REIMAGINING STUDENT CENTERS AND CAMPUS LIFE AT CLEMSON

Introduction

Student centers are an important part of a positive student-life experience. Clemson currently has a distributed model for student centers, with the Union and Hendrix serving the western and eastern sides of campus, respectively. The Douthit Hills Hub building will add dining, retail, and recreation uses for the new neighborhood at the north of campus. The current Union was built in the 1950s and is no longer meeting the needs of the campus and its students. A replacement student center has been discussed for some time, and the Framework Plan presents the opportunity to consider this need while thinking holistically about the campus. Key considerations include where the new student center should be located and how student life program should be allocated among the new student center, Hendrix, and other facilities.

Trends

Like many building types on college campuses, the range and nature of programmatic uses in student centers has changed over the years. Traditionally, student centers included dining, bookstores, ballrooms, student organization space, administrative offices, conference and meeting rooms, theater and auditorium space, recreation and entertainment space, lounge space, and in some cases, housing. In recent years, new types of retail, technology labs (computer labs and maker spaces) and cultural centers have been introduced.

The components of student centers have remained relatively consistent; however, there have been changes in the size, scope, configuration, and arrangement of these various programmatic elements.

- Dining has changed in that the number of options offered has increased in response to student demand and tastes. On many campuses, dining services are now more dispersed. Rather than the centralized cafeterias, food services are distributed in more locations, addressing demands for convenience and the overall scale of many campuses. There has also been a push to create distinct and unique dining options, versus generic offerings.
- Bookstores are no longer primarily textbook warehouses. Today, sales have shifted toward university insignia and memorabilia for the student population and for a wider customer base of visitors and alumni. Cafés have been introduced in response to the "coffee culture" associated with student lifestyles. Another trend has been third party management of campus bookstores and, in some cases, the shift toward peripheral or off-campus locations.
- A wider range of retail spaces have also been introduced including convenience stores and in some cases, small grocery stores.
- Student organization spaces and offices remain key features in student centers; however, the demand for such space has increased as there are now more student groups and organizations on many campuses.

- Many newer student centers include a range of theater types in response to the demand for flexible performance venues and for non-traditional theatre type uses. The amount of theatre space varies from campus to campus depending on the programs offered. Universities with large performing arts programs often create separate performing arts centers.
- Lounge spaces include social lounges for informal gathering and study lounges for both individual and group study. The shift toward group activities and study has changed the social dynamics in many student centers. Access to technology is a consideration for such spaces.
- Cultural centers have been included in response to the growing diversity of student populations and the goal of more interaction and engagement among various groups.

Considerations

Recent and ongoing investments at Clemson have resulted in a distributed model of student centers and activities. Existing and proposed major student centers include Hendrix, completed in 2000, the Core Campus Complex, completed in 2016, and the Douthit Hills Hub, due for completion in 2017. The Edgar Brown Union, completed in 1950, remains as the longstanding center of campus life but is slated for demolition. This distributed model results in three centers or "neighborhoods" around which campus life is organized each serving a different on-campus or commuting population group.

Building	Assignable SF	Gross SF
Hendrix Student Center	66,339	111,246
Edgar Brown Union	149,285	219,440
Core Campus		78,000
Douthit Hills Hub	TBD	TBD
Barnes Center	3,380	3,935

Hendrix Student Center

The Hendrix Student Center was completed in 2000 and reflects a contemporary approach to student center design. It is located on the east side of the academic core. In conjunction with Schilletter, Hendrix serves as a center of student activity for the surrounding residential buildings in the Horseshoe, Calhoun Courts, Thornhill Village, and Lightsey Bridge. It is also positioned to serve the commuting population arriving by transit as well as commuters who utilize the nearby commuter parking lots along Perimeter Road, C1 and C11. Hendrix includes a range of retail, student organization, administrative, and meeting spaces as follows:

First Floor

- Eastside Food Court
- Clemson University Barnes & Noble Bookstore (to be relocated to the Douthit Hills Hub)

- Clemson Computer Store
- TigerOne Card Services
- '55 Exchange (Clemson Ice Cream)
- McKissick Theatre
- Hendrix Atrium

Second Floor

- Dean of Students
- CARE Network
- · Campus Activities and Events Hub
- · Campus Activities and Events Main Office and Student Organizations Offices
- Student Lounge
- Meeting Room Hallway Computer Lab
- David Peebles Room (Multiuse Room)
- Almeda Jacks Ballrooms
- Meeting Rooms A & B
- 212 Conference Room

Third Floor

- · Center for Career and Professional Development
- Student Media Suite

Edgar Brown Union

The Edgar Brown University Union is home to several uses. It was the center of student life and activity on the campus from the 1950s-2000 when Hendrix was completed. Demolition and partial replacement of the facility is planned in the coming years. Uses remaining in the building today include the following, some of which will be relocated to other buildings on campus or will be included in a replacement facility:

Ground Floor

- CU Student Mail Services
- Municipal Court
- · Parking and Transportation Services
- Underground Recreation Center

Fifth Floor

- · Undergraduate Student Government Offices
- Palmetto Ballroom
- Union Plaza
- Student Senate Chambers

Sixth Floor

- Campus Activities & Events Central Campus Operations
- Clemson Computer Store
- Meditation Room

Seventh Floor

- Central Spirit
- CLEMSON LIVE
- Student Organizations Conference Room
- TigerPaw Productions
- Graduate Student Government

Eighth Floor

- · Campus Activities & Events Graduate Assistants' Office
- Staff Senate Offices
- Student Affairs Business Office
- University Housing Business Office

Ninth Floor

- · Office of Community and Ethical Standards
- New Student and Family Programs

Core Campus

The Core Campus, a 260,000 square foot mixed-use facility, opened in 2016. It includes housing (300 beds), retail and residential dining, and the Calhoun Honors College Residential College (400 beds). Dining space totals 78,000 square feet (900 seat dining hall and a 300 seat dining center). The Core Campus dining facilities replace the 1,000 seat Harcombe Dining Hall, one of two main dining facilities of the campus, located in the Edgar Brown Union. The Dining Center features several retail and residential dining facilities as well as a convenience store.

Douthit Hills

The soon to be completed Douthit Hills Student Center or the Hub will include a residential dining facility, the new campus bookstore, a fitness center, and other services for the residents of Douthit Hills. The dining facility also will serve as a gathering space for student group study and student organization meetings after hours. Supplemental retail and a café will be included.

Barnes Center

The Barnes Center was originally the Clemson College Experimental Barn or "Sheep Barn." Constructed in 1904, the building was used for agricultural purposes until 1940. Since then, it has been used for storage. In 1990 the barn was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2014, Clemson received a gift from the Barnes Family to create the Barnes Center—a facility envisioned as a social destination for informal gathering and events including late night programming. The barn is currently under renovation with a scheduled completion in 2017.

Opportunities

The future of student centers on the Clemson campus has been the subject of discussion and considerable study dating back to 2007-2008 and before. The Core Campus project and the Douthit Hills project are outcomes these discussions.

Looking ahead, Clemson has a major opportunity to redevelop the Edgar Brown Union site in a way that addresses the needs of the campus population and in a way that complements the adjacent Core Campus facility as well as the evolving pattern of distributed student life on the campus. Options for redeveloping the site will be explored in the alternatives phase of the Framework Plan and will be informed, as appropriate, by the previous programming study for the site developed by HOK (2016) and the Core Campus Precinct Planning Study by VMDO and Stevens and Wilkinson (2007).

In Framework Plan discussions to date, key feedback from the Campus Planning Task Force has included:

- Hendrix and the New Union will be equivalent hubs for students; neither will be considered the primary. The distributed model works well with these two facilities and the Douthit Hills Hub. A more distributed model with the replacement Union being split into several smaller new facilities is not desirable because of the higher administration costs associated with running separate facilities.
- Consideration is needed relative to student life programming needs across all facilities. The Union and Hendrix each have programs that could be better fits elsewhere on campus, as well as programs that are in need of more space (ex. Michelin Career Center).
- The location of the future union: the current Edgar Brown site makes sense given the proximity to students (housing and academic space). Parking / service access is limited near this site, therefore, uses like ballrooms that have higher parking demands would need to be located elsewhere.
- The need for 3,500-5,000 seat auditorium, but could be located outside of new union.

New Union Program

The program developed for the Edgar Brown Union replacement facility focuses on lounge, student involvement, meeting, and supplemental dining space. Overall, the study recommended 150,000 assignable square feet of space. The program was predicated on a limited amount of administrative space in the new facility and suggested that existing office and student service functions be relocated to suitable space elsewhere on campus.

The following program provides a programmatic basis for the union replacement facility.

HOK/Workshop Union Replacement Program (April 2016)

Use	Program	Phase I: asf	Phase II: asf	Total asf
Lounge	Wellness, Social/Leisure, Quiet Study, Reflection, Media Wall Commons, Games/gaming	20,000	20,000	40,000
Leisure Recreation	See above	0	0	0
Student Leadership	Student Government, Civic Engagement, Gantt Multi-cultural Center, Veterans, Graduate/ Post-Doc, Student Involvement, Student Programming, Student Events	15,000	10,000	25,000
Meeting / Event	White Box Theatre (4,500 sf), Large Divisible Meeting Room (3,600 sf), Medium Meeting Room (800 sf), Small Meeting Room (450 sf), Huddle Rooms (300 sf)	10,000	5,000	15,000
Academic	Classrooms and Studios	5,000	5,000	10,000
Dining/Food Service	Franchise, Micro-Restaurant (Sports Grille), Coffee House, Communal Kitchen, Farmer's Market, Faculty/Grad Club, Food Trucks, Catering Kitchen	15,000	10,000	25,000
Retail	Spirit Store / C-Store, Post Office, Tech Store	2,000	8,000	10,000
Student Services	Graduate Student Services, International Student Services	0	5,000	5,000
Administration	Union Administration Suite, Campus Activities, Civic Engagement, Gantt Multicultural Center, Service Learning, Student Organization Advising	5,000	5,000	10,000
Operations/ Support	Event Storage, Building Storage, Loading Dock, Trash/Recycling	8,000	2,000	10,000
	TOTALASF	80,000	70,000	150,000
	TOTAL GSF	123,000	108,000	231,000
	EFFICIENCY	65%	65%	65 %

This program is similar to feedback heard through the Framework Planning process. The Campus Planning Task Force and

campus leadership have expressed desires for the new student center to include the following components:

- · Student organization space, including meeting space
- Student government
- Lounge, gathering space
- Graduate student center
- Food service
- Outdoor space

It was also noted that the facility could be a mixed use structure with classrooms and housing (a major recreation component like a Fike replacement could be included, however, this is unlikely given different funding streams)

The need for leisure recreation space has been mentioned, but the specifics of the future program need to be determined. Based on conversations with students and researching recently completed student centers across the country have been suggested to justify this program.

In addition, feedback has included that the new facility does not need to include much administrative office space; many of these current uses could be better fits elsewhere on campus. Larger meeting spaces—including a space for 3,500 to 5,000—are needed but do not necessarily need to be located within the new student center.

Next steps include conducting a planning level programming exercise to better understand how the uses proposed in the replacement facility would best complement those in Hendrix and the other distributed facilities. The relevance and value of the phasing strategy will also need to be reevaluated.

Hendrix

As noted, Hendrix is a relatively new facility featuring many of the spaces and amenities of a contemporary student center. The uses and overall scale of the facility will be considered in the Framework Plan relative to the potential distribution of campus life spaces and the opportunity to rethink the building once the bookstore is relocated to Douthit Hills. The future of Hendrix also will be considered relative to the potential program for the Edgar Brown Union replacement. Preliminary design studies suggest opportunities for reimagining the allocation of space in Hendrix and potentially expanding the building to balance the distribution of student life facilities, services, and amenities across the campus.

Constraints

While redevelopment of the Edgar Brown site presents several opportunities, there are some constraints that will need to be considered. First, the site is located on the interior of the campus with limited direct access from the surrounding road network. Second, the lack of parking surrounding the site, as well as the lack of opportunities for adding parking, limits the types of programmatic uses that would be appropriate for the site. This would include large ballrooms, theaters, and other venues that draw large crowds, especially off-campus visitors. The topography of the site also presents challenges (and opportunities) for the distribution of space and for universal accessibility.

The Way Forward

During the alternatives phase of the Framework planning process, options will be explored for distributing campus life facilities, services, and amenities in a way that best serves the various population groups of the campus. This distribution will take into account each existing student center and the potential for the Edgar Brown site relative to accessibility, program location, and broader campus design opportunities. With that in mind, Campus Planning Task Force feedback and preliminary analysis suggest the following distribution of program relative to the populations served and the potential of the Hendrix facility and the Edgar Brown site.

Hendrix will serve adjacent on-campus communities and will be the main center for members of the campus community travelling by bus or car. The facility is well positioned relative to these transit modes. It is also well positioned for major ballroom and large event spaces given available and proximate parking as well as transit access. Thus, it will serve as a major commuter and outwardly focused gateway to the campus.

The *Edgar Brown site* will designed to serve the population of the Core Campus and other existing and future housing on the west side of campus. It will also be designed to provide an amenity gateway for the growing number of students expected to walk into the campus from the downtown. It would also serve auto commuters who park along the western segment of Perimeter Road.

The *Douthit Hub* will serve the Douthit community, some downtown walking commuters, as well as the high rises, low rises, and Calhoun Courts.

While the overall pattern of campus life facilities is well defined, the Framework planning process will explore opportunities for future facilities in new expansion areas.