

Office of the President

TO MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE AND CAPITAL STRATEGIES COMMITTEE:

DISCUSSION ITEM

For Meeting of September 13, 2017

STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER PROJECT, RIVERSIDE CAMPUS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Riverside campus proposes to construct the Student Success Center, a new facility of approximately 39,000 assignable square feet (57,000 gross square feet). The project would support the UCR academic mission through its explicit focus on “student success”: academic achievement, retention, and timely graduation for students from all backgrounds. The project would accomplish this by providing three elements that are essential to student success: (1) general assignment classrooms designed for modern pedagogy and technology, (2) easily accessible and centralized academic advising space, and (3) multipurpose student life space to support academic and co-curricular activities – all located within the campus academic core. The proposed capital investment in the Student Success Center will contribute to UCR students’ success, in terms of improved retention and four-year graduation rates.

In support of enhancing student success at UCR, this project will address a shortfall in classroom capacity. At the current pace, without significant improvement in capacity, all classroom size categories will exceed 100 percent utilization by 2023. Currently, an off-campus lease at a movie theater complex supplies the equivalent of about 620 general assignment classroom stations in three auditoriums. This space was leased to relieve pressure on the existing inventory of general assignment classroom space on campus. However, hours of use are restricted, and classes cannot be scheduled into evening hours due to the shared use of the space as theaters. The lease is set to expire at the end of 2021.

This project would help support enrollment growth – the student population at UCR has increased 36 percent in the past decade, and is expected to continue growing – and address the associated anticipated shortage in classroom space by constructing approximately 900-1,000 general assignment classroom stations: a large lecture hall, two smaller lecture halls, and medium-to-large classrooms designed for flexible teaching configurations. These seats would replace the capacity provided by the leased theaters and provide additional stations for enrollment growth. The project would also provide office space for student advising services located in the same structure and multipurpose spaces for independent study and student organization events and meetings.

The proposed project is to be sited within the campus's academic core on the western edge of what is known as East Campus. This area was selected largely based on its accessibility to undergraduate students; proximity to other classrooms, the student union, and other student support functions; and consistency of the proposed project's Academic use with the UCR Campus Physical Master Plan and the UCR Long Range Development Plan.

The proposed project is part of the *2018-19 Budget for State Capital Improvements* that will be presented to the Regents for discussion at this meeting and was submitted to the Legislature and Department of Finance in early September 2017. The total project would be funded by external financing supported by State general funds and non-State resources including University Fee Reserve funds, auxiliary reserve funds, and campus funds (centrally managed pool of unrestricted funds – non-State, non-tuition). The preliminary plans phase is anticipated to start in mid-2018 and construction is anticipated to start in mid-2019 and complete in early 2021.

BACKGROUND

The fundamental goal of this project is to support excellence in undergraduate education as outlined in UCR's Strategic Plan. This would be accomplished by providing pedagogically-informed classroom space to support a growing student population, by facilitating student access to academic advising and other support services, and by providing opportunities for enrichment and engagement via participation in student organizations and other extracurricular activities.

Project Drivers

Over the past decade, total enrollment at UCR has increased 36 percent, from 16,875 students in fall 2006 to 22,990 students in fall 2016. Undergraduates currently comprise a large majority of the campus population (86 percent) and are expected to continue to do so in the future. These students will be the primary users of general assignment classrooms and other services housed in the Student Success Center. The campus community has been resourceful and continues to provide quality instruction and student services in aging and overextended facilities; however, this situation is not ideal.

Need for Additional General Assignment Classroom Capacity

Two factors related to general assignment classroom space contribute to the need for this project: continuing student enrollment growth which will push the existing inventory of general assignment classrooms at UCR beyond maximum classroom utilization capacity in the very near future, and the impending end of an off-campus lease agreement which contributes a significant portion of that existing classroom inventory.

The University of California follows standards established by the California Postsecondary Education Commission for classroom utilization as a measure of productive classroom use. Utilization is calculated based on available classroom stations, number of students taught, and hours per week of active instruction. A utilization rate in excess of 100 percent represents an impact on resources that can negatively affect quality of instruction.

Due to sustained enrollment growth, UCR is reaching, and in some cases exceeding, maximum utilization of its general assignment classrooms, with particular demand for both lecture hall and technologically enhanced and flexibly configured classrooms (see Table 1). Some classroom size categories already exceed 100 percent utilization. Enrollment will soon outpace classroom capacity across all size categories: with the current classroom inventory, all categories are projected to exceed 100 percent utilization by 2023.

**Table 1
UC Riverside General Campus
General Assignment Classroom Utilization Rates (Without Project)**

Classroom # of Stations:	Actual Utilization Fall 2016 ¹	Projected Utilization 2021-22 ²	Projected Utilization 2023-24 ³
1-15	101%	108%	115%
16-25	117%	126%	134%
26-50	89%	96%	102%
51-100	99%	106%	112%
101-200	122%	131%	168%
201-200	91%	98%	104%
300+	98%	105%	181%
Total	98%	105%	127%

An off-campus lease at a movie theater complex currently supplies the equivalent of 620 general assignment classroom seats in three movie theater auditoriums being used as lecture halls. Hours of use are restricted; classes cannot be scheduled into evening hours due to the shared use of the space as theaters. The leased space was not designed for teaching and consistently receives negative feedback from both students and instructors due to inadequate or nonfunctioning equipment and furnishings, and distance from central campus. This lease is set to expire at the end of 2021 and the campus has decided to replace this inventory with proper classroom seats on campus.

The campus is currently implementing a multi-year classroom renovation program to improve the quality and efficiency of existing small-to-medium classrooms; however, the need for high-quality medium-to-large and lecture hall-sized classrooms remains to be addressed.

Need for Academic Advising Space

Academic advising staff help students define their educational and career goals, develop a strategy of well-informed academic choices to reach these goals, and guide them to campus

¹ UCR Registrar: Fall 2016 Classroom (110/130) Utilization (December 2016).

² Projections: UCR Capital Asset Strategies based on Fall 2016 Utilization provided by UCR Registrar and enrollment forecast provided by UCR Institutional Research. 2021-22 column assumes no project but retains off-campus leased classroom space.

³ Projection: UCR Capital Asset Strategies based on Fall 2016 Utilization provided by UCR Registrar and enrollment forecast provided by UCR Institutional Research. 2023-24 column assumes off-campus lease for classroom space is not renewed.

resources available to optimize their time at university. The majority of UCR's student population includes first-generation, transfer, and commuter students who benefit especially from professional academic advising.^{4,5} Currently, advising offices are largely housed with their respective academic disciplines, located throughout campus. Students who have not yet crystallized their academic plans – and would most benefit from advising – lack a centralized area where they can easily locate and leverage advising services available to them. Additionally, individual advising offices in multiple locations means duplication of facilities or services which could be more efficiently provided in a shared location.

Need for Multipurpose Student Life Space

It is well established that university students benefit greatly from extracurricular activities – out-of-classroom experiences which augment formal instruction and positively impact their emotional, intellectual, social, and interpersonal development.^{6,7} Involvement in student organizations allows opportunities to develop communication, leadership, and social skills – thus improving self-confidence, independence, and the ability to work with diverse groups of people, all tools essential in life after graduation.

Despite the 2007 completion of the new Highlander Union Building (HUB) complex, specifically built to provide space for student organizations and other extracurricular activities, there remains substantial unmet demand for student life space at UCR – demand that will only increase with expected enrollment growth. A *HUB Expansion Study*⁸ was commissioned by UCR in 2014 to identify and quantify the most urgent student life space needs. It was found that multipurpose spaces for meetings, performances, and other student organization activities were of highest priority. Demand for space to support independent study, dining, and student services was also identified.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Vision and Objectives

This project would support the instructional and research missions of the University of California by providing essential campus facilities to support the academic enterprise. General assignment classrooms serve a broad section of the undergraduate population, often hosting foundational courses necessary across academic disciplines. Academic advising and student life programs help ensure students take maximum advantage of the resources made available to them by the University. The project presents a unique opportunity to create synergies between these different

⁴ Swecker, H. K., Fifolt, M., & Searby, L. (2013). Academic Advising and First-Generation College Students: A Quantitative Study on Student Retention. *NACADA Journal*, 33(1), 46-53. doi: 10.12930/NACADA-13-192

⁵ Young-Jones, A. D., Burt, T. D., Dixon, S., Hawthorne, M. J. (2013) Academic advising: does it really impact student success? *Quality Assurance in Education*, 21(1), 7-19. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1108/09684881311293034>

⁶ Astin, A. W. (1999). Student Involvement: A Developmental Theory for Higher Education. *Journal of College Student Development*, 40(5), 518-529. Retrieved from <https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/ace/downloads/astininv.pdf>

⁷ Pascarella, E. T., Pierson, C. T., Wolniak, G. C., & Terenzini, P. T. (2004) First-Generation College Students, *The Journal of Higher Education*, 75(3), 249-284. doi: 10.1353/jhe.2004.0016

⁸ Brailsford & Dunlavy: *UC Riverside HUB Expansion Analysis ("HUB Expansion Study")* (November 2014).

facets of the student experience by housing them within one facility.

As a key part of the planning process for the proposed project, the campus conducted a visioning workshop in April 2017 where 136 faculty, staff, and students came together to learn about the project and provide feedback on its program and location. Following two brief presentations, moderated small-group conversations facilitated feedback on key questions related to the future of instructional space at UCR. Feedback from this session also guided the creation of a subsequent campus-wide survey, distributed via e-mail and available online. The findings from the workshop and the survey directly informed the project vision and program.

Taken together, classrooms, advising, and student life programs provide students with an enriched and engaged university experience, giving them the tools to achieve the intellectual, personal, and social development that will ensure success as a student and, after graduation, as a world citizen.

Proposed Program

The Student Success Center will provide, in total, approximately 39,000 assignable square feet (57,000 gross square feet) of general assignment classrooms, student advising offices in the same location, and multipurpose student life space as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2
UC Riverside Student Success Center
Space Program Summary – Assignable Square Feet**

Space Type	ASF
General Assignment Classrooms	23,900
Academic Advising	3,000
Student Life	9,100
Auxiliary Operations	3,000
TOTAL	39,000

General Assignment Classrooms (approximately 23,900 asf)

The project proposes to help alleviate anticipated classroom space constraints and quality concerns by providing new general assignment classrooms (target: 900-1,000 classroom stations; count to be better defined as design is refined and aligned with the available budget) designed in collaboration with students and instructors. In addition, construction of multiple classrooms would help address heavy classroom demand in the “medium-to-large” classroom size categories. All classrooms would be flexibly designed and technologically equipped to accommodate evolving pedagogy, maximizing their utility through the life of the space. This program would be supported by the State-funded portion of the project budget.

Advising Space Located in the Same Facility (approximately 3,000 asf)

The project also proposes to provide space for advising staff from various disciplines. Location in the same facility allows for efficient sharing of space and resources. It also improves

accessibility and convenience for students by creating a single location for multiple academic disciplines. Academic advisor offices would be sized to allow for confidential meetings between student and advisor. Conference rooms for larger meetings (for example, student plus family) and support spaces such as reception and a break room would be provided. This program would be supported by the State-funded portion of the project budget.

Multipurpose Student Life Space (approximately 9,100 asf)

Student life spaces would be provided consistent with the priorities identified in the 2014 *HUB Expansion Study*. Multipurpose spaces will be provided for student organizations to meet, hold events, and hold performance rehearsals. Public lounge and lobby areas will be located at the building entry and adjacent to the lecture halls; these will provide adequate circulation area for the ingress and egress of students during passing periods, and seating areas will be provided to facilitate informal class breakout sessions, social interactions, and independent study. A student lounge, potentially for commuter or graduate students, will provide opportunities for independent study, and academic and social interactions. The project will also house a student resource center to assist specific student populations (for example, transfer students) in identifying and utilizing available campus resources to support their academic and personal growth. This program would be supported by the non-State-funded portion of the project budget.

Auxiliary Operations (approximately 3,000 asf)

Opportunities will also be studied for ancillary uses to be operated by Campus Auxiliary Services. Potential improvements would include dining space – likely leveraging interior and exterior public areas for seating – and retail space, such as a copy/business center for use by students and instructors. This program would be supported by the non-State-funded portion of the project budget.

Delivery Method and Schedule

Based on preliminary project analyses and in consideration of the budgetary and schedule constraints attached to the project, an initial decision has been made to use the design-build delivery approach. This approach will help maximize value received in terms of total project budget, program capacity, facility life-cycle performance, and allow for quick and efficient delivery of the project. The study phase of this project is underway. The preliminary plans phase is anticipated to start in mid-2018, and construction is anticipated to start in mid-2019 and complete in early-2021.

Preliminary plans funding, followed by approval of full budget and design pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act will be requested in future Regents' actions.

Funding Plan

The total project budget would be funded from external financing supported by State General funds as well as non-State resources including University Fee Reserve funds, auxiliary reserve funds, and campus funds (centrally managed pool of unrestricted funds – non-State, non-tuition).

KEY TO ACRONYMS

ASF	Assignable-Square-Foot
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
HUB	Highlander Union Building
UCR	Riverside Campus

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Alternatives Considered

Attachment 2: Proposed Site

ATTACHMENT 1

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The campus evaluated a number of alternatives to meet campus programmatic needs: 1) no project, 2) renovation of existing campus space, 3) lease off-campus space, and 4) construction of a new campus facility (best alternative).

No Project

In view of current classroom utilization rates and projections showing increased enrollment and need for this space, it would be untenable for the campus to lose the classroom stations currently provided through an off-campus lease during UCR's ongoing enrollment growth without a strategy for offsetting the loss. The academic advising and student life programs likewise will continue to experience an increase in demand as the student population grows, and existing space challenges will only worsen.

Renovation of Existing Campus Space

Lecture halls and classrooms are specialized spaces not readily available in excess supply on or near campus. Existing classroom space is already heavily utilized. Projects are in progress to update these spaces for better operation and efficiency, but this solution would not provide new space in the quantity or quality needed to offset the anticipated loss of three leased lecture halls or increased demand due to enrollment growth. Research space is also in high demand due to the ongoing faculty expansion and thus conversion of that space to classrooms is not a viable option.

Renovation of other existing space is already being utilized by the campus as a strategy to deliver additional space for advising and student life programs. However, this must be done as resources and vacancies of space allow. Therefore, this provides a limited and piecemeal solution, lacking the efficiencies and synergies created by strategically locating programs together with classrooms.

Lease Off-Campus Space

Renewal of the existing leased classroom space is an option. However, leased space is viewed as, at best, a temporary solution for such a mission-critical function as undergraduate instruction. A lease incurs significant operating costs without the benefits of ownership, including the ability to fully access, control, and update the space. An off-campus location also creates challenges for students and instructors attempting to travel between classes within the ten-minute passing period.

Feedback from users regarding the current use of leased movie theater space as classrooms has been strongly negative, citing unsuitable space configurations, furniture, and equipment as detrimental to effective instruction and not meeting the standard of quality expected of the University by students and instructors. Any lease of off-campus space not specifically designed as classrooms is likely to pose similar challenges.

As with the renovation alternative, off-campus leasing could be possible for the student life and advising programs, but removes the access and convenience for students and instructors that being located together with the classroom space and a central campus location provide. Additionally, the sites identified for the new construction project specifically enhance the advising and student life components by proximity to related functions – an advantage lost by locating these programs off-campus.

Construction of a New Facility

Construction of a new facility is the preferred project alternative. While most costly in immediate outlay of campus resources, it is believed to provide the best overall value. New construction would allow delivery of the quantity of space needed for the classroom, advising, and student life programs to the standards and specifications of users. It would allow for optimal siting of these programs to leverage existing campus facilities and programs, and future planned development. New construction would allow these programs to be located together in a single facility and take advantage of the efficiencies and synergies this confers.

Most importantly, design and construction of a new facility provides the project with the best opportunity to achieve its fundamental goal of supporting student success and excellence in undergraduate education in alignment with the campus Strategic Plan and the University mission.

This option is viewed as the best alternative for the project.

ATTACHMENT 2

PROPOSED SITE

An initial site selection analysis undertaken by campus staff studied several potential project locations within the area of East Campus known as the “academic core”, which contains a high concentration of classroom and student-centered facilities. These locations met basic suitability requirements: a clear site with access to utilities and infrastructure, easy access for undergraduate students, proximity to related student support functions, and adequate land area for the program. Also considered were the potential connections to future planned development, such as the North District Redevelopment project, which will include several thousand beds of student housing, and the Mobility Hub, which will create a new transit plaza and connections to the wider community.

As detailed project programming continues, analysis of fit between program and site will be refined and a final site selected.