

# Interior design class creating green office in Smith Hall

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Six teams of interior design students are working to transform a stark corner of Smith Hall's basement into a comfortable and inviting green office for Syracuse University's Sustainability Division.



Smith 003 is the Sustainability Division's satellite office. The office, dubbed the Sustainable Studio, will allow the division's staff to build a presence within the College of Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) and on the North Campus while they implement SU's Climate Action Plan (CAP). VPA is the first SU academic unit selected to begin implementing the CAP.

The third-year design students have their work cut out for them as they attempt to infuse functionality and style into the new Sustainable Studio. The former workshop for VPA students features mostly bare brick walls, very high and nearly inaccessible windows, a large spray paint booth and a floor speckled with paint, glue, tape and bare concrete patches. The paint booth must stay, as it's too large and costly to remove.

The ISD 351 students, led by Sarah Redmore, professor and program coordinator, and Zoriana Dunham, adjunct professor, both with VPA's Interior Design Program, were charged with creating a nontraditional office using sustainable materials and featuring green amenities; Sustainability Division staff specifically requested no desks or workstations. They envision a casual space where four staffers can work on laptops, chat with visitors and meet with groups of up to 15 people. The room must be inviting for students, faculty and staff to drop in, collaborate on projects or simply relax. Plans are to eventually donate the space back to VPA once the CAP work within the college is finished.

"This is the first time these students are taking on an assignment such as this," says Redmore. "These types of projects give them real-world experience. It will help them get internships next semester."

The students enthusiastically dove right into the project recently during their first visit to the room. They wasted no time asking questions, taking measurements and brainstorming ideas.

"I'm really excited about [the project]," says ISD 351 student Rian Smith. "It's a cool space. The windows will be a challenging feature because they're set so high up."

"I like the conceptual idea because it's not a typical office space," says ISD 351 student Heather Kennedy. "Keeping the rustic look could be challenging with the lighting. We need to do something with the entryway."

While the room's rough condition may create some challenges for the students, the nearly blank slate they have to work with can present any number of opportunities. "The room's got some really good features," says Dunham. "It's not just a dingy blank office space."

Smith Hall became the home this year of VPA's foundation program for first-year students in the Departments of Art and Design. The Sustainability Division's staff recently began holding regular office hours in Smith 003. Each of the four staff members are taking shifts staffing the room from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Tuesday-Friday.

"It's great to have a room in Smith Hall and be closer to the action," says Steve Lloyd, associate director for SU's Sustainability Division. "We hope the Sustainable Studio will be a place for students and others to meet us and learn what is going on across campus with regard to sustainability. Besides, this will be my first chance to hang out with real artists."

Each team of students will present their Sustainable Studio designs to the Sustainability Division in mid-October. The division's staff may choose one team's entire design proposal or pick and choose pieces from some or all of the teams' work. Once the final makeover features are chosen, it will be up to the Sustainability Division to facilitate getting the actual design work done, which may include student volunteers.

"It's going to be interesting to see what the design teams come up with," says Rick Martin, SU's sustainability analyst. "We challenged them to create a space that they, themselves, would find comfortable, attractive and welcoming. I guess we'll soon find out just what that means."