



The University Law Library is packed with so many books like these that 50,000 volumes have to be stored across campus in the Knight Library. Students who want those books must request and wait for them.

Project: Plans may be done by spring

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1971, the building was designed with a fifth floor over the library, but because of budget constraints that floor had to be cut, making the building too small from the start — a problem that has only gotten worse as the field of law has expanded.

"A lot of what we now think of as legal education didn't exist in the 1970s," said Chuck O'Kelley, dean of the law school.

Additional classroom space is part of the plan because the school currently has only one seminar room appropriate for classes of around 20. The rest of the classrooms are designed for large groups. Current classrooms were constructed with the speaking platform at the bottom and rows of desks rising in tiers away from the professor. This style of architecture simply doesn't work, he said, because they interfere with interaction and learning.

"We need more level space, more classrooms where students can work collectively, and more smaller spaces," he said. The school only has five

classrooms and needs at least 15, he said.

Another reason to expand is the lack of room for technology expansion in the building, he said. There is no room for computers in the classroom, and the tables are too small for laptop computers and books.

The law school has been working on the remodel idea since May 1994, when it was determined that about 45,000 square feet needed to be added to keep up with comparable law schools.

O'Kelley said he hopes to have plans for the addition completed by spring so they can start "a whole lot of fund raising." The first phase will cost around \$9.4 million.

The 1995 Legislature passed a bill that allows the University to sell \$4.7 million in general revenue bonds for the first part of the project and private donations will make up the rest.

The Portland architecture firm of Yost, Grube and Hall has been hired to develop a schematic design for the project, including suggestions for ways to phase its construction

over several years. The school picked the project architect, in part, because of his use and emphasis on natural light in his other designs, O'Kelley said.

"The law school is often the first building people see on campus," he said. The new design may incorporate a courtyard and will mirror the school's focus on remaining open and accessible to the students and the University community. "The current building is a barrier" to that goal, he said.

"It's exciting because we're poised at a new era," he said. "Our print book [inventory] will probably decrease and we'll be creating a more flexible space to accommodate the next generation of law."

"This is a really good time to be doing this because there are so many changes in technology," O'Kelley said.

The law school administrators received an offer from a company that would allow them to purchase law books on CD-ROM for about \$100. The books would cost about \$10,000 on paper.



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