

DiSC: Developing A Digital Scholarship Commons

Final Report on a Planning Grant
from the
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

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CNI Spring 2011
San Diego, CA

Vision

*an experimental trans-disciplinary laboratory where we evolve
multiple facets of a sustainable eResearch commons
for the humanities and beyond*

- Enable new forms of exploration, creation, authorship, & scholarly communication
 - Explore the research library's role as a point of engagement between scholars and resources
- Facets include:
 - Organizational structures, workforce expertise, collaborative spaces, enabling technologies, funding models...

Goal: Develop a path from ground zero through the

Background

Method

- Exploratory planning grant as a precursor to full proposal
- Seed campus dialog
- Investigate existing models via discussions and site visits
- Consider actual and potential role of the Library in digital scholarship
- Sought Foundation support to help prioritize DiSC at upper levels of University administration

Goals of the DiSC

- To be ***of the library***, not just “in” the library
 - Move away from the vertical-market-segment approach of other institutions
 - Encourage trans-disciplinary conversations, opportunities, solutions
 - Explore evolving structural role of research libraries in the domain of digital scholarship
- Model for sustainability
 - Determine space needs, staffing levels, tools and technology to support vision
 - Develop realistic on-going cost models for a DiSC
 - Examine alternative methods for addressing continuity / sustainability of digital projects and content

Advisory Board

- Membership
 - Richard Furuta, Texas A&M
 - Geneva Henry, Rice University
 - Laurie Patton, Emory University & Director Faculty Development & Excellence
 - Stephen Ramsay, U Nebraska-Lincoln
 - Jeffrey Schnapp, Stanford University
- Purpose
 - Unite varied perspectives into a richer implementation of DiSC than any single vision might produce.
 - Take advantage of their operational experience, particularly with regard to Digital Humanities project inception, development, and deployment
- Activities
 - Virtual and on-campus meetings
 - Discussion Panels on Digital Scholarship (open to all)

Certificate Program

Overview: Certificate in Digital Scholarship and New Media

- Partnership between ILA, Laney Graduate School and Library
- <http://web.library.emory.edu/innovations/ila/certificate-program>
- http://ila.emory.edu/home/assets/documents/dsms_short_description.pdf

■ History

- Two years in development, from 2008 through 2010
- Formal endorsement by Board of Trustees in Spring 2010

■ Current status / enrollment

- Accepted first class in Fall 2010 (academic year 2011)
 - 14 Students enrolled Fall 2010 initial seminar
- ❖ <http://ila.emory.edu/home/graduate/index.html>

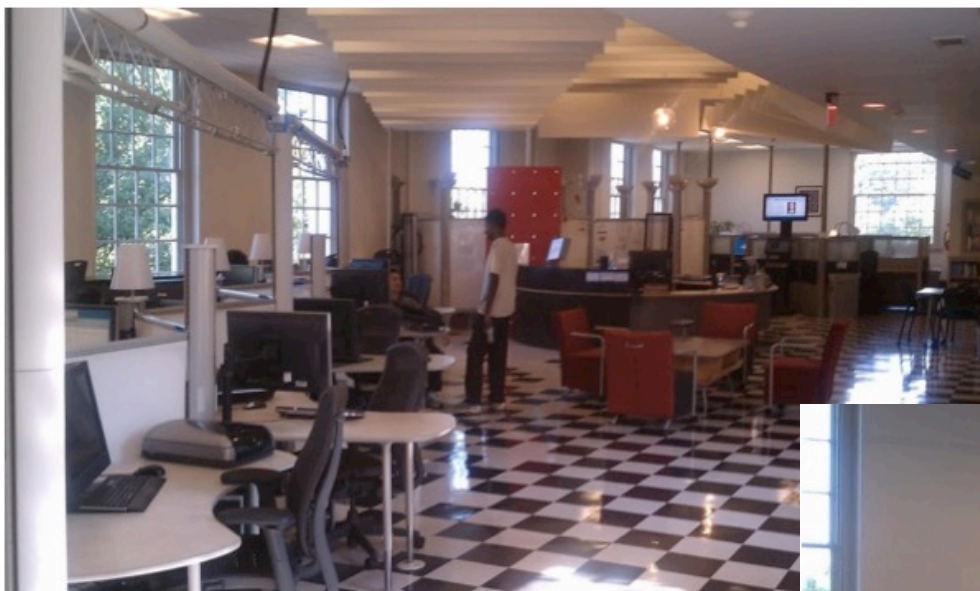
DiSC's Sponsored Internships

- Give technology-oriented research a kick-start by providing skilled digital scholarship support and a funded position within the Library
- Fellowships paid by University, grants, and endowments
- Grad students (specifically PhD-level) apply, interview
- Competitive award

Site Visits: CHNM



Site Visits: UVA Scholar's Lab



Site Visits: CDRH at U Nebraska



Site Visits: VSI at Duke U

- Center built within Smith Warehouse 2007-2009
- Mellon also helped fund Fellowships, Faculty support for Duke's initiative



Image of VSI under construction from:
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vszabo/>



Image of Immersive Visual Environment from:
<http://ftp.ee.duke.edu/news/?id=979>

Site Visits: MITH at U Maryland



Image from

<http://grandtextauto.org/2006/09/>

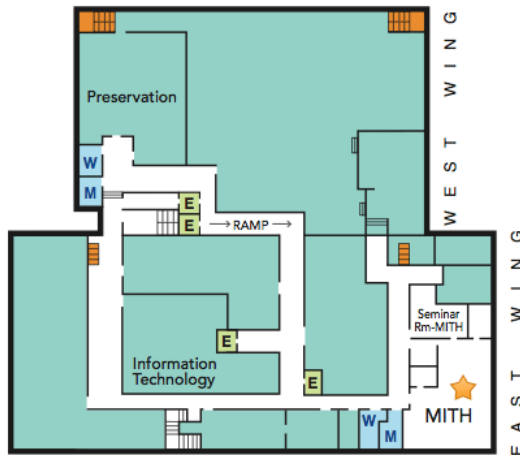


Image from

<http://mith.umd.edu/about/directions/>

- College Park Campus
- Within McKeldrin Library

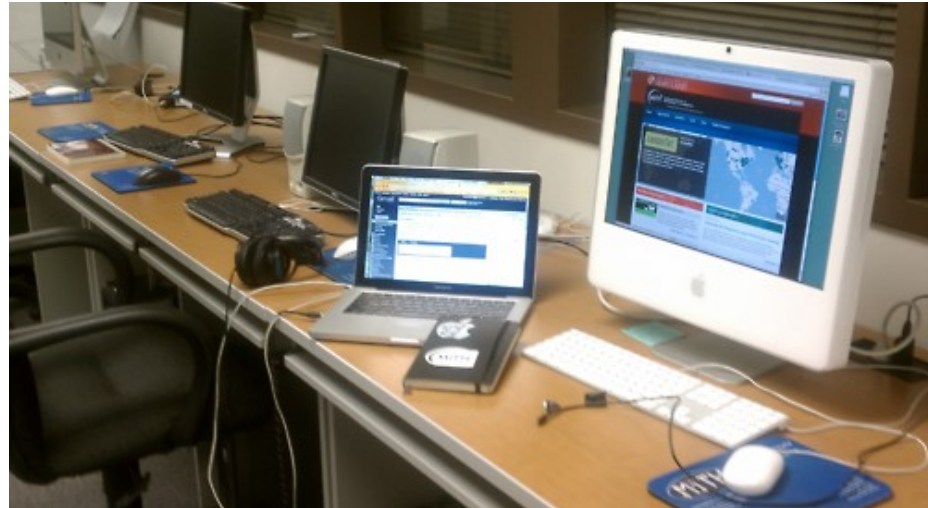


Image from

<http://aviewfromyourdesk.tumblr.com/>

3 Types of Challenges

1. People Challenges

- External Board member meeting coordination
- Staff retention and replacement
- Post-Doctoral candidate identification & hire

2. Infrastructure Challenges

- Physical space!
- Multiple technologies (lack of common “tech stack”)
 - ❖ Tension between leading-edge creativity & long-term sustainability
- Sustaining digital scholarship after project completion

3 Types of Challenges

3. Process Challenges

- Project management
- Source code and related production tools
- Transparency for project status and resource allocation

Plans & Goals for DiSC

- **Build Collaborative Environment**
 - Flexible spaces for range of user numbers
 - State of the art computing, display, interactive equipment

- **Build Collaborative Relationships**
 - Encourage transdisciplinary scholarship
 - Co-located projects = opportunities for new partnerships

Plans & Goals for DiSC

- **Explore Possibilities**

- Support variety of tools, methods, ideas
- Provide in-house technical support to assist digital scholarship ideas

- **Explore Sustainability**

- Evaluate solutions for maintaining, sustaining, & preserving leading-edge digital scholarship

Building Collaborative Environments

- Emory Library's Collaborative Work Spaces
 - Group Study rooms, esp. most recent renovations on 6 & 7
 - Learning Commons and SmartBoard in the Business Library
- Exploring where we can go
 - Collaborative design process with architects
 - Look at the concept drawings from Daly
 - (Contrast with other sites such as MITH or CHNM)
- Library as ecumenical space
 - Discipline-neutral environment
 - Broad swath of interests, people, interactive opportunities

Existing Library Group Study Spaces



Original Circ Desk Area - (3rd Floor)



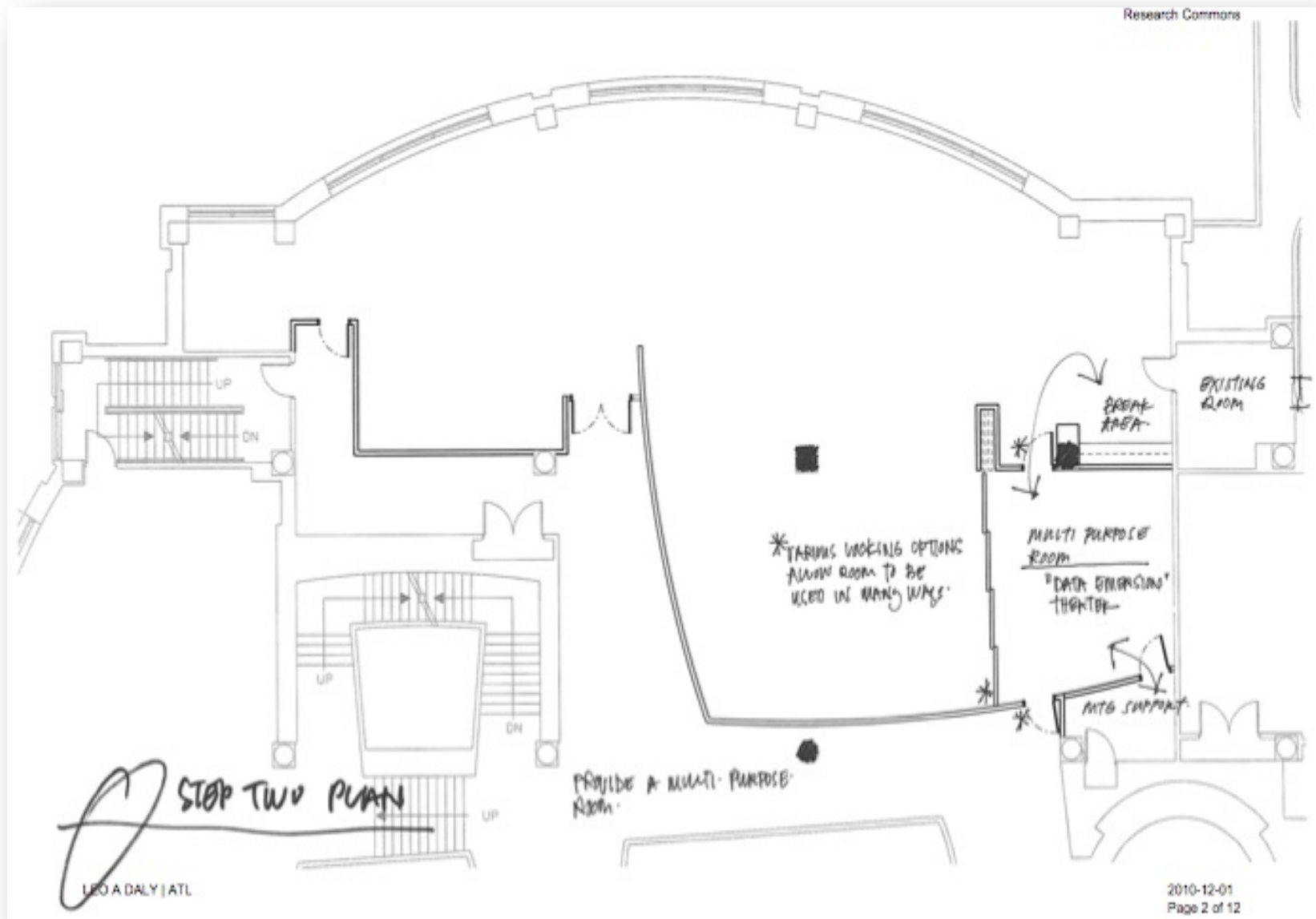
Initial Demo of Space



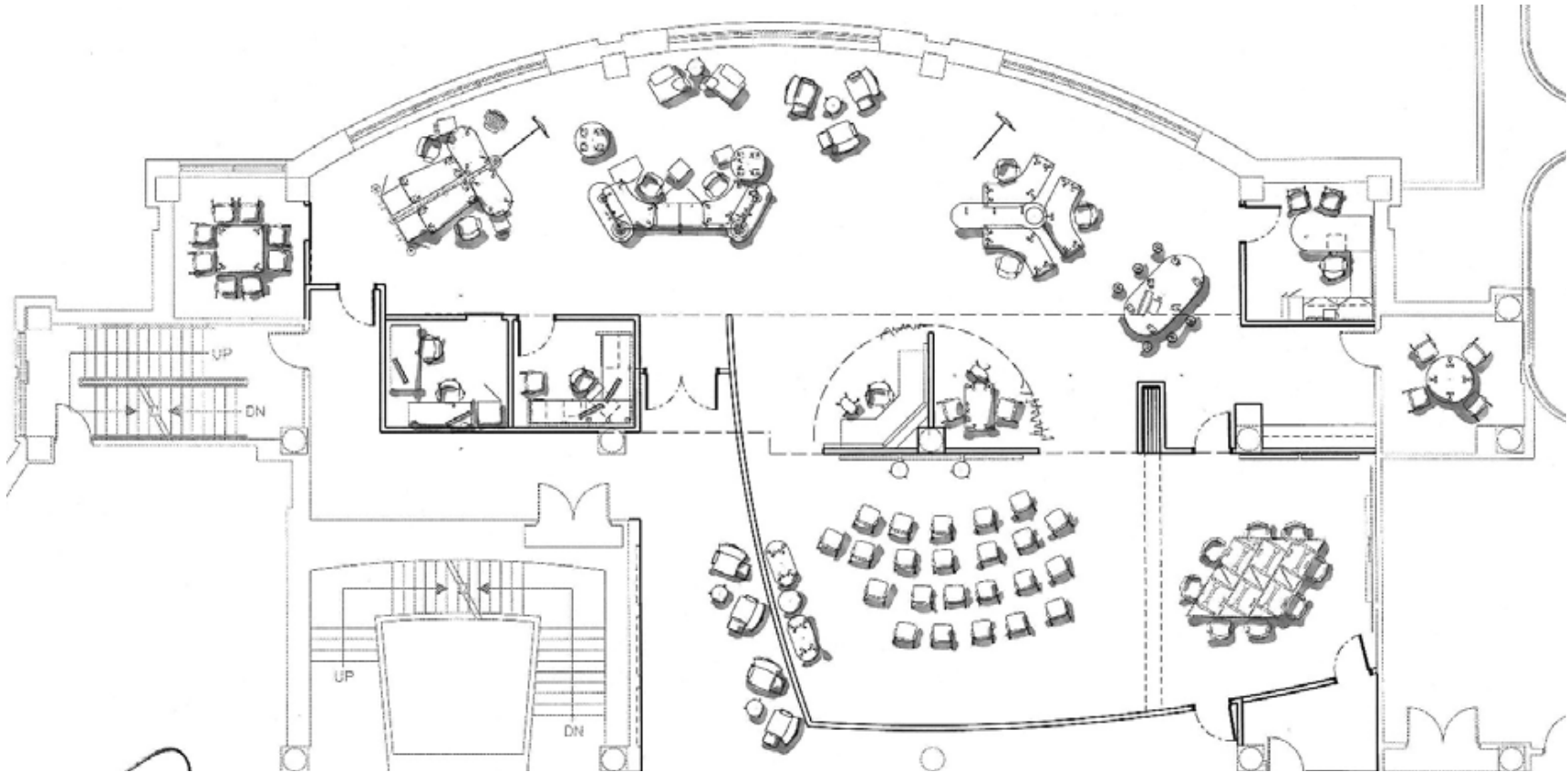
View of Proposed DiSC Space



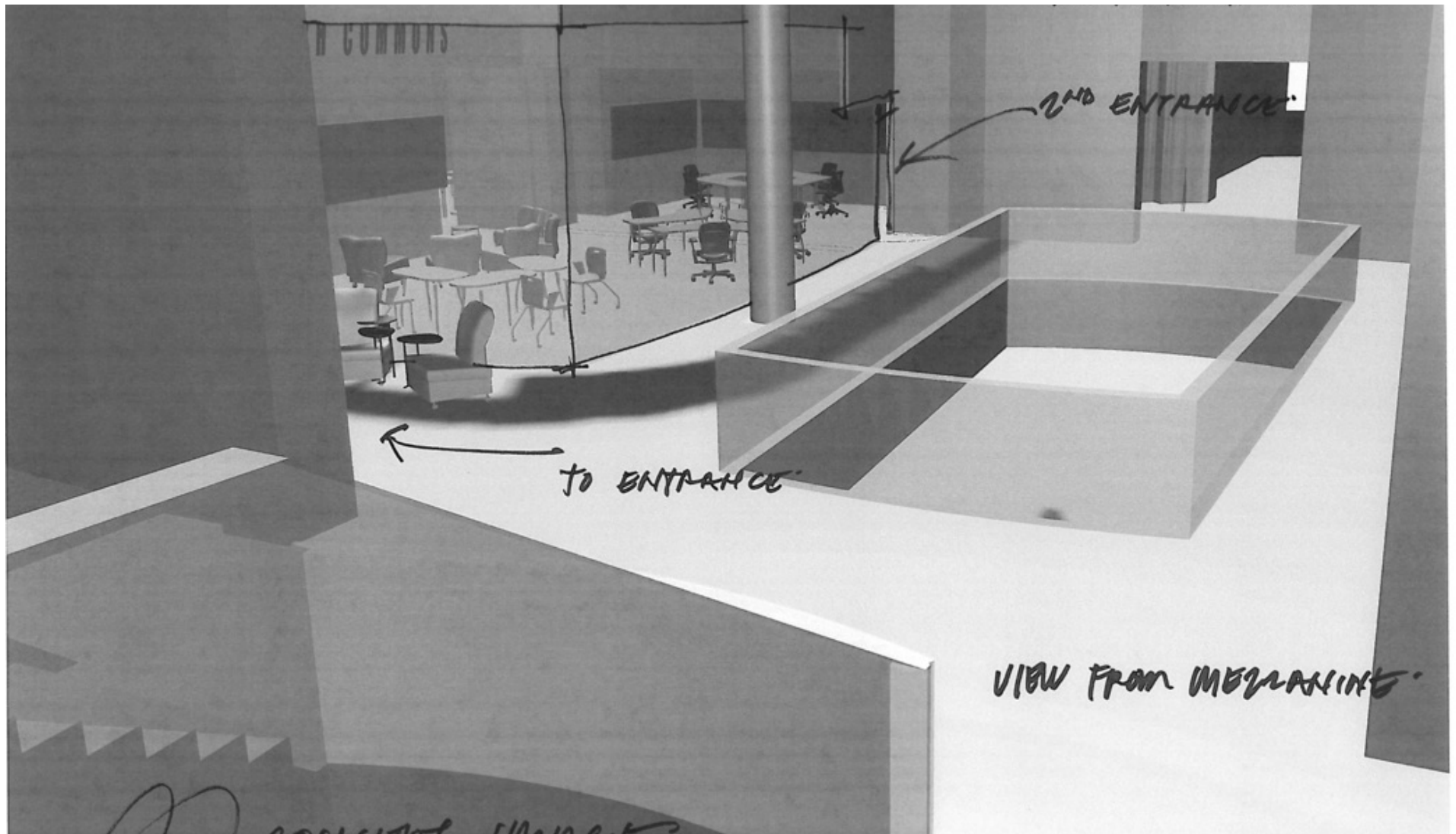
Defining the Site



Architectural Concept Drawing



Research Commons – Library Level 3



Concept View: Mezzanine



Concept View



Concept View: Park Land

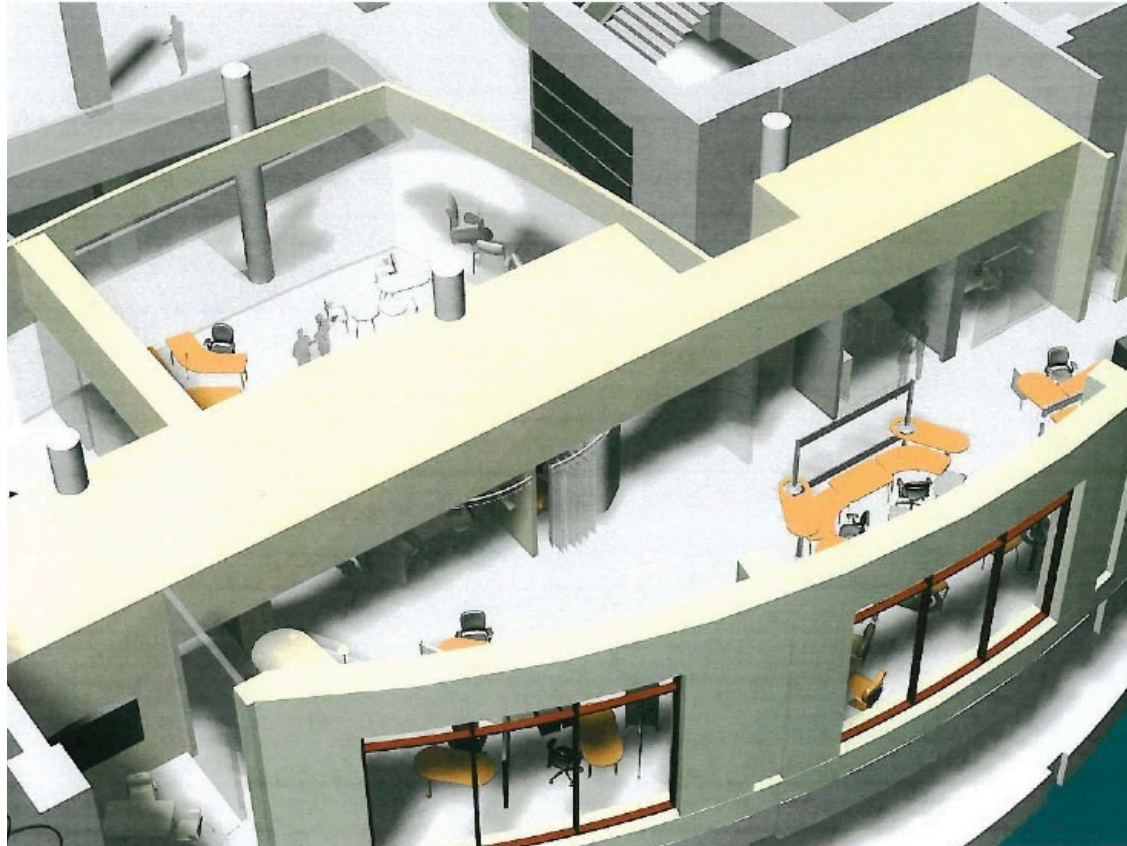


Concept View: Mixed Use



Current Status – Emory's Research Commons

- Two year DiSC proposal
 - funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
 - Staffing, technology support, & project stipends
 - “Anchor Tenant” of Research Commons space
- Provost-funded Research Commons / Digital Humanities Director position
 - seed funding for two years – Spring / Summer 2011
 - Collaborative oversight of DiSC & other eResearch initiatives



Q & A

Concept drawings by Leo A Daly Architects.