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PROGRAM STATEMENT

FOR THE

PROPOSED NEW LIBRARY/MEDIA BUILDING

Prepared by:

Prof. Robert B. Ford,

Chief Librarian and

Professional Staff

Medgar Evers College

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## Part I

### BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE INSTITUTION

Medgar Evers College is one of the more recent units of the City University of New York, having been established in 1970. In its brief history, Medgar Evers College has undergone various changes. The most recent change is that in 1976, the institution was changed from a four-year institution to a two-year institution offering both associate and baccalaureate degrees. Also in the same year, Medgar Evers College became accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. It should be noted also that the baccalaureate programs were reduced to 5 degree programs in nursing, business administration, public administration, teacher education, and biology. Recently, Medgar Evers College has begun to expand its areas of concentration in some of these programs and to add other associate degree programs, such as bilingual education, journalism, pre-law, pre-medicine, manpower training/special education. With the addition of the Co-operative Education Program, the College continues to strengthen its support of strong professional career programs. Much of Medgar Evers College's efforts have been toward offering curricula to meet the special needs of the student body, to recruit and maintain its student population, and to meet the varying needs of the larger Central Brooklyn Community, which the College serves.

The majority of the student body is drawn from the Central Brooklyn Community. According to various studies done of the Medgar Evers College student body, a profile of the typical Medgar Evers College student would be a Black female age 21 - 40 years. The student

population is predominately Black with a large percentage originally from the Caribbean. Approximately 75% is female. Also many of the students have been out of school for a number of years and for that reason the College is exploring giving credit for experiential learning. It should be noted that many of the alumni of Medgar Evers College continue their education toward the completion of a baccalaureate and/or master's degree(s).

There are various means employed to reach and serve the Central Brooklyn Community. Some of these means are the activities of the Medgar Evers College Community Council, the programs of the Adult Continuing Education Division, and the extra curricula activities of the divisions. The Council supports the College through jointly sponsored seminars and workshops on institutional development and by sponsoring fund-raising activities. The Adult Continuing Education Division sponsors various programs and classes in such areas as the GED, Small Business Institute, Parenting Project, and Project Retail/Sales. Each division, including the Library, either offers or participates in a multitude of cultural and educational activities. For example: each semester the Special Programs Division presents a series of lectures in honor of a famous Black person; the Natural Sciences and Mathematics Division presents a series of lectures as part of the science honors program; and the chairperson of the Humanities Division coordinates cultural programs sponsored by the College for the community. Also as an outgrowth of the projects in Adult Continuing Education programs, community conferences are held -- International Year of the Child conferences, Small Business for Minority Women, etc.

All these activities and more interact not only with the student body and its needs, but also with the Central Brooklyn Community to identify and improve life-long educational needs and to positively develop the community, which are part of the missions of the Medgar Evers College.

To develop and expand the missions of the College -- needs and interests of the student body, life-long educational needs of the community, and interaction with the community -- there are seven major goals which are:

1. Career education and occupational competence
2. Basic skills development
3. Cultural appreciation
4. Sociopolitical understanding
5. Human relations
6. Life-long learning
7. Community interaction

For a further discussion of these missions and goals, see the Self Study, 1977-1978. Since life cannot exist without change, and Medgar Evers College must continuously improve services to its constituents -- students, faculty, administration, and community -- the College is currently involved in another self-study for the 1981 visit from Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. The missions and goals may have to be re-defined and priorities reset after this evaluation.

## Part II

### THE LIBRARY AND A DESCRIPTION OF ITS REQUIREMENTS

This statement will delineate the basic philosophy and assumptions that undergird the library program here at Medgar Evers. It will then specify the aims and objectives of the library that must be reflected in the design and layout of the proposed new library/media building. Finally, it will discuss the various elements that must be included if the building is to effectively accommodate the needs of this academic community.

The basic question to be addressed is: what is the basic purpose of any college library? Mr. Metcalf sheds some light on this question:

"The basic purpose of a college library is quite simple. It must provide the records of civilization and assist students and faculty to retrieve and interpret them... Properly planned, it is a catalyst in the creation and discovery of ideas. While this purpose can be expressed simply, neither the function of the library nor its design is a simple problem."<sup>1</sup>

One way of interpreting the statement cited above is that the structure of the library facility must reflect the purpose of the library activities that will take place within its walls. Furthermore, the process of achieving this goal is problematic since a library should be, not a static place, but a dynamic organism that is constantly growing and changing as needs dictate. The implications for the library building are obvious: a great deal of the space provided must be capable of being utilized for a variety of purposes.

There are certain basic assumptions that should be stated at the

outset. A library in the academic setting is an instructional system in the broadest sense of the term. What this really means is that this system of relevant knowledge and information known as the library must be successfully negotiated by the student if he is to succeed academically and intellectually. Secondly, when one observes the academic environment, it becomes readily apparent that many diverse elements contribute to the quality of instruction, of which the library is just one among many but a highly significant element nonetheless. The Guidelines for Two-Year College Learning Resources Programs define education as "a process for communicating means for resolving the range of problems continuously encountered by man in living and in pursuing an occupation."<sup>2</sup> This process extends beyond the classroom and can occur in the laboratories and libraries of an educational institution. Next of all, it is generally agreed that the students' success in achieving instructional objectives is heavily dependent on access to materials. There is no other unit in the college that has the range of materials or can facilitate its accessibility like the college library. The final assumption is that an academic library that serves a population of largely academically underprepared students must have a basic commitment to go beyond the traditional limits in serving its clientele and educating them to become independent library users.

Here at Medgar Evers, the library faculty has articulated its major objectives in the following manner:

- (1) to acquire, organize and disseminate all relevant recorded knowledge and information, regardless of format, that will support the instructional programs

- (2) to develop a continuous program of library instruction, in collaboration with the faculty, that will make our students independent library users
- (3) to acquire a comprehensive collection of materials on American ethnic minorities with special focus on Afro-American history and culture
- (4) to maintain a functional and attractive facility that is conducive to a positive learning experience for our students
- (5) to promote utilization of the library's resources not only by the immediate academic community but by all residents of the Central Brooklyn Community
- (6) to add resources and develop programs that are relevant to the following seven major objectives of the college: (a) career education and occupational competence; (b) basic skills; (c) cultural appreciation; (d) sociopolitical understanding; (e) human relations; (f) lifelong learning; (g) community interaction
- (7) to become actively involved in the total teaching-learning process of the college.

#### THE REQUIREMENTS

First of all, the approach to library service at MEC must be fast, efficient and economical primarily because we are a commuter-type situation and our students generally don't have the time to leisurely search for the information they need.

Secondly, there must be space available for conducting library lectures as well as providing seminar rooms for group studying. A small lounge or browsing area is desirable where students can smoke and relax comfortably.

In planning an effective interior arrangement, the elements of utility and flexibility should take precedence over other considerations. This is necessary in order to provide for the rearrangement of units to meet future needs. One way of achieving this goal is through the use of modular construction.

Open stacks are preferred except where there are special collections, reserve items and materials of unusual value. Since the patrons will have free access to the stacks, adequate security is of major importance. The library will have a book detection system that will be a major deterrent against theft. There will be only one major entrance and exit and the layout of the main reading room should facilitate the traffic flow of patrons entering and leaving the library. All stairways should be within the central exit control point. High priority should be given to the efficient and economical flow of people and materials. Emergency exits should be provided which are equipped with alarms and plainly marked.

If the library is to maintain the proper atmosphere and environment for study and concentration, it is necessary to minimize and control the noise level. One major way of doing this is through the use of acoustical materials, especially in areas where group activities are taking place, e.g., typing booths, seminar rooms, library instruction rooms, library staff and office areas, etc. Sound-proofing will help to reduce sound and suppress vibration resulting from the use of the building as well as reducing machinery noise at its source.

The MEC library staff is composed of 18 full-time workers and 8 part-time workers, plus 17 student aides. Work areas should be

to present

located and arranged so that the noise of working and staff conversations will not adversely affect patrons. At least 125 square feet are required for each staff member on duty. Separate offices are desirable for supervisory personnel.

Another important element that is necessary for the protection of books and for the comfort of staff and patrons is the proper functioning of an air-conditioning system. The design of the air-conditioning system should have thermostats strategically placed so that different temperature controls can be maintained for different sections of the facility. Adequate ventilation and humidity control must be considered in planning this aspect of the building. Another important consideration is a back-up system when the air-conditioning malfunctions. Filters of high capacity should be used to filter dust and smoke.

The next significant factor to be considered is that of lighting and illumination. Fluorescent lighting should be used throughout the facility. A good light level should be maintained in the reading areas with higher intensity in the technical services area and over the card catalog. Direct sunlight is harmful to books and paper. Windows should not be placed in areas that will be used for stack space. The lighting design must deal adequately with the problems of glare and shadow. In both areas of air-conditioning and lighting, it would be most beneficial to seek the opinions of an expert.

The present student population of Medgar Evers College is approximately 3,100 students. Enrollment trends suggest that the student body may increase to about 3,500 students. Therefore the minimum seating capacity of the new library should be 1,000 or roughly

one-third of the expected future enrollment. As many seats as practical should be included at individual study carrels. Students seated at tables or in carrels require at least 25 square feet of space.

Seating arrangements in the reading room should provide a combination of individual study carrels and larger tables that will accommodate no more than six students. The informal grouping of occasional chairs can be used to break up the pattern of large numbers of students seated at tables. Tables seating more than two students should be placed in the middle of each area and individual study carrels located around the perimeter. Books can be shelved close by in a block of free-standing stacks. Coat racks in all major reading rooms and coat hooks on carrel partitions should be used instead of coat rooms.

In terms of floor loading, the floors must be designed for 150 pounds per square foot live load to permit location of book stacks in any location. However, if modular construction is used, the weight of each floor should be supported by columns rather than bearing walls. Ideally, the columns should not be larger than 14" in either dimension, which would make them fit properly into stack layouts.

Furniture and equipment should be harmonious in color and decor and contemporary in design. Contrasts are preferable. Carpeting throughout the public service areas and in the director's office is most desirable. The total effect should be one that is functionally attractive as well as being warm, bright and inviting to the average patron.

The library has currently 71,000 volumes. Assuming 5,000 volumes are added annually and that it will take three years to complete the

new building, there will be approximately 86,000 volumes in the present building when the new library is completed. Plan new space to house 150,000 volumes in the new building but provide shelving initially for only 100,000. There is also the related matter of housing the microform collections. We currently have 5,125 reels of microfilm to which 490 reels are added annually as well as 20,300 microfiche. In our present configuration, these microform collections are housed in the Periodicals Room. In the new building, a separate room or area might be desirable.

Since the acquisition, organization, and distribution of commercially produced audio-visual software and hardware is subsumed under the library's operation, several rooms including both preview and projection rooms as well as staff work areas must be set aside for these special purposes. No decision has yet been made regarding the college's position on media production facilities such as a television studio, etc.

There is a need for storage space for seldom-used volumes and other materials preferably at the basement level of the new facility.

If the new building is multi-level, then public restrooms should be provided on each level. There should be a separate restroom for the library staff or it may be part of the staff lounge.

It will be necessary to have a service entrance at the rear of the building with a covered unloading dock. Telephones for both outside and intercom service should be installed for all offices and work areas. Public telephones should be located in a convenient place where they can be monitored by the library staff. A complete directory and a

diagram of the floor plan should be prominently located at the entrance and on each floor. Space must also be provided for mounting exhibits and displaying important materials in one of the public service areas.

# REFERENCES

1

K.D. Metcalf, Planning Academic and Research Library Buildings.  
(New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), p. 370.

2

ALA (ACRL)/AACJC/AECT, "Guidelines for Two-Year College Learning  
Resources Programs," IN: Audiovisual Instruction (reprinted from the  
January 1973 issue), quoted from the section on the role of learning  
resources program.