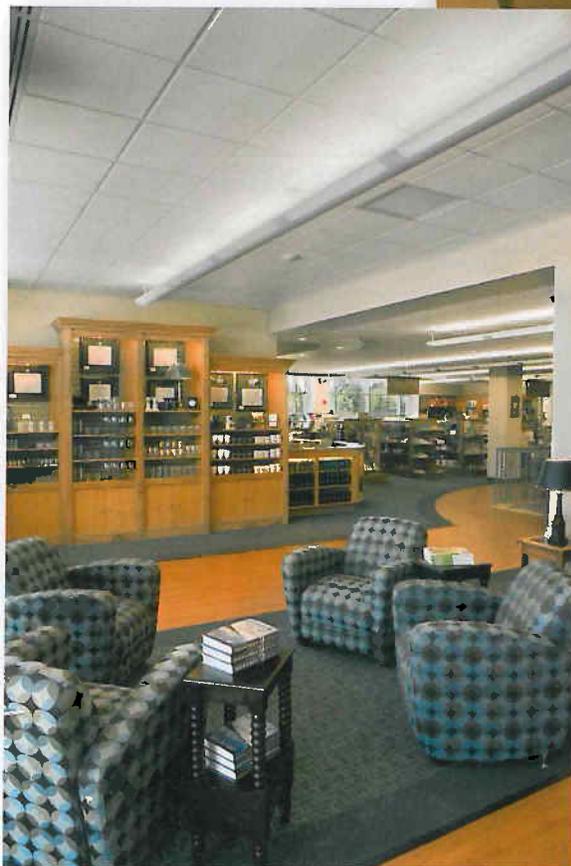


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Being green also was an important consideration: The Davis Center would be built with a goal of LEED® certification in green design. It achieved Gold Certification – the first student center in the United States to do so. In fact, UVM has been named one of America's ten greenest universities by *Forbes*. The University is one of only six schools on the list to receive the highest ranking by the Sustainable Endowments Institute's recent annual College Sustainability Report Card.

The environmentally friendly focus carried over to the bookstore. Fixtures used in the store featured a green production process, with the use of water-borne coatings and adhesives and recycling of scrap wood left over after production.

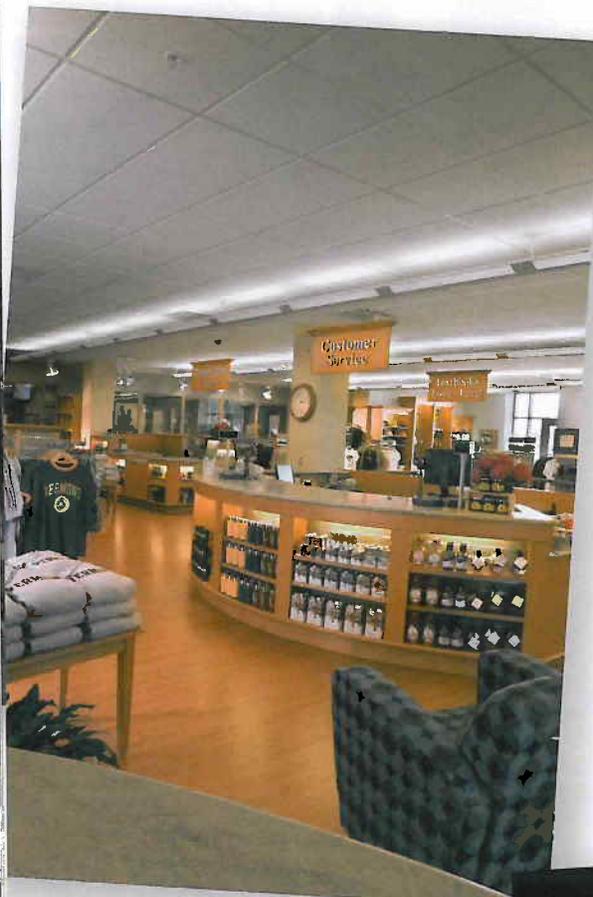


To help develop the new store's look, in conjunction with architects WTW Architects (Pittsburgh) and Truex Collins & Partners (Burlington), bookstore management turned to Nebraska Book Company's College Store Design (CSD).

The CSD team visited the UVM campus to learn more about the project parameters and what made the campus unique. After an in-depth discussion, they provided a plan that would complement the finishes in the building as a whole, yet put its own stamp on the bookstore brand.

In April 2007, after closing its doors for only two days for the move, the UVM Bookstore opened in its new location. The store features not one, but three, attractive destinations for students and campus visitors: a bookstore, café and convenience store.

Textbooks are located on the second floor; retail items are on the third floor.



With over 21,000 square feet on two levels, the store can now offer visitors almost double the amount of space and a greater selection of merchandise.

CSD helped the store achieve a warm, inviting look with the use of soft tones on the wood floor and on all the fixtures. Green and aqua hues in the floor covering complement the wood as well as the overall color palette of the Davis Center. Neutral walls let the general merchandise and apparel “pop” with color throughout the store. Soft seating located throughout the store invite visitors to linger for a while to chat with friends.

Free-standing fixtures were kept to five feet high or less, underscoring the store’s open floor plan and letting visitors look in any direction to see the full scope of all the store has to offer.

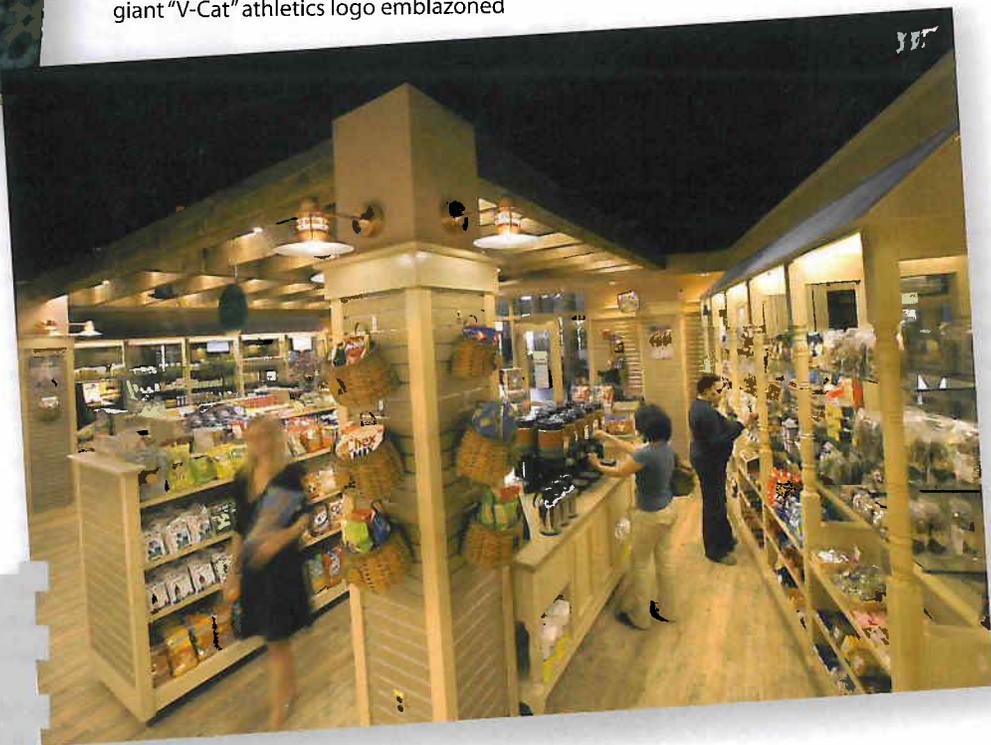
At the entrance on the third floor, the UVM Bookstore greets shoppers with a giant “V-Cat” athletics logo emblazoned

on the floor at one entrance and the UVM seal at the other.

Oversize windows let in natural light; a fireplace is the focal point of the lounge space filled with comfortable seating. Soft wood tones mirror what’s used in the bookstore. Henderson’s Café, a coffee bar, flanks the trade book area.

Here, the service counter features warm oranges and deep browns and is highlighted by a Vermont leaf pattern. Visitors can find wireless access and an environment that encourages relaxing over a cup of coffee.

In keeping with UVM’s focus on diversity, the café was named in honor of George Washington Henderson, the first African-American man voted into Phi Beta Kappa. The café serves Vermont Artisan’s Coffee, a fair-trade and organic product, as well as teas; two local bakeries provide fresh pastries every day.



College Store Design, a division of Nebraska Book Company, provides comprehensive bookstore and dining planning and design. Its team of IIDA designers offer a fresh perspective on how to create a unique, imaginative retail environment for students, faculty, staff and campus visitors.



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Those who need a quick snack or incidentals can stop by the CAT's Pause, UVM Bookstore's convenience store. CSD researched local retailers to create a true Vermont general store design. The store features a country store look and feel, from the wood plank laminate flooring to the exposed beam ceiling.

At 1,350 square feet, the c-store is triple the size of its previous location and has moved 180 degrees from its former linoleum floors, brick walls and dropped ceiling. The rustic look of the CAT's Pause is complemented by leading-edge technology in everything from the registers and card swipers to the coffee machines and cooler.

The size and local flavor of the store allows a perfect opportunity to offer products by Vermont vendors, numbering more than 60 in all. Three full aisles of product include coffees, candy, local sandwiches, sushi and Ben & Jerry's ice cream.

Feedback from the c-store, café and bookstore has been overwhelmingly positive: The facilities all rank in the top ten destinations for Davis Center visitors, with Henderson's Café taking the top spot. For the staff, the new design has energized the team – giving them a newfound sense of pride in their store and in their work. A year after its grand opening, UVM Bookstore is a stand-out, both for its innovative design and firm nod to its Vermont heritage. 

Jay Menninger is the director of the University of Vermont UVM bookstore. He may be reached at jmenning@uvm.edu.