



*Collin College president Dr. Cary Israel in the domed great room of the Collin College Spring Creek Campus Library.*

## Collin College Library at Spring Creek Campus represents a new chapter

**T**HIS IMPRESSIVE NEW LIBRARY on the Collin College Spring Creek Campus is a visual representation of Dr. Cary Israel's grand vision for the school. Already recognized nationally for many programs—fine arts, nursing, Center for Advanced Study in Mathematics and Natural Sciences (CASMNS), Cisco Systems Computer Networking Technology Program, plus three U.S. Professors of the Year winners—Collin College is becoming the school of choice for students locally and worldwide who are seeking an excellent education.

To symbolize both the world-class education offered and a diverse student population, the landmark feature chosen to be situated at the entrance of the library will be a stainless steel armillary sphere, or globe, that spans about 20 feet in diameter.

Dr. Israel points out, "Our campuses all have iconic structures—the traditional light tower at the Preston Ridge Campus in Frisco, the clock tower and Jeffersonian architecture of the Central Park Campus library in McKinney, and now this domed library which stands 64 feet tall at its highest point with the armillary in front at the Spring Creek Campus in Plano.

He continues, "I wanted to have these features because when you look at universities, they have distinguishing landmarks," noting that landmarks and architecturally important structures

instill pride within the student body and faculty members on college campuses.

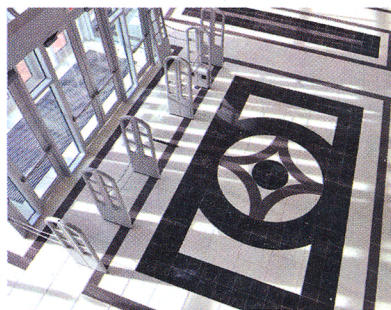
Since offering its first classes at area high schools in 1985, Collin College has expanded to serve about 53,000 credit

and continuing education students each year. The only public college in the county, the college offers more than 100 degrees and certificates in a wide range of disciplines.

Collin College's phenomenal success is attributed to excellent instruction coupled with innovative approaches to

meeting the needs of the students, the community, and society at large. One obvious example of blending instruction and innovation is this library.

Standing on the second floor of the library (which was still under





construction at the time of the interview), Dr. Israel pointed out standard features of the library such as book stacks and a reference desk. But he also indicated where students will be able to check out wireless notebooks which they can use anywhere on campus; more digital information resources; desks for individual work; and gathering areas for conversations.

In a significant departure from traditional libraries, there are 16 new classrooms with this expansion, each holding from 30 to 75 students, in addition to faculty offices, 41 small and large study rooms that students can reserve to work on group projects, and quiet alcoves.

This design is tailor-made for learning communities, an innovative approach to education championed by Collin College. This is where interdisciplinary courses are integrated, allowing students the opportunity to delve more fully into a subject.

Citing one example, Dr. Israel says "You can combine political science, history, and psychology courses and call it 'Road to the White House.' Three professors teach it, you get nine credit hours, and you're covering all the aspects that go into running for president."

The benefit of having classrooms, faculty offices, and library resources under one roof become obvious. He explains, "Say a professor is teaching a class and a student doesn't understand the concept. The student can follow the professor to his or her office for additional help. If someone still has difficulty with the concept, the student

can come down to the library, do research, and work on it corroboratively with other students. It's a blizzard of learning going on here."

Another surprising use of space is a large room equipped with cameras and bench railings built to accommodate mock trials. That's because Collin College has made a name for itself by advancing to the American Mock Trial Association Championship Series for four straight years. Collin College is the only two-year institution to achieve this feat.

Collin College mock trial teams have beat teams from Baylor

University, The University of Texas, Texas A&M University, University of Houston, Tulane University, The University of Texas at Dallas and others.

But, again employing the interdisciplinary approach to learning, this room will also be used for speech and broadcasting classes, allowing professors to use the cameras to offer immediate critiques on posturing and presentation. Plus the room is large enough to accommodate groups for special integrated lectures and programs.

Looking ahead, Dr. Israel is keenly interested in Collin College becoming a hub for healthcare training.

He informs, "We are nationally

recognized for our nursing program. Our nursing students have a 98 percent pass rate on their licensure exams—the highest rate in Texas. We have a 100 percent pass rate in respiratory care, surgical technology, and dental hygiene.

"I believe we can become a world-class training facility for healthcare, so that's where we are going. We are going to become a center of excellence in healthcare, because that is what this community needs. Look at what has happened in Collin County," he says, reeling off the names of a dozen hospitals that have a presence in the region. "This is a healthcare hub for North Texas and even Oklahoma...like Houston is with M.D. Anderson. I want to become the training hub in healthcare for North Texas."

And his plans don't stop there. This month, when the Texas legislature convenes, Collin College is going to introduce legislation that would enable the college's healthcare program to

expand and become a baccalaureate degree, along with a couple of other programs. Technology is another area of interest for expansion.

Clearly, there is a lot of excitement about

Collin College's potential. That is why this library is about more than housing books and research materials. It is a statement. A declaration: Collin College is an exceptional college, one in which students, faculty, Dr. Israel, Collin College trustees, and the community can take great pride.

Collin College is writing its own history, and it is ready for the next chapter.

