

Pardon the Mess – Future Plans at the Library

Posted on [November 1, 2012](#) by [Carol Hixson](#)

<https://poynterdean.wordpress.com/2012/11/01/pardon-the-mess-future-plans-at-the-library/>

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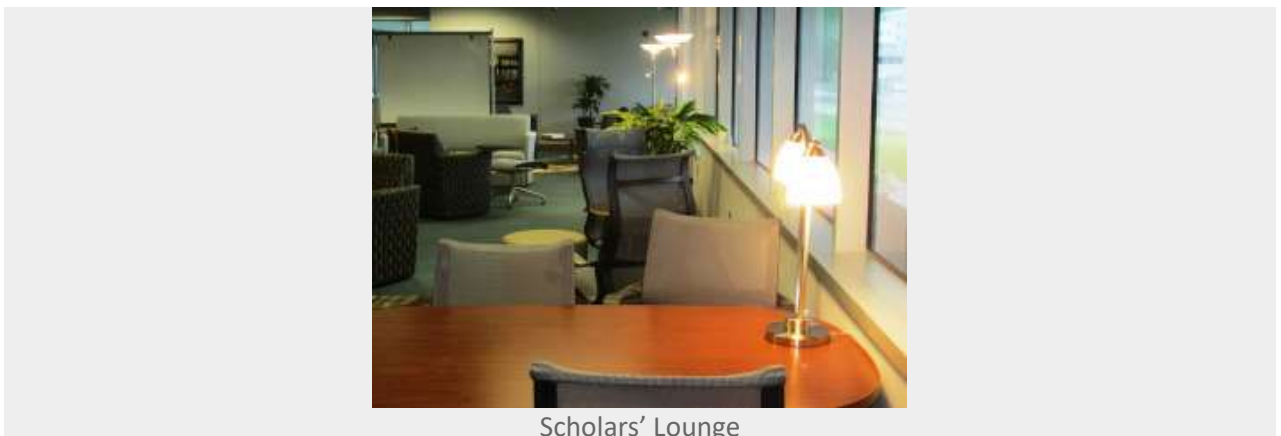
Yesterday I received a phone call from a student who was upset about the noise and the disruption in the library. Based on that call, we made some changes right away to reduce the amount of time that workers are in the library making noise. But it also made me realize that we needed to do a better job to let you know what's going on.

First, I apologize for the noise and disruption to date. We will do everything we can to minimize that as we move forward.

Anyone who has been in the library this semester knows that there are a lot of changes underway: new furniture, new technology, lots more open space – and a fair amount of noise and disruption along the way. What is probably not obvious is that we have a **plan** to move us forward incrementally to a new design that responds to what students have told us they want and need. Unfortunately, we have to rely on ourselves for planning and design and using Foundation funds set aside for the library, with occasional investments from the University that come available suddenly and typically must be spent in a very short timeframe when they do become available.

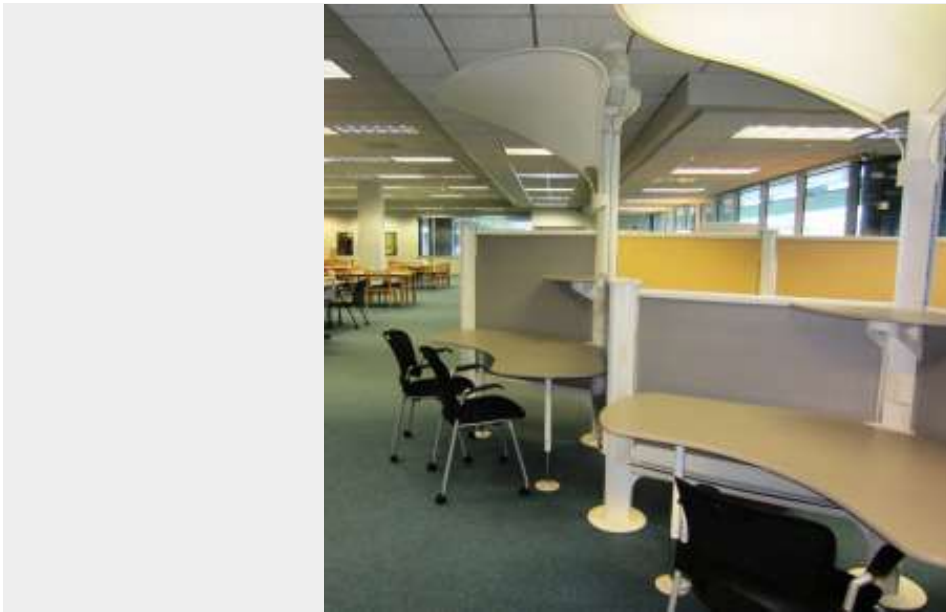
In the spring of 2011, I charged a Space Committee to look at the use of space in the Library, starting with the first floor. Every member of the committee is a full-time library employee who already has more than enough work to do to fill up every day: the committee work is an add-on to their regular jobs. The committee has consulted with libraries that have done major renovations, attended workshops, made site visits, carried out research on designing Library space, worked with furniture vendors to get free design ideas, and conducted surveys and focus group meetings with our students. We have been carrying out renovations incrementally because that is the only way we can do it without a big infusion of funds earmarked for renovation. The basic design principles we have been employing for the first floor, along with some of the steps we have taken to bring them to life, are enumerated below:

1. Free up as much floor space as possible, reducing the collections on the floor and creating more room for group and individual study (reference books, journals, maps, videos/DVDs, microforms have been extensively weeded to remove older, low-use items or those that are available electronically and we have moved most of the remainder to other areas of the Library)
2. Create some quiet zones on the first floor (Poynter Corner and new Scholars' Lounge area on the south wall facing the harbor)



Scholars' Lounge

3. Get furnishings that enable us to have more power outlets for laptops and other technology (Resolve Workstations pull power down from the ceiling or from walls and provide power for 8-10 people to work independently; Collaboration Stations provide shared workspace for 4-6 people to plug in and work individually or as a group)



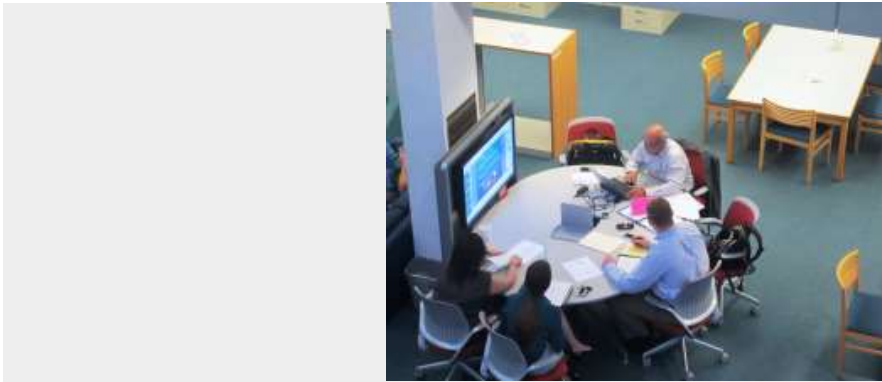
Resolve workstation with power for laptops

4. Increase flexibility by acquiring furnishings that are movable and that support the on-the-fly creation of quiet and group study spaces (movable lounge chairs and other chairs on wheels, white boards on wheels, etc., Resolve Workstations with movable walls)
5. Create zones with different styles to appeal to a variety of student interests and preferences (worked with Herman Miller to select variety of furnishings to support range of activities)
6. Maintain a physical presence of books because students indicate that their proximity helps them get in the mood for studying (Leisure Reading collections will remain on first floor)
7. Build on the aesthetics of the building and the location with decorative touches, i.e. with student artwork, plants, throw rugs, carpeting, painting, etc. (Building the collection of professionally framed posters from the graphic design classes, picking out and putting together/installing lamps, throw rugs, throw pillows, plants, and more)



Posters from graphic design students

8. Bring in more technology (Collaboration Stations, Resolve Workstations)



Students using one of the Collaboration Stations

9. Create more space for exhibits (Repainted and repurposed portable display units from the old Dali Museum)
10. Reduce the number of discrete service points (Have eliminated separate reference desk and instead have librarians on call and utilize a Resolve Workstation for consultation)

What's next?

1. The University decided to grant our request for new carpeting on the first floor. This decision was made by University Administration in August.
 - A. We are working with Campus Facilities to ensure that the carpet installation is undertaken after finals are over – December 15 and before next semester's classes start January 7.
 - B. So that everything is ready for the carpet installers, we have had to remove some materials and shelving from the first floor. This has taken longer and has been noisier than expected. We have now arranged for the remaining breakdown of shelving to be done between 7 a.m. and 10 a.m.
2. The area by the south wall facing the harbor that we are calling the Scholars' Lounge was designed to provide a quiet study area on the first floor with a more scholarly ambiance. Transparent glass walls are due to be installed to provide soundproofing and also increase the number of electrical outlets by bringing power down from the ceiling into the walls. When this project is approved, we will work with the vendor to ensure that the bulk of the installation occurs when the library is closed or when classes are not in session.
3. We have plans to purchase more furnishings and are seeking student input to help us make good selections. Over the next few weeks, you may be approached by student workers or library staff to ask your opinion. We will get as much new furniture and technology as we can afford, using every funding source that we have available to us. To date, funds have come from USF Foundation funds earmarked for the library and student technology fee money.
4. We have requested additional computer workstations to be installed on the first floor, moving some computers from another underutilized lab on campus. Rather than add them onto the existing horseshoe configuration, we would like to have them installed in small pods, such as around columns. The design we are proposing is based on what we saw during a visit to the library at the University of Central Florida (see below). We hope this will come to pass and will keep you informed as soon as we know more.



Computer workstations at UCF

5. Some of you may remember our failed attempt to provide coffee in the library. The machine that had been installed was unreliable, too costly, and people were not satisfied with the product. We have been looking into alternative approaches. For the time being, however, we have to wait for other projects to be completed before we can push forward on this one.
6. Another long-term project on our wish list is to find a way to keep the library open longer hours. We are looking into ways to make some structural changes that would enable us to keep the first floor of the library open 24/5 the way that the USF Tampa Library is. However, we don't have access to renovation funds that USF Tampa made available to the library there so we will have to secure funding from other sources and move forward more slowly.

Our goal is to create a more flexible, vibrant, connected space for all of our students based on what students themselves have told us they want. Please give us your input, either when you are asked for it or whenever something occurs to you. This library and everyone in it is here first and foremost to help the students of this university succeed.