

# Library as Social Space

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Back in [November 2012](#), [I gave an update on some of the changes taking place in the library](#). I outlined the work that a Library Space Allocation Committee had undertaken to interview students, conduct focus group meetings with students, visit other libraries, and research trends in academic library design. I and several library faculty and staff have attended workshops where the redesign of library and instructional spaces have been the sole or a primary focus.

The work is still underway. The new carpeting for the first floor is due to be installed between Spring semester and Summer A. Because of the carpet installation, the library will be closed to the public for that week.

Later in the summer, glass walls are due to be installed around our new Scholars' Lounge area, thereby providing a quiet study zone on the first floor.



Not everyone is happy, however. Earlier this week I received a statement of “concern” from one or more anonymous faculty that the “Library [is] becoming more of a social center for students rather than the emphasis continuing to be on research resources.”

The University is here for the students. And if students tell us they want a space where they can connect with their peers and study in groups, as well as conduct individual research, we are going to try our best to give them a variety of spaces to meet their varied needs.

The books are still here. The access to over a million electronic books, journals and databases are still here. Dedicated librarians and other library staff are still here to help people do whatever they need to do for their research and study. Special Collections where students can work with primary source materials are still here. Even the microfilm cabinets and the microfilm readers are still here – although they no longer take up half the space on the first floor of the library as they used to. But the first floor is definitely looking different.



And, according to an article published last week in the Crow's Nest, we seem to have gotten it right for at least some of the students: [Not Your Grandmother's Library](#). As the article says:

"Ricky Cherry, a junior majoring in marketing, comes to the library five days a week for about four hours. He said the library's ambiance is one of the reasons he stays on campus between classes, even though he only has a 12-minute commute.

"This is perfect, looking at the water, like you're at home on your own couch," Cherry said. "It's relaxing and doesn't make studying as big of a chore. It's nice, a place to get away or get some work done. This illustrates that they care, and that we have a voice. I feel that students must have recommended this."

Yes, Ricky, you are right. Students did recommend it. We listen and we care and we will keep listening and caring, no matter how much some people disapprove of how "social" our space is becoming.