

4/5/2012

Student Life Committee Meeting of April 5, 2012

In attendance: Lisa Ferrari, Cameron Ford, Rebecca Kuglitsch, Bruce Mann, Sierra Phillips, Mike Segawa, Nila Wiese

Meeting called to order at approximately 4 p.m.

The committee approved the minutes of the last meeting.

Committee chair Bruce Mann asked for emailed suggestions for self-charges to the committee. He will include them in the end of year report that he is now preparing for the faculty senate.

Mann turned the meeting over to Mike Segawa for a presentation on the new residence hall. The facilities sub-committee recently met with trustees about the new hall. Last February trustees asked for more work on the designs. Since then the sub-committee has been addressing those concerns. According to Segawa, the trustees have now affirmed the changes made in designs over the course of the year. This is an important step toward groundbreaking and ultimate completion of the hall by the fall of 2013.

Segawa shared several slides of the revised plans for the residence, beginning with one that positioned the hall and the arrangements of its wings on the campus map. Segawa noted that this design eliminated a wing of the hall so that the new configuration is an "L" not a "U." This change allows the university to keep a theme house on Lawrence Street that would have been removed: what is now the Foreign Language and Culture House. Segawa went on to describe other changes that have been made in the design, such as moving the hall back from Lawrence and separating it a bit more from the new Weyerhaeuser Hall.

The next slide that Segawa presented was of a floor plan for a suite of rooms on the ground floor of the east wing: it showed single rooms with bathrooms, laundry for the suite as a whole, and a "great room" with full kitchen, lounge, dining room/living room, and informal seating. This space is intentionally casual and will be, it is hoped, conducive to group interaction. The great room is large enough for a gathering of about twenty-five students for res-life programming (e.g. – sharing DVD's of taken during study abroad).

Next slide: the next floor up from the previous slide showing living areas similar to the prior slide on the second floor of the east wing. It also shows the ground level of the west wing, which is adjacent to the Commencement Walk and a covered colonnade. The west wing includes a ground floor open space, not part of the original plans but now added, that might be used for several purposes: a home for the Expeditionary, a room for showing films, space for the Diversity Center (although Wheelock might make more sense), offices for residential life, and so forth.

Next slide: residential facilities in what will be the third floor of the east wing. The west wing, at this level, will have a meeting room that can seat up to 150 people. There is a critical need on campus for this kind of space. Individuals will enter the hall from the Commencement Walk. This is the second floor on the west side. A stairwell on the end of the west wing leads down into what Segawa is calling “the back yard” of the residence hall.

In terms of living space, the residential hall has gone from 125 to 135 beds.

Next slide, next floor up: residence spaces in the west wing on the third floor and residences, as well, in the east wing, its fourth floor.

Next slide, the top floor: the fifth floor on the east wing; the fourth floor on the west, both with residence spaces.

Next slide, external views from the east: this view shows the colonnade, entrances, use of various sizes of windows for both function and aesthetics.

Next slide, view from the north: this view shows excavation that allowed for additional space on the ground level of the west wing. It also shows variety in window size to improve aesthetics.

The view from the south shows the location of the great room with a fireplace. Sandstone is being used around the building to establish a podium or pedestal effect, consistent with other uses of sandstone around campus.

Next slide, a preliminary look at landscaping: this allows for a possible space for urban horticulture. Trees create some privacy and separation. The parking lot currently shown will probably be removed for campus aesthetics.

Next slide, a preliminary look at the lounge/cooking area for suites: these areas include soft seating, large windows, and wood accents. Mann asked about single rooms and their immediate adjacency to the great room with respect to privacy and noise level, as opposed to the more traditional layout of rooms along a hallway. Others expressed appreciation for rooms opening onto the great room. Segawa noted a degree of forced interaction in these living spaces. Cameron Ford noted that the Trimble floor plan, with its more traditional hallways and rooms, has not fostered interaction. Rooms are about the same size, however, as in Trimble.

Next slide, looking from Wheelock toward the entry into the building: this slide gives a sense of the grading and excavations that will need to be done. Ford noted that he liked the lawn space as opposed to so many trees, which, along with bushes, are meant to create more privacy around residencies.

Next slide, looking toward hall from the event area: this slide shows a windowed lounge area (“George Erving’s humanities library”), entrances, and a porch area.

Ground breaking is set for six weeks from now, right after graduation.

We had a discussion about the fireplace and how it fits into the look of the campus. Lisa Ferrari shared her concern about negative resonances carried by images of giant chimneys with their echoes of concentration camp architecture. Further discussion followed of fireplaces and aesthetics of the building's exterior such as the study room over the building's entrance. This conversation, in turn, led to a discussion of how coveted study spaces are on campus, especially toward the end of the semester.

The hall will house as many as five different programs designed to give the building a more scholarly orientation and attract returning students, in addition to a set of first year residential seminar students in humanities. Ideally the staff will be able to focus more on programming than on conduct.

The building will open in the fall of 2013.

It will allow us to require, starting in the fall of 2014, first and second year students to live on campus, and provide living space on campus for juniors and seniors who do not want to live off campus. This will increase the residential character of the campus, an important feature of how Puget Sound wishes to identify itself.

Sierra Phillips used this time to ask about the Washington Street houses: they will probably become Greek overflow houses. Those three or four houses will help the Greek community live together. They are within the university's footprint, which cannot easily be enlarged.

Meeting adjourned by Bruce Mann at 4:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Geoff Proehl