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## A Tale of Two Libraries Slated to Be Closed

Pat Sulouff  
*University of Rochester*

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# A Tale of Two Libraries Slated to Be Closed



**PHYSICS-OPTICS-ASTRONOMY LIBRARY**

**UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER**

**PRESENTED BY**

**PAT SULOUFF**

**OCTOBER 25, 2010**

**UPSTATE NY SCIENCE LIBRARIANS ANNUAL MEETING**



# A Typical Evening in POA







**From the Bell  
Tower** Oct. 22, 2009

Steven Bell, Associate  
University Librarian,  
Temple University

- “Specialized science libraries at research universities seem particularly vulnerable with their collections going primarily digital and their user communities having far less need to visit the library for print materials, they are obvious targets for consolidation or integration into the main campus library.”

# Why?

- Space is at a premium on our campus.
- Space needed for engineering computer classroom
- Not a decision of the library administration to close POA
- The library is a tenant of The College and has no control over the space

- “We must be able to explain *not* why the POA is a good library but why its existence is incredibly beneficial to physics students of all types.”

Society of Physics Students

- “Remember: They aren’t just removing a library, they are displacing a *community*.”

Facebook comment by student

- “POA is the academic home away from home for our undergraduates working out homeworks together in study areas or discussing physics at the whiteboards”

Faculty member



*Having one place where everyone goes to work on projects, study, drink coffee, tutor, teach, and learn creates opportunities for inter-class and inter-major interactions that couldn't happen otherwise. It builds a community of diverse people that share a common interest.*

*Senior*

Libraries are more than just the books in them. They are places for people to channel certain types of discourse and reflection, and the more diversified such intellectual landscapes are, the more vibrant the intellectual life of the University will be.

*Junior*

*The close proximity of the reserve book collection to the group study area, the centrality of its location, its facilitation of student/grad-student/professor interactions, and to remain competitive with other institutions are just a few of the reasons. But the real reason the room should not be closed is the intense focused scholarship that occurs there...It is that room which, like a lens, focuses intense academic activity into heightened student performance and lasting activity.*

*Recent alumnus*

POA IS SAVED!

THANK YOU ALL FOR  
HELPING US KEEP THIS  
GREAT PLACE!!

VIVA  
LA  
EVOLUCION  
*Si Si Fantastico!!*



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PRECISION

SAV  
POA LI

POA Library



## What did we do?



- We held an hour-long design workshop with 24 undergraduates and one grad student.
- Workshop conducted by Dr. Nancy Foster, our library's anthropologist.
- Each student given poster paper and markers to redesign POA and a short questionnaire to complete.

Book display / display great  
display books the way present  
at the back of the room + these  
display area + a book display  
but any physical items might  
be a bit too far.

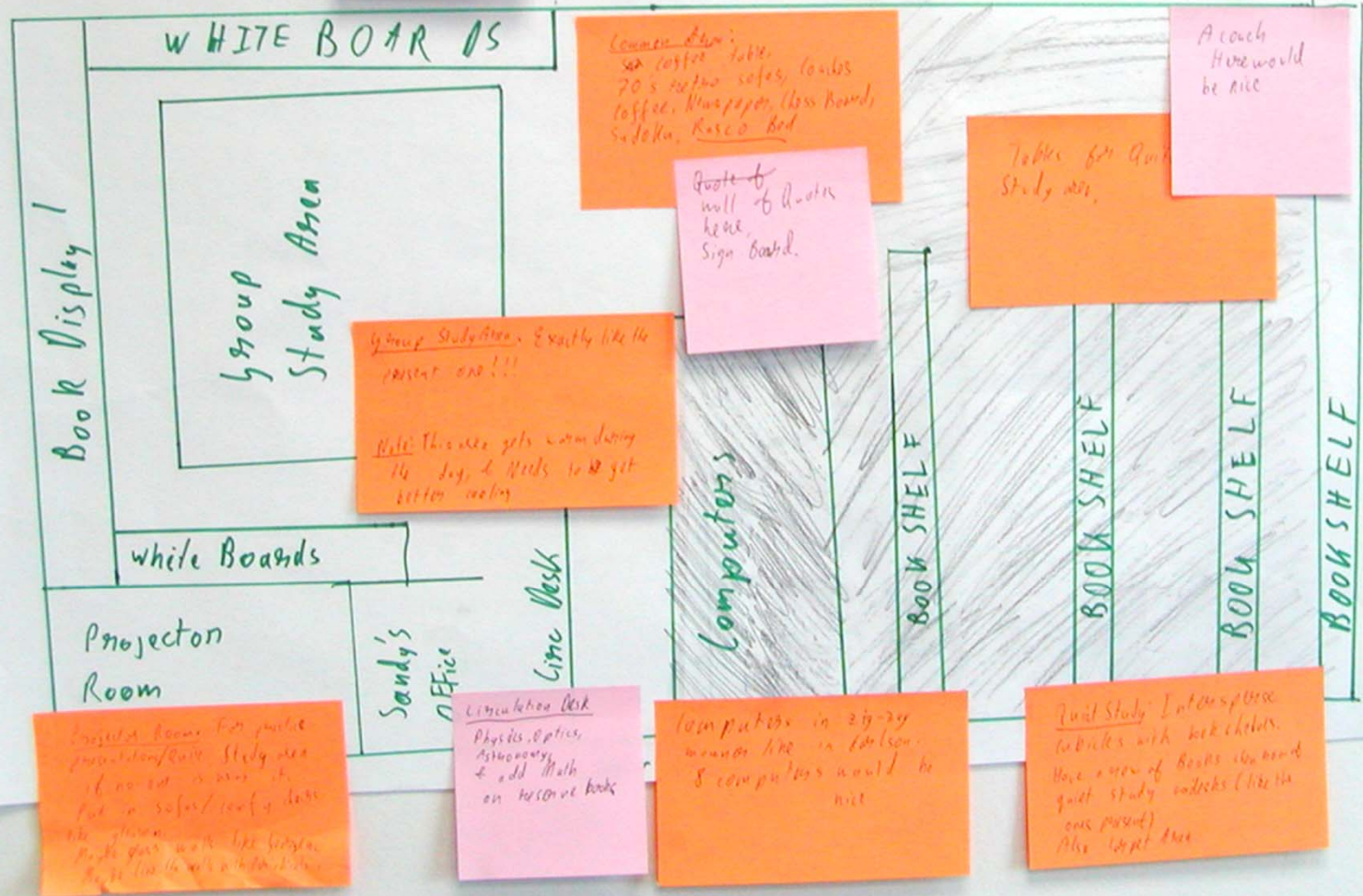
Note get  
Rid of  
Journals

Signifies  
computer

Heating &  
cooling are general  
Issues to be noted

NOT TO  
Scale

SMOONIM



Projector Room for public  
presentation/quiz. Study area  
if no one is using it.  
Put in sofas/comfortable  
the chairs.  
Maybe give walls like screens.  
Maybe for the wall with a table.

Circulation Desk  
Physics, Optics,  
Astronomy,  
& add Math  
on reserve books

Computers in zig-zag  
manner like in labson.  
8 computers would be  
nice

Quiet Study: Intersperse  
tubicles with bookshelves.  
Have a row of books (around  
quiet study) indexes (like in  
our present)  
Also laptop area

Common Area:  
small coffee table,  
70's style sofas, tables  
coffee, Newspaper, Glass Board,  
Sofa table, Rasco Bed

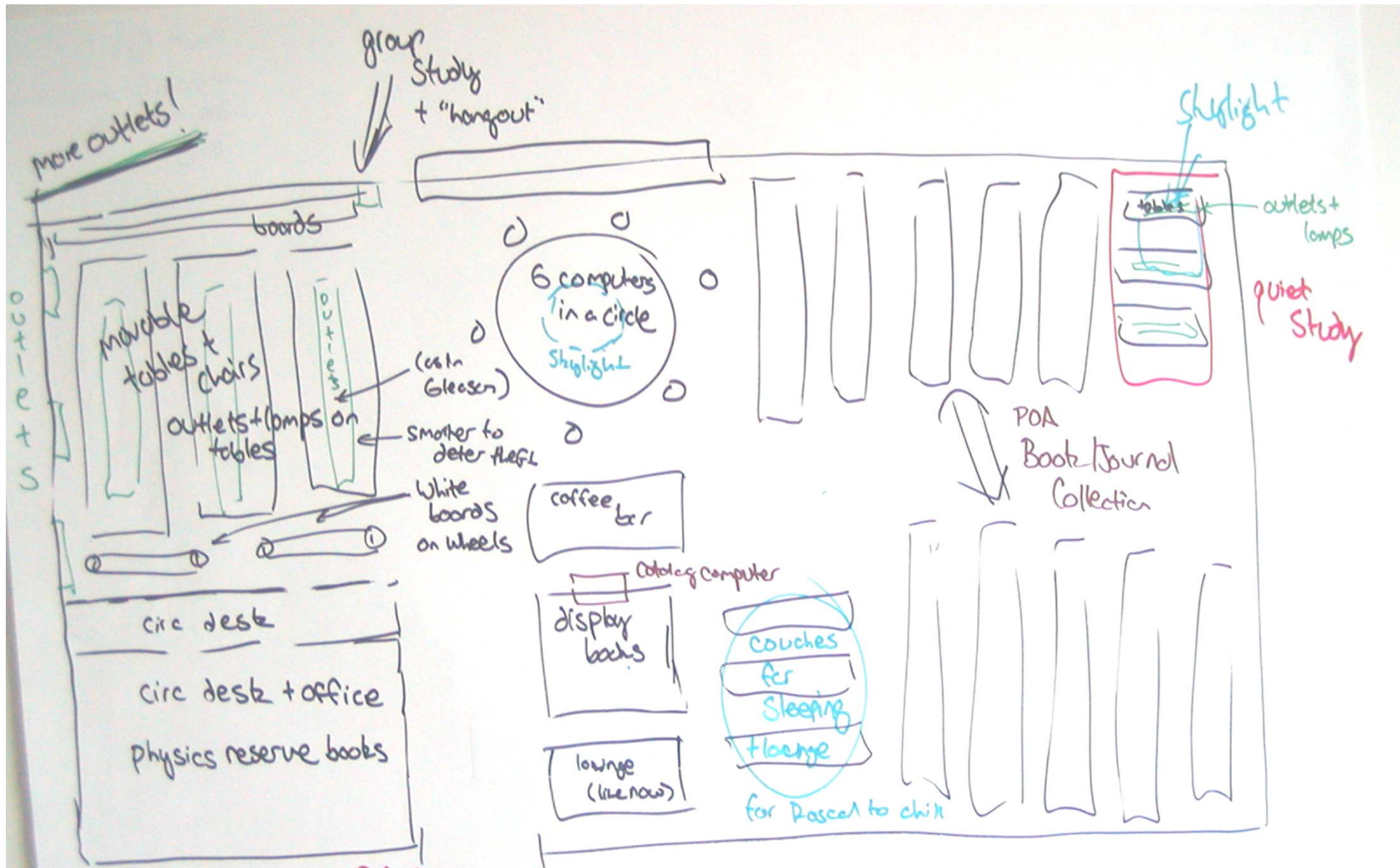
Footnote  
wall of quotes  
here,  
Sign Board.

Group Study Area, Exactly like the  
present one!!!

Note: This area gets warm during  
the day, & needs to get  
better cooling

Tables for quiet  
study area.

A couch  
Here would  
be nice



**CARD ACCESS** for registered undergraduate + graduate students

"not to scale"

# What do the students want?



- **More computers**
- **Service desk**
- **Tables for group work**
- **Whiteboards/smartboards/blackboards**
- **Books on shelves/stacks**
- **Lounge (comfortable chairs around tables)**
- **Quiet areas/individual study desks/cubicles**
- **Coffee/food**
- **Comfort/aesthetics (chairs, paint, lighting, balcony)**
- **Reduce books or shelves/reduce or eliminate journals**

# What do they need to do?



- **Be alone**
- **Get books**
- **Print**
- **Aspire/inspire**
- **Relax/socialize**
- **Compute**
- **Teach/learn/study/write**
- **Eat/drink coffee**
- **Feel proud/attached**
- **Work in groups**

# Questionnaire



1. When were you last in POA?  
What did you do?  
How long did you stay?
2. What about the time before that?  
What did you do?  
How long did you stay?
3. When did you last use another UR library?  
Which one?  
What did you do?
4. When was the last time you borrowed a textbook from POA or Carlson?
5. When was the last time you took a non-textbook or bound journal from the shelf in POA?  
What was it?
6. When was the last time you took a non-textbook or bound journal from the shelf in Carlson or Rush Rhees?  
What was it?
7. When was the last time you consulted a non-textbook or article that you got via a computer?  
Did you print it out or read it on screen?  
Where were you when you consulted it?  
What time was it?



# User Behavior



- 23 of 25 students had been in POA within past 24 hrs, and before that, within the previous 2 days.
- Average stay: 3 1/2-4 1/2 hrs
- 24 had been in another library on campus within the past week or so
- Attendees borrowed a textbook from POA or Carlson, on average, about a month before the workshop
- They borrowed a non-textbook, on average, about 3 months prior to the workshop
- 9 had accessed online literature the day of the workshop, 7 reading on the screen and 2 printing the item
- Another 8 had read online literature within the prior week, 7 of them reading it on the screen.
- Of the 20 who told us what time they read online literature, 5 did it between midnight – 6am, 8 between 10am-4pm and the remaining 7 between 5pm-9pm.

# We are changing!



- Sent many journals to the annex so that we can remove a significant amount of shelving
  - To make room for collaborative working spaces
  - Quiet study areas
  - More computers
  - More open and airy space

