

Fort Bend County/University of Houston System Sugar Land/Wharton County Junior College

Library Collaboration

Background

As a continuing process of partnership with Fort Bend County in the development of the University of Houston System at Sugar Land (UHSSL) campus, plans are in place for the construction of a joint-use library on the UHSSL campus. Whereas the County has bonds approved for the construction of a standard 35,000 square foot library, the UH System and Wharton County Junior College (WCJC) have agreed to fund an additional 5,000 square feet, resulting in a 40,000 square foot library that will meet the university, community college and community needs.

Cost

The County cost of construction for the 40,000 square foot library is estimated to be \$11.7 million. UHS has agreed to fund the additional 5,000 square feet by paying 12.7% of actual construction cost, or a maximum of \$1.5 million. Wharton County Junior College has agreed to cover half the cost of the additional square footage through a long-term lease with UHS. Current market trends are favorable for the construction cost to fall below the estimate.

Process

Head librarians from the primary participating institutions (UH, UHV, WCJC) met with County librarians and have reached agreement on design and operations. The County will pay for standard operational costs, with UHS/WCJC being responsible for costs of special requests (extended hours, etc.). County operational hours currently meet both the UHS and WCJC needs.

Benefits

- allows for efficient use of public funds
- provides a greater quantity and quality of collections, electronic resources and services
- eliminates duplication of services and resources
- promotes community and student interaction/relationship building
- increases community awareness of current education practice and opportunities
- frees classroom space in other campus buildings

Summary

Combining resources results in considerable cost savings for all three partners and provides an example of our efforts to optimize the use of resources in times of economic challenge - without sacrifice of quality or service. The partnership serves as a model of collaboration for others to emulate.