The university library, which in many ways has become the modern-day agora of campus, provides a case study in renewal and realignment for other programmatic spaces that will need reenvisioning in the post-COVID physical campus. Hayden Library Reinvention at Arizona State University transforms a place for books into a place for people, reflecting the diversity, history, and scholarship of the university. The proliferation of digital technologies has changed how information is discovered, used, and shared. Since the turn of the century, the library has adapted to service the changing needs of research, teaching, and learning. As planners, we were required to reconsider the role of the library in the university ecosystem.

What can we learn from this process, that can now inform other spaces on campus? The physical campus is transforming from a collection of buildings used for static, scheduled, and segmented curriculum to a network of interactive spaces focused on the creation, application, and academic integration. We see a shift in space priorities from curricular to co-curricular spaces, from segmented and singular research to flexible research spaces that allow students to participate in the process, and from buildings that separate faculty from students to places that encourage them to come together. Libraries are now 24-7 hubs of activity – they are diverse, versatile, and malleable spaces for learning and making. In an environment of higher education that offers both digital and physical space, what physical spaces does the campus need to welcome students, support their education journeys, and facilitate their success? And what lessons can we take from the library’s reinvention to move us forward into the next normal of campus planning and design?