Environmental and Organizational Context

The library's role in supporting the learning environment required a rethinking of the second floor of the Robert E. Kennedy Library. Prior to the project, the second floor was the domain of the Reserve Desk and study carrels. In addition, the floor contained open computing labs. Adjacent to the desk there was a large, bright area with many windows. Prior to the project, the need for a more collaborative area was clear. Faculty were clear that a modern library needed to be an active place that would support student needs and learning.

Approaches to Revitalization

In 2007 a task force was convened by Cal Poly’s Provost to envision The Future of the Library. One of the top recommendations of this report was that the Kennedy Library should foster the concept of “the Science Cafe” trend, our project is unique in its location within the university library, and in its broad, interdisciplinary interactions. Science Cafe is an international phenomenon, taking place in coffee shops, wine bars, libraries, and even coffeehouses around the world.

The newly reconfigured second floor is arranged around Cal Poly’s “learn-by-doing” philosophy. By being creative in developing campus collaborative relationships, and by using current technologies for educational outreach and exhibitions in the library, our project is currently well-placed to become a central collaborative space on campus.

The 2nd floor café lounge (adjacent to the Julian’s Cafe trend, our project is unique in its location within the university library, and in its broad, interdisciplinary interactions. Science Cafe is an international phenomenon, taking place in coffee shops, wine bars, libraries, and even coffeehouses around the world.

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