

GTU Opens New Collaborative Learning Space



The Graduate Theological Union was pleased to unveil its new Collaborative Learning Space on the first floor of the Flora Lamson Hewlett Library this spring. Thanks to a generous grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, the room that has served as the GTU computer lab since 2001 has been remodeled as a flexible smart classroom and learning space, highlighted by an 84-inch touchscreen LCD panel. The screen features a built-in computer and allows multiple computers to connect to it wirelessly for collaboration. Users can “draw” on the screen, or they can use the wireless keyboard and mouse. Whatever is placed on the screen can be saved and distributed to the class.

The new learning space is outfitted with chairs and tables that can easily be rearranged to meet the requirements for different class sizes and learning situations. In its first month of use this semester, the room has been set up in 10 different configurations. Such flexibility is a concrete representation of the GTU’s revised doctoral program, which encourages both academic innovation and interreligious and cross-disciplinary collaboration. This spring, required seminars for two of the four doctoral departments are being taught in the room; next semester all required doctoral seminars will meet there. Holding doctoral seminars in such a room increases possibilities for creative interaction, and situates the students in the library with full access to the reference librarians and other library resources during and after class.

The library staff has been making use of the newly designed space to offer in-person and online workshops both inside and outside of class time. In addition, the expanded technological capabilities of the new learning space will enhance opportunities for online course offerings, video conferencing, and other distance learning.

Photos by Larry Pickard