

# Ongoing Redesign of Library Spaces at FAU

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<https://faulibrarydean.wordpress.com/2017/04/30/ongoing-redesign-of-library-spaces-at-fau/>

About once a week, it seems that I am approached by various people across the University asking if the libraries have space we can permanently – or temporarily – give up for various offices or functions. These requests have included Math Lab, tutors, office spaces for different individuals, meeting spaces for faculty without a permanent home, space for artwork, special exhibitions, etc.

The FAU Libraries review all requests for space in light of the following:

- The Libraries' purpose is to serve all students and all academic departments.
- Our libraries are the only academic spaces that are available for all students.
- The Libraries are heavily used and all of our open study spaces and group study spaces are in high demand and available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- We are consolidating staff offices so that we can turn previous staff office spaces into group study rooms or other shared spaces to support research and collaborative work.
- We are reducing the footprint of physical collections so that we can accommodate more seating and study spaces.
- We are working to redesign spaces to open up more student spaces and multi-purpose presentation spaces to showcase faculty and student work.
- While all of our work is incremental due to the need to pull together funding, we are working closely with [Design and Construction Services](#) to develop a strategic space plan so that our incremental changes all fit within an overarching plan.

The FAU Libraries [Space Allocation Committee](#) has been working to redesign the spaces in our libraries, focusing its initial efforts on the Wimberly Library in Boca Raton. The Wimberly Library is the third oldest building on the Boca Raton campus and is in need of upgrades of all kinds – from the air conditioning, to the flooring, to the study spaces, to the access to power, to the integration of technology, to the acquisition of new furnishings, to the use of FAU colors and branding. Guiding principles are to create more spaces for individual and group study, design spaces that are flexible, safe, and that can be redesigned on-the-fly by users, and that support not just research but also the creation of new scholarship and creative activity. The number one guiding principle behind the use of all space in the Libraries is “Students first.”

A major project underway in 2016/2017 has been to open up the fifth floor of the Wimberly Library. The fifth floor has for many years been locked down, reserved for special collections, staff work areas, and limited public events and exhibits. With the support of FAU President John Kelly, the Libraries received \$250,000 in FY2016/2017 to “Redesign the 5th floor of the Wimberly Library to expand public space and secure collections and staff work spaces in order to open it to students and the public all hours that the Library is open. The 5th floor is the only space sufficiently large and open to provide a venue for events and presentations. With this redesign, the Library could host a wider array of student, faculty, and community presentations, as well as provide much-needed open study space when not in use for events and presentations. This redesign would support all levels of research and all Pillars and Platforms, but especially Community Engagement and Leadership, Innovation and Entrepreneurship.”

The Libraries have been working closely all year with the University's [Design and Construction Services](#) to reduce the size of collections, open up more floor space, bring in FAU branding and design elements, make more effective use of staff work areas, and make the space multi-purpose to support a variety of functions. Much preliminary work has been done. To ensure greater flexibility, one of the basic needs was to provide wider and more flexible access to electrical power – a challenge in older buildings. New flooring is being installed this week that distributes electrical power throughout the main seating area. When the flooring is complete, the new furniture that is designed to be easily moved can be brought in. We are expecting a soft opening during the summer and a grand opening and celebration in the fall semester of 2017.

We are sure that students will love the extra space – 100 new study spaces with much improved access to power, with much more comfortable and attractive seating, and with far greater flexibility. We are sure that students and faculty will enjoy and take advantage of new space for presentations to showcase the intellectual life of FAU. Stay tuned for news of the 5th-floor opening in the Wimberly Library and watch for other redesign projects in Wimberly and elsewhere as we move forward.