The library began a multiphase project to refresh the first floor and improve the overall environment for patrons. A major renovation was previously completed on the library’s second floor in 2011. Consequently, there was a lack of design cohesiveness between floors.

The project team consisted of faculty from the Access Services and the Research/Instruction divisions. Initial discussions around redesigning computer workstations for functionality and privacy eventually morphed into a more involved library endeavor encompassing projects on both levels of the library. The team met with the UMMC Planning, Construction and Design Department, Paint Department and furniture vendors to determine available options.

A new paint color scheme was selected, including dark accent walls for an art gallery feel. The library’s substantial art collection was given new life by changing the location of many pieces. Furniture and shelving were rearranged to create open spaces and uncluttered sightlines. Dated signage was redesigned. Some patron seating was reupholstered to coordinate with the new color scheme. Custom workstations and task chairs were purchased to create more private and comfortable workspaces for users.

The first phase of the project was completed in February 2020 just before the coronavirus pandemic greatly impacted the campus. Changes to our recently improved furniture placement were required to comply with social distancing guidelines and reduce patron capacity. The second phase of the project is proceeding with revisions. There are aspects of this project that any type of library, with any budget or staffing level could replicate.