Graduate and undergraduate students have a wide variety of study and social space needs, which also change over time. As the library is one of many campus locations where students may congregate, academic librarians must work to reinvent the study and social spaces within their libraries to continue to attract students and to be considered contributors to student success. Considerations must be made for the development of learning commons, individual study spaces, group/collaborative spaces, and/or social spaces. For a successful design project, it is critical for librarians to be able to work with architects and interior designers.

Developing new spaces is not enough; they must be designed with student engagement in mind, one of the major contributors to college student success and retention. Two
important dimensions of engagement are academic engagement and social engagement. Students who have higher levels of academic and social engagement are more likely to be successful. Library spaces must be designed to support both students’ academic and social engagement. Therefore, research is needed to investigate the perceived link between library spaces and student engagement. Being able to demonstrate the correlation between library use and student engagement will guide future library design and should lead to increased funding for library renovations. Importantly, it should bring renewed acknowledgement of the value of libraries in relationship to student success and retention.

In this session the presenter will discuss the essential elements that must be considered when assessing and redesigning library spaces. This will include a discussion of design elements that could contribute to student engagement and success. Differences between graduate and undergraduate students’ use of the library will also be described. The presentation will conclude by describing a study of library space and student engagement that is currently being undertaken by the presenter. Following this session, attendees will understand the importance of considering student engagement when designing library spaces and will be able to identify critical library space attributes that contribute to student success.

Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Sarah D. DeVille is the Head of Library Public Services at Ave Maria University’s Canizaro Library and a doctoral candidate at Florida Gulf Coast University studying Educational Leadership. She holds a bachelor’s degree in History from Florida Gulf Coast University and a master’s in Library and Information Studies from Florida State University. Sarah’s primary research interests lie in the assessment of library services and resources with a particular emphasis on how and why students use the library for their academic and social pursuits. She is also interested in the library’s contribution to student success through the services that are offered. Sarah is also interested in instructional design for library instruction.

Ms. DeVille has conducted several forms of assessment to understand how students use the library and their vision of the ideal library. This has included ethnographic research that was used to inform the redesign of an academic library. Her current research is intended to assess the effectiveness of this redesigned library with regard to students’ perceived level of student engagement and to make recommendations that can lead to better spaces for student engagement. She intends on continuing this research in the future so library spaces will remain relevant as new students enter college.