

### **Program Summary:**

Positioned at the center of campus, the new Student Union serves as the heartbeat of student life through dining, student-focused areas, and community spaces.

### **Program Statement:**

As the campus of a Louisiana university continues to grow beyond the capacity of its aging Student Union, a new center for student life emerges to redefine the relationship between campus, community, and student engagement. Positioned on the Quad beneath a canopy of legacy oak trees, the building extends the campus fabric while establishing a new front door to the university.

Organized around a central circulation spine, the Union connects dining, student-focused spaces and event functions through a sequence of open, light-filled environments. Transparency, movement and visual connectivity shape the student experience while strengthening links between the Quad, adjacent campus buildings and the broader university.

Drawing inspiration from the character of the original Union, the project reinterprets familiar campus forms and materials through a contemporary architectural language. The result is a vibrant gathering place that reinforces campus identity while adapting to the evolving needs of future generations.

## **A-40.01**

Building Area: (sf)  
**51,000 SF**

Cost per Square Foot:  
**\$518**

Construction Cost  
**\$26,400,000**

Date of Completion:  
**January 2026**



## A-40.02

### LEGACY REIMAGINED

The new Student Union's prominent façade reflects the University's historical legacy through the use of traditional masonry materials and wood tones, interpreted with a modern architectural language that signifies vibrancy, transparency and forward-looking campus identity. By reimagining a new but also identifiable design language on the evolving campus, the goal is to root the project in its rich history and continue the heartbeat of the campus. Student movement from the existing Quad, which is lined with legacy oak trees, into the Union unfolds through warm, open interior spaces, where expansive glazing and wood tones reinforce transparency and community.



# A-40.03

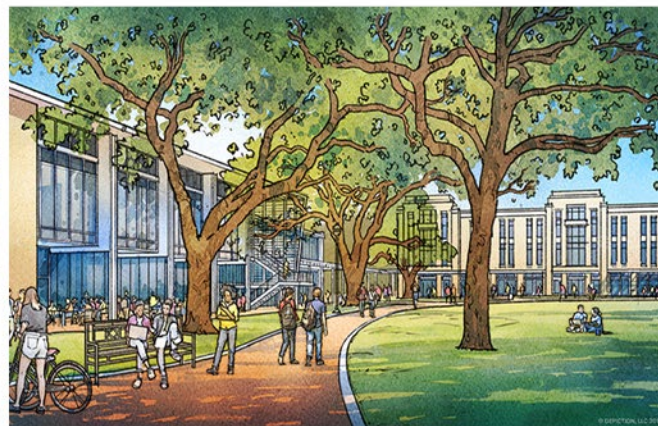
## PROJECT ORIGIN: CAMPUS MASTER PLAN

The University approached the architects to reimagine the evolving campus. The Master Plan engaged stakeholders, administrators, and students and documented a design vision that was informed by an intensive week-long workshop. Through this process, an enriched vision was formulated to help pave the path forward for future buildings, with the Student Union being the main priority. A critical path was taken during the 2020 hurricane season, where the campus was heavily impacted by Hurricane Laura. The architects assisted in the hurricane repair work that subsequently led to two existing signature buildings needing to be demolished due to their post-hurricane condition. This location is now the site of the new Student Union.



28 JUNE 26, 2019

PROPOSED BUILDINGS EXISTING BUILDINGS



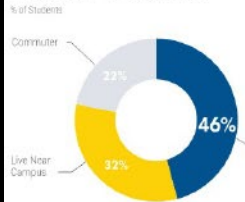


# A-40.04

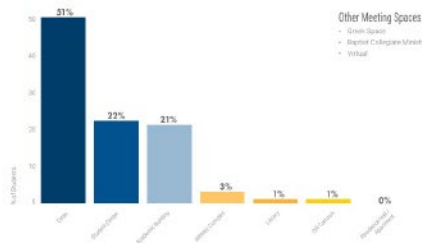
## COLLABORATIVE DESIGN PROCESS

The design process started with a week of curated student engagement. The architects positioned themselves across the campus to ensure in-depth contact with a broad cross-section of the student population. Student buy-in and collaboration were critical in providing the design team with a comprehensive view of the current student experience. The week ended with a presentation to the project's Board to showcase the collected data that will later inform the design on programming and design needs.

### PROXIMITY TO CAMPUS



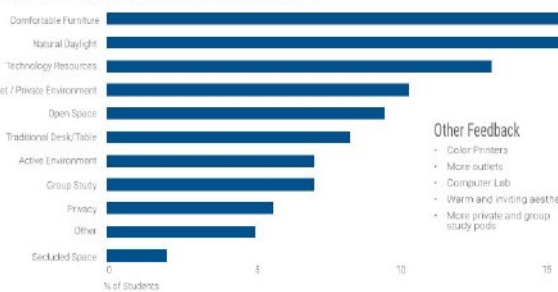
### WHERE CLUBS/GRGS MEET ON CAMPUS



Other Meeting Spaces

- Greek Space
- Improv College Administration
- Virtual

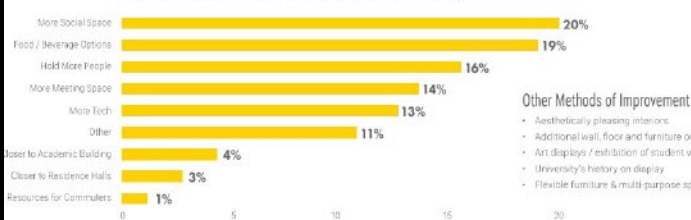
### STUDENT FEEDBACK ON IDEAL STUDY SPACE



#### Other Feedback

- Color Printers
- More outlets
- Computer Lab
- Warm and inviting aesthetic
- More private and group study pods

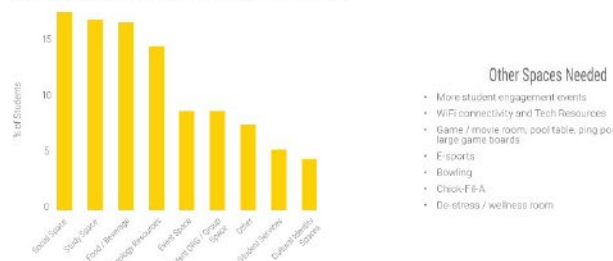
### WAYS TO IMPROVE HANG OUT SPACES



#### Other Methods of Improvement

- Aesthetically pleasing interiors
- Additional wall, floor and furniture outlets
- Art displays / exhibition of student works
- University's history on display
- Flexible furniture & multi-purpose spaces

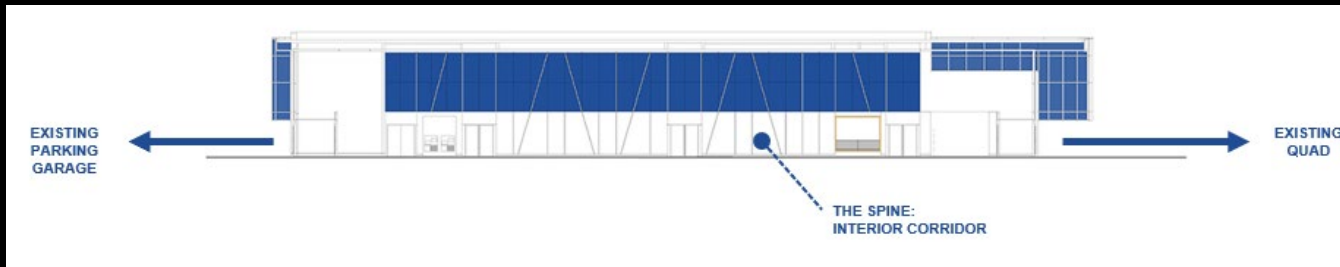
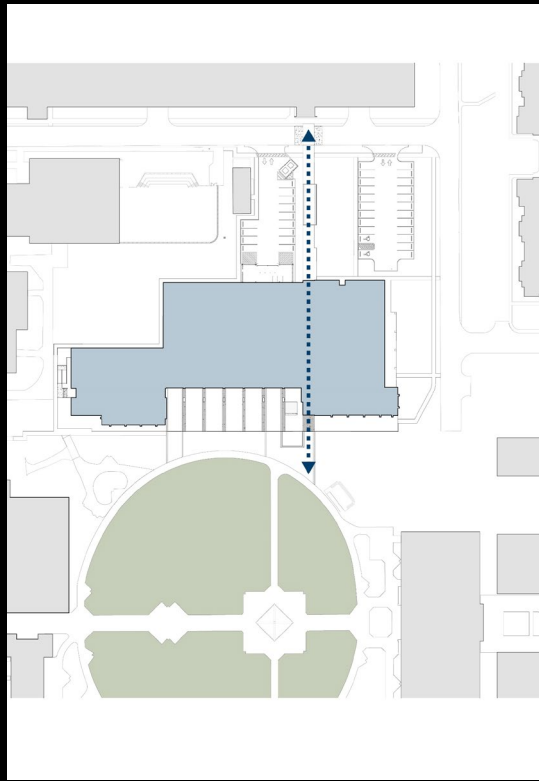
### SPACES NEEDED IN NEW STUDENT UNION



#### Other Spaces Needed

- More student engagement events
- WiFi connectivity and Tech Resources
- Game / movie room, pool table, ping pong, large game boards
- E-sports
- Bowling
- Check-F-A
- De-stress / wellness room





# A-40.05

## CONNECTIVITY

Through the developed Master Plan, the concept of campus connectivity is paramount to stitch the campus core – where the new Student Union is located – to the rest of the campus. The Quad serves as the node that creates a sense of directionality for the students. The new Student Union is nestled in between an existing parking garage that houses commuter students and the Quad. As the new anchor piece of the main campus core, the new Union must serve as a connector not only externally but also internally. The design concept incorporated an interior corridor coined as “The Spine” where design melds movement and energy to complement the heartbeat of the students.

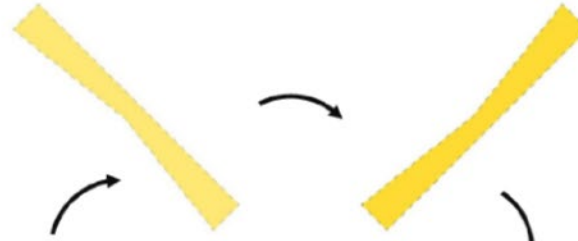
“The Spine” further reinforces connectivity from the Quad into the interior of the new Student Union that leads to the existing parking garage. Geometric acoustical panels, integrated modern lighting and repurposed legacy screens animate the corridor, balancing sound control with a sense of energy, connection, and spirit. The interior corridor stitches the student-focused spaces, dining hall and supplementary social spaces together to elevate the synergy of the student’s quality of life on campus.



EXISTING NEW RANCH MASSING



EXISTING NEW RANCH AND EXISTING ACADEMIC BUILDING MASSING



MASSING OF NEW UNION



STUDENT-FOCUSED SPACES

DINING

EVENT SPACE

# A-40.06

## BUILDING MASS REIMAGINED

Western Heritage has long been embedded in the campus identity and was depicted in the previous Student Union through form and materiality. The established language informed the designers in the massing studies of the new Union, in which the form was inverted to generate a sloped roof geometry that now establishes a strong presence within the Quad. The "butterfly" roofline creates a strong datum line that crafts a visual connection to the canopies of the legacy oak trees to the "Front Door" of the campus.

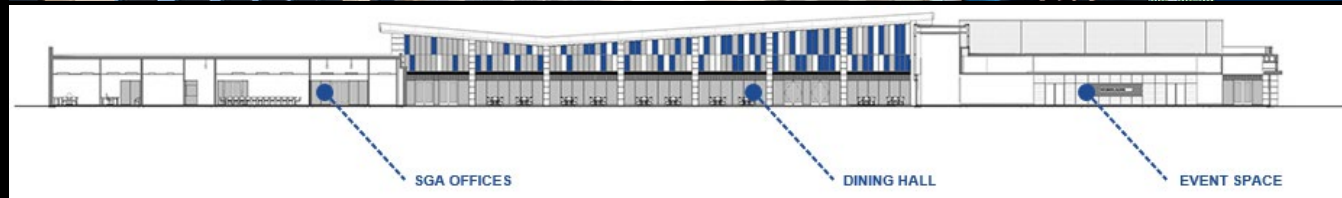
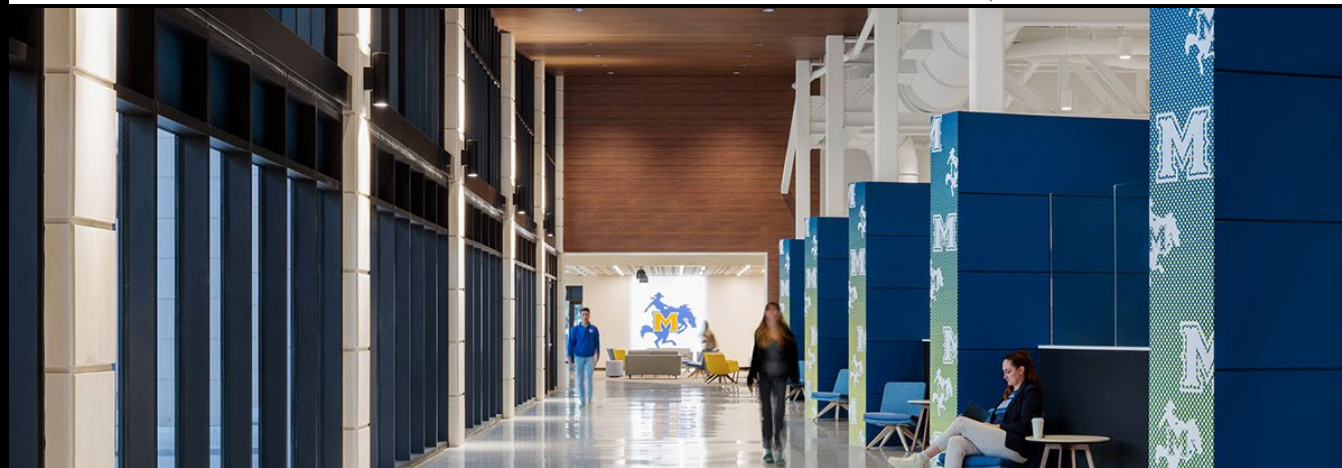
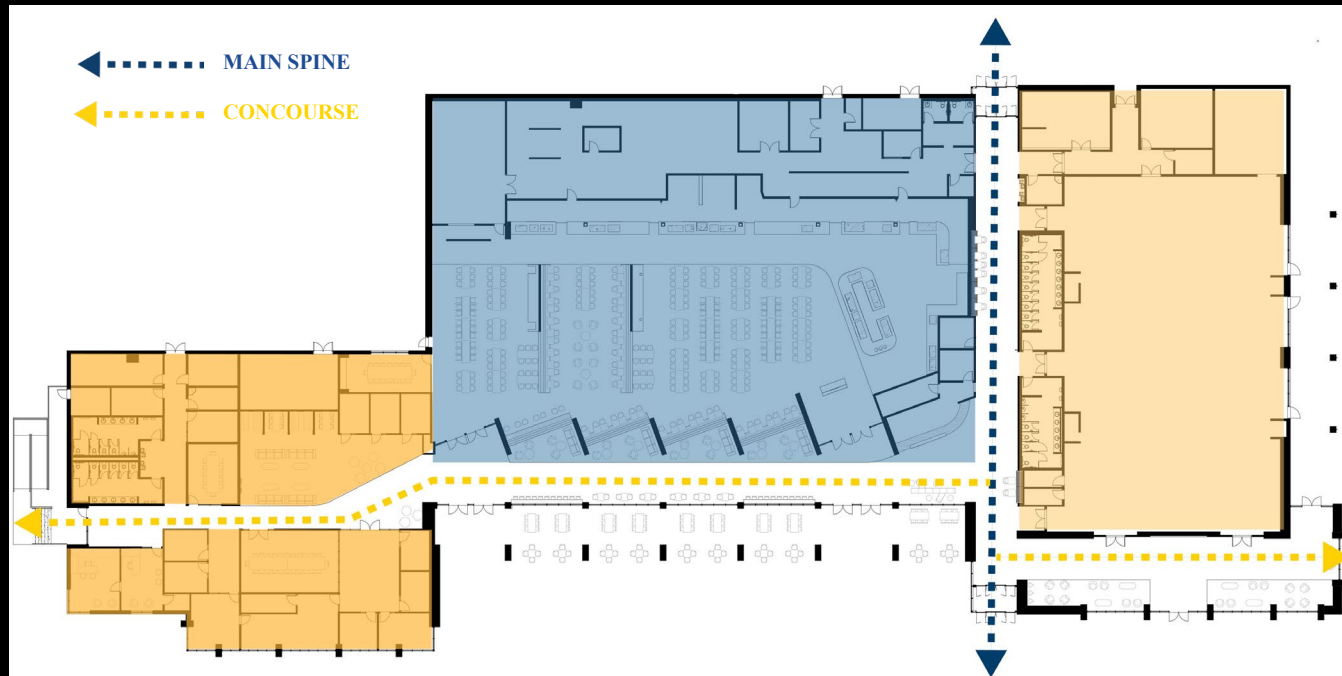


## A-40.07

### THE FRONT DOOR

As an expression of "The Front Door," a punctuated blue glass cube reaches out into the Quad through floating structural framing to further draw the students inside and denote an entry into "The Spine." The blue glazing brings the pride of the campus into architectural materiality that takes on different lighting qualities throughout the day. As the sun sets, the Front Door becomes more prominent, with ambient lighting filtering through the glazing panels to create a consistent blue glow recognizable across the campus. The lighting layout in "The Spine" is indicative of the life inside of the Union's walls – energetic, spirited and engaging.





# A-40.08

## CORE SPACES

The data collected from the student engagement workshop informed the architect's understanding of the core areas the project required. Three key areas were subsequently developed: student-focused spaces, a dining hall and flexible event space.

A concourse serves as an interior connector that moves through the project into the core spaces. The interior corridor is flanked by an expansive curtain wall system that allows for natural daylight to filter through a series of clear, blue, and frosted colored glazing on the western façade. The Dining Hall, positioned opposite the connector, acts as a programmatic anchor that activates the space through dining and social engagement. At the terminus of the connector, a series of collaborative student-focused spaces provide a destination for connection.

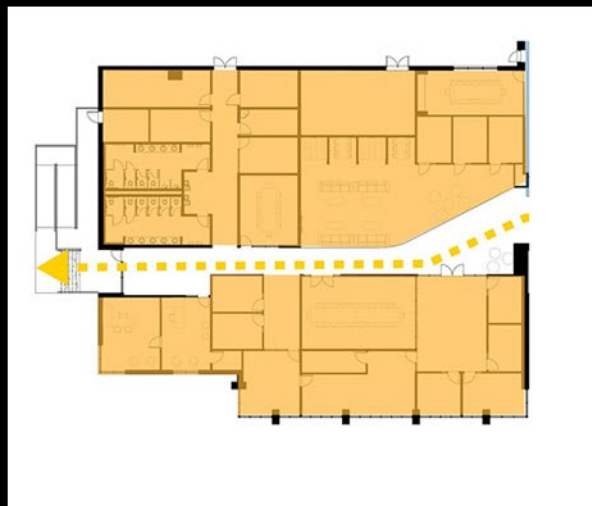
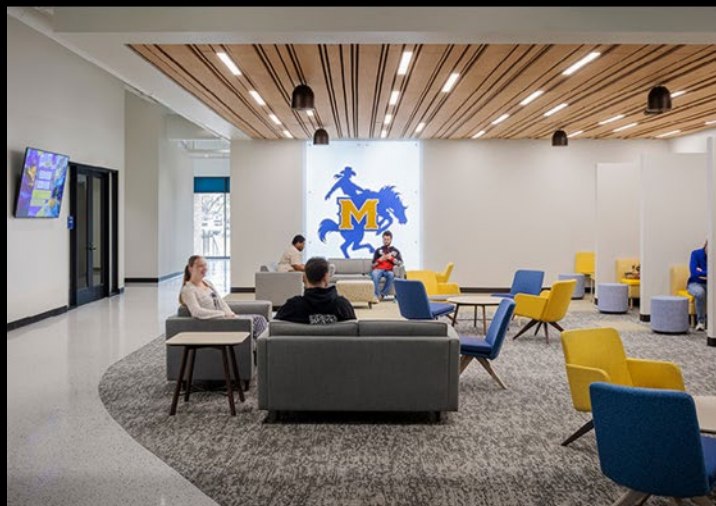




# A-40.09

## STUDENT FOCUSED SPACES

At the terminus to the concourse, there are a series of student-focused spaces that foster leadership, collaboration and academia. Flexible seating arrangements allow for the user to create spaces for differing levels of collaboration, studying and governing. Student Government offices are the anchoring pieces of this core space which supports the Student Government Association Lounge, where governing and leadership initiatives are cultivated.

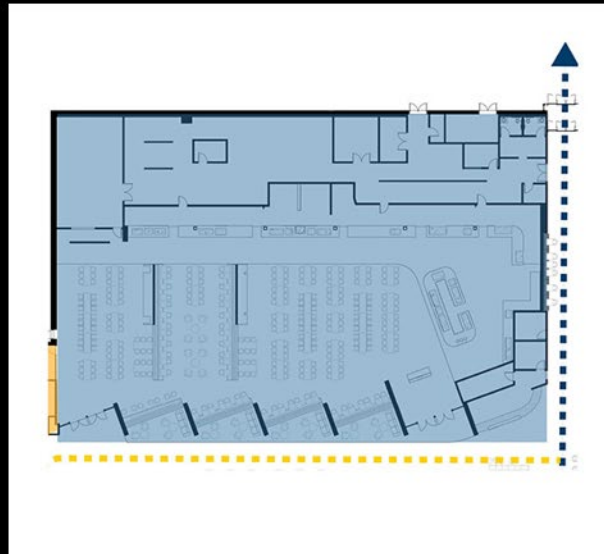




## A-40.10

### DINING HALL: THE SOUTHERN KITCHEN

The Dining Hall represents the spirit of a southern Louisiana kitchen, where individuals gather to share memories, experiences and stories that expand through generations. Data collected during the student engagement workshop indicated that over 90% of the students surveyed yearned for a sense of community and home. The Dining Hall seats approximately 425 students during peak hours with varying levels of dining, including booth seating, communal tables and small-scale tables. Natural lighting filters through the space to enhance comfort levels while angled, low walls capitalize on the majestic views of the legacy oak trees in the Quad and an exposed ceiling structure helps accentuate the sloped roof – a nod to the signature buildings on campus.



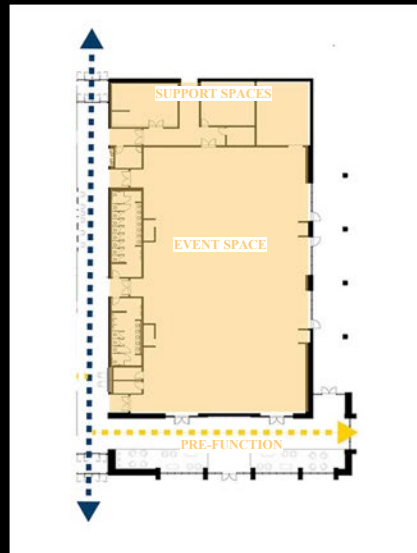




# A-40.11

## EVENT SPACE: FLEXIBILITY

Major events are constantly held on campus that facilitate academia, community engagement and campus awareness. The Event Space is directly adjacent to “The Spine” and is the terminus at the end of the concourse, which helps student and public connectivity flow with events that are conducted throughout the day/evening. The Event Space can be sectioned into three individual spaces that can be further compartmentalized to accommodate events occurring in tandem. Immediately outside of the Event Space, a pre-function space faces the Quad, allowing for views of green spaces. This area is conducive for everyday use and can transform into an elevated lobby space for both public and private events.





## A collage of various interior design material samples. The top row features a white textured square, a light wood rectangular piece, a dark wood rectangular piece, and a dark wood rectangular piece. The middle row shows a white textured square, a light wood rectangular piece, a dark wood rectangular piece, and a dark wood rectangular piece. The bottom row displays a white textured square, a light wood rectangular piece, a dark wood rectangular piece, and a dark wood rectangular piece. The background is a dark, textured surface.

As a building that will anchor the campus for decades to come, the designers did not sacrifice looks for longevity through careful sourcing and considerations for the final finish selections. The University allowed for the designers to develop a design language that is rooted in legacy but elevated for a modern aesthetic. "Reimagined" was the key concept when curating both exterior and interior materials that keep within the school spirit applied architecturally: hues of yellow and blue are positioned on all surfaces of the building and textures are integrated in furniture, millwork and walls to warm up spaces. University-branded elements are integrated throughout the spaces to help root the building to its locality.



# A-40.13

## BUILDING SCIENCE

As an anchor building on campus, the new Union was designed to retain a weather-tight envelope, utilize daylight strategically for comfort levels while also protecting the building from Louisiana's harsh sun, and withstand the test of time with the use of legacy finish materials. The exterior envelope complies with IECC 2021 code parameters. Legacy materials include masonry brick and cast stone panels that are found across campus to fit within University design standards. Composite aluminum panels with a warm wood tone help draw from the Western history of the campus but utilizes modern materials to ensure that longevity and structural integrity are not compromised.

As the campus grows and outpaces its existing Student Union, the new building is conceived as the heart of student life – integrating dining, collaboration and student-focused spaces into transparent, connected environments that strengthen campus identity that support the pride and spirit of the University.

