

Butler Eagle

BC3's Beck Library will undergo face-lift

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BUTLER TWP — Within a few years, BC3's Beck Library will be stripped of its antiquated look and orange carpet, straight from the 1970s, and undergo major renovations that will bring the campus study hub into the 21st century.

“If we wait just a little longer, it'll be back in style,” joked Steve Joseph, dean of library services, walking on the orange carpet that's been on the first floor of the building since the library opened its doors.



Steve Joseph, dean of library services for Butler County Community College, speaks in the school's Beck Library, which is to undergo a \$4.7 million renovation. The work may include a new entrance, larger windows, more study rooms and a cafe.

Longtime plans to reconfigure the 25,000-square-foot library are now under way, thanks to a \$2.3 million grant the college recently was awarded by the state. BC3 will be matching that amount through a capital campaign that kicks off this fall, and through college reserves that have been saved. Renovations will total around \$4.7 million.

Many aspects of the library will be overhauled. Large windows, bringing natural light into the building, will likely replace smaller ones. There might be a new main entrance facing the center of campus, rather than the back.

A cafe could be added to the building, where students could buy sandwiches and drinks on site. And there will definitely be more study rooms, of varied sizes, that will foster collaboration with groups. Balconies and outdoor seating are a possibility, too. These are all features that have been discussed, among others.

“And (electrical) outlets,” Joseph said. “You can't have enough outlets.”

A building design will most likely be finalized come spring.

Several years ago, Beck Library staff conducted a study with students, which helped with developing ideas.

“The message was people were very happy with the staff,” Joseph said. “But in terms of the setup and construction of the building, it wasn't that welcoming ... and it wasn't conducive to studying.”

One student had even said, “It's like walking into a cave.”

Right now, the library has nearly 60,000 books, but that will probably be trimmed during renovations.

“This will be much more technology oriented,” said Brian Opitz, BC3 director of operations. “Books will be reduced to some extent,” and more computers and electronic tablets likely will be available for use.

New furniture also will be included in renovations. Opitz said construction hopefully will begin by next summer, and be completed in time for the 2015 fall semester.

A temporary library location during the anticipated 18-month construction period has been discussed, but has not been finalized. The library could be moved to Founders Hall or vacant classrooms during the interim.

“Construction is always an inconvenience,” Opitz said. “We want to minimize the disruption to the campus.”