



**Title of the Work: The Active Learning Classroom Building:  
A Not-So-Virtual Tour**

**Type of Work: Creative Scholarship**

**Interior Design Educator's Council South Regional Conference**

**10/10/2019**

**Abstract**

Designing any building is a challenge. Designing a modern active learning classroom building attached to, and then pushing into, an existing historical library building is even more of a challenge. The author of this presentation worked for six years as an interior designer in the University's Facilities Management Division, and was the University designer on the project team for the design of the active learning classroom building. The subject of this creative scholarship presentation is the building and its interior design – design as interior. In speaking to the conference theme – unpacking systems – the presentation will use available technology and resources to take the audience on a not-so-virtual tour of the space. The broader impact of this approach is to ask participants to unpack how we change our perception of three-dimensional design when we consume it only through two-dimensional media and staged architectural photographs. And, further, how we change design education by only teaching through these limited, 2D media.

The project scope for this \$35 million new building + renovation included adding or renovating 69,000 square feet of building space, 26 state-of-the-art active learning classrooms, two large active learning lecture halls, and dozens of multipurpose group study rooms and informal learning spaces. The new active learning classroom building pushed into the existing library, providing a seamless transition from class to learning commons and learning resources.

Design challenges that the presentation will unpack include: how to make the classrooms easily operable for faculty new to active learning and also engaging for students; how to make the classrooms easily, safely, and appropriately accessible 24 hours a day/five days a week to align with the existing library hours; how to foster both impromptu and pre-planned informal collaborative learning; how to incorporate the more modern, clean-lined aesthetic that campus new construction is using while attaching to the front of, and gutting tens of thousands of square feet of, an existing and more traditionally styled structure?

The author will present the content as a museum-style docent-led "tour" of the building, with 360 degree views throughout. At predetermined stops, physical signage created especially for the tour will show imagery such as construction photographs, palette selection process work, and building plans and sketches – two-dimensional methods of communication that have resulted in three-dimensional space. The participants in the audience will receive a coordinating pamphlet to accompany their tour, expounding on details of interest and providing sources for further study. The experiential nature of this creative presentation will be developed in coordination with the conference hosts to ensure access to, and engagement with, as many members of the audience as possible. It is the author's intent to spark discussion, challenge assumptions, and unpack the traditional conference experience through truly immersive creative work.