Since the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act by Congress in 2010, employers nationwide have been required to provide places (other than bathrooms) in the workspace that are sheltered from view and free from public intrusion where employees can express milk.(1) Until this past year, many Illinois universities had not taken steps to create a comfortable environment for mothers on campus. Mother’s rooms were often unrelated to office and were shoved into small, unused closets in a few of the major buildings on university grounds (University Library, personal communication, February 10, 2016).

This situation was challenged by the members of the Non-Traditional Student Services department of Southern Illinois University Carbondale this past year, and from their efforts to raise grant money from the Green Fund and solicit other interested parties, they successfully recruited a team of architecture, interior design, and construction management faculty and students to design and build a devoted mother’s room for the campus library. This ongoing project has become a way for the university to improve the environmental experience of mothers on campus, and it has also developed into a beneficial learning opportunity for the students participating in the design/build project.

Simulating the professional design process, a school of architecture team has worked through schematic designs, design development, client meetings, and consultant interactions over the course of the Spring/Fall 2016 semesters. With one schematic design expressed in construction documentation, the goal of this group is to continue to work with the physical construction of the Mother’s Room this semester. Through this process, a significant step has been taken toward improving the quality of student life on campus.