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Jeffery Olin, Aramark food services director, and Eddie Garcia, executive chef, take a moment to enjoy the new lounge area. Artworks from the Metro Collection will soon be hung in the lounge area. *Photos by Ned Racine.*

Metro Café's Lounge Area Offers New Environment for Meetings, Conversation

By NED RACINE, Editor

(June 4, 2008) Tucked in the north corner of the Metro Café, a new café-style lounge area was created as a comfortable, restive oasis.



Danielle Boutier, director, Communications Services, and Jorge Pardo, director public arts & design, explore the new lounge area in the

The new lounge area, which opened June 3, was collaborative project between Building Services, Communication Services and Metro Art.

"We are incorporating café-style furniture to create a small lounge area attractive for more uses," said Danielle Boutier, director, Communications Services.

The furniture features club chairs, small tables and loveseats, creating an atmosphere similar to that of national coffee chains.

Jorge Pardo, director public arts & design, helped pick the furniture and the placement of the furniture.

north corner of the Metro Café. Phyllis Meng, General Services supervisor, also helped create the new space.

"I went there and looked at the space and looked at the environment and the finishes and the materials that existed

[there]," said Pardo, an architect and licensed interior designer.

Also working on the design, selection and procurement of the custom-built furniture was Phyllis Meng, General Services supervisor. Meng worked with Boutier and Pardo on placement of the furniture—appropriately titled the Transit Collection—within the newly vacated space.

Building Services installed the furniture the evening of June 3 and will paint the walls in the lounge area June 9. Artworks from the Metro Collection will soon be hung from the lounge walls.

The furniture was paid for from the revenues of Metro's Employee Activities contracts.

Boutier and Pardo wanted a place to attract Metro employees throughout the day by providing more opportunities for use and to give Metro Café more business.

"I've seen cafeterias in other companies and they usually have something like this," said Boutier. "Lots of people come into our building for a meeting—consultants and the public. If they arrive early, now they can sit in the lounge area and have a cup of coffee and work on their laptops."

"Rather than having a meeting in your office, maybe you could have a cup of coffee or soda and meet in the lounge," Boutier said. "Sometimes in a different environment you would have different types of thoughts and meetings."

Pardo started with a palette of 20 fabric possibilities Meng knew to be easy to clean and long wearing. Pardo chose a fabric incorporating what he called "a timeless grid" and reflecting the colors in the lounge area, including the terra cotta floor tiles.

"The wood has enough depth of color to sit well in that space," he explained. "If you look at the tiles and the flooring, [the fabric has] that soft brown ochre feel. I wanted to go back to the architecture of the space."

"The lounge area is refreshing," Meng added. "Building Services and the food service provider have been trying to make the cafeteria more like a restaurant experience. The lounge furniture will help."