

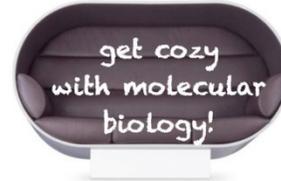
The MCDB Learning Lounge.

Jonathon Keeney, Nancy Guild, and Mike Klymkowsky, MCD Biology, University of Colorado Boulder.

One of the challenges for undergraduates is finding a place where you can not only study, but study in an interactive, supportive, and comfortable space, a place you can talk to others grappling with the same challenging ideas and academic coursework.

MCDB's Learning Lounge in Porter Bioscience, B0054 is one such setting. It was established about 10 years ago, when we transformed what was essentially a storage room in the basement of the Porter Biosciences building into a welcoming space for students to meet, study and work together on academic projects.

Molecular, Cellular &
Developmental Biology



Learning Lounge

The first step in this transformation was providing chairs and tables for a few used CU computers that students could use for coursework and email. While useable, the space was not quite as welcoming as one might wish.

About a year later, in September of 2005, the improvement of the Learning Lounge was a project adopted by the MCDB Mentors Club. They contacted the Keeney Design firm in Denver (who donated their services) and helped develop a basic color scheme for the Lounge that would be engaging without being distracting. A general color scheme was chosen, and a cell diagram was picked from Molecular Biology of the Cell (4th ed.,



Alberts *et al.*) to use as a wall design. This diagram was traced onto a transparency sheet and then projected onto the wall of the Lounge. The specific color scheme and exact elements of the cell were intentionally left open so that students could add their own color palates and organelles as the project proceeded. This effort was collaborative: Mentors club members discussed various approaches during this project, choosing different parts of the room to paint, and occasionally painting over the elements they

disliked!¹

After the painting phase, micrographs of living cells initially compiled for the department website were selected to put on display in the lounge. Four visually striking images, including striking micrographs of biological objects were chosen to be

¹ Painters included Jonathon Keeney, Rebecca Green, Isaac Avram, Thomas Gardner, Tara Martin (now Tara Carlisle), Jonathan Levy, Sara Kashuk, Caitlin White-Root, and Shem Johnson.

printed, framed and hung in the Lounge. These micrographs captured the strong imaging research that is an integral part of the MCDB department.

Finally, the room was furnished with donated items, including a white board, several more computers, a couch, a microwave and a mini fridge.

The funds for the painting, and the printing and framing of the micrographs were generated in part by the sale of MCDB Mentor T-shirts (designed by Jonathon Keeney and Shem Johnson), and in part by the MCDB Mentor's Club funds.

Since then, the Learning Lounge has become a favorite with students looking for a comfortable place to study, meet other students, form study groups and discuss ideas about science .