

Committee on Residence Life
Student Union Senate
University of Notre Dame
SS0506-34

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF LAFORTUNE STUDENT CENTER REPORT

WHEREAS the Committee on Residence Life of the Student Senate has assessed the status of LaFortune Student Center with students and administrators; and

WHEREAS the Committee has published a report, *LaFortune Student Center Report: Recommendations Concerning Future Renovations*, that offers specific recommendations to improve LaFortune Student Center by identifying the current status, deficiencies, and recommendations for improvements in four specific areas; and

WHEREAS the Campus Master Plan is an evolving document that is modified as needs arise, and the current Plan alludes to many of the suggestions made in the report; and

WHEREAS the residential system at the University of Notre Dame is unique and strengthened by a student center that adequately meets the needs of University students; and

WHEREAS an adequate provision of services in LaFortune Student Center is critical to the academic, extracurricular, and other success of students; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Student Senate affirm and support the *LaFortune Student Center Report* produced by the Committee on Residence Life of the Student Senate; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Student Senate strongly advocates the recommendations of the report be considered by the University in future campus development, construction, and renovation decisions.



LaFortune Student Center Report

Recommendations Concerning Future Renovations

By the Student Senate Committee on Residence Life

INTRODUCTION

During Fall Semester 2005 the Student Senate Committee on Residence Life began to address the Deficiencies of LaFortune Student Center. We have produced this report recommending the inclusion of certain amenities and services should the University choose to renovate and/or expand LaFortune Student Center. The report focuses on four topics regarding LaFortune:

- Social Space
- Dining Options
- Technological Capability
- Storage Space

Each topic is divided into three subsections. The “current status” section will reflect the topic’s current status as of March 12, 2005. It is based on focus groups conducted in 14 dorms, interviews with student leaders, and our personal observations. The “Deficiencies” section will offer our interpretation of the Deficiencies of the current status of the topic. Finally, the “solution” section will suggest possible remedies for the Deficiencies.

Students in focus groups indicated that the mission of a student center should be “...social, functional...a place that meets the needs of the student body all in one location: study, work, play, eat, meet, get informed, get involved.” Other responses included “...affordable...[an] environment providing entertainment and study facilities...” and “...a resource for clubs and student groups.” In producing this report we have made recommendations we believe serve this purpose.

SOCIAL SPACE

Current Status

The West basement and first floor lounges serve as prime locations for casual meals, group meetings, and casual social interaction. During late evening and night hours, studying often monopolizes the tables in the dining area between The Huddle and Burger King. Brother Gorch pool lounge is usually busy during evening hours.

Deficiencies

Although ideal for short, casual social interaction and group meetings, the current lounges do not serve as a particularly neutral location for social interaction between genders. This is largely due to their lack of activity offerings.

Solutions

A bowling alley or similar "action-venue" would serve as the ideal neutral meeting location for social interaction, particularly in winter months. The central campus location of LaFortune makes it ideal site for such a venue.

DINING OPTIONS

Current Status

Sbarro, Subway, Burger King, Starbucks, The Huddle, and Buen Provecho are franchises and/or university-run ventures that serve varying dining preferences. Weeknite hours of operation include: Sbarro closes at 2am; Starbucks closes at 2am; Subway closes at 1am; The Huddle closes at 4am Sun-Weds and 2am Thurs-Sat; Burger King closes at 8pm.

Deficiencies

While existing restaurants serve various dining preferences, students overwhelmingly desire an expansion of dining options and later weeknight hours of operation for Burger King.

Solutions

Explore expanding nighttime hours of operation for Burger King. Explore recruiting local, South Bend-based restaurants such as South Bend Chocolate Company or Bruno's Pizza to fill possible future restaurant vacancies.

While recruiting pizza or candy franchises might bring duplication of products with current Huddle offerings, the Starbucks-Subway model has proven that venues offering superior quality products do not compete with the Huddle. Starbucks Coffee and Subway franchises in LaFortune are regional leaders in sales volume, and do not compete with Huddle coffee or sandwich offerings. It is reasonable to assume that a local franchise in LaFortune would perform comparably well. If competition was present, hours of operation among restaurant venues might be adjusted to avoid such scenarios.

Finally, recruiting established, local, South Bend restaurant franchises would have the desirable external effect of helping students build meaningful relationships with the South Bend community through student employment and patronization.

TECHNOLOGICALLY EQUIPPED FACILITIES

Current Status

Wireless Internet is available in parts of the main level and basement, while electrical outlets are available in the dining booths outside Subway. Student offices on the second and third floors include several computers and myriad electrical power strips and surge protectors.

Deficiencies

Conference and meeting rooms do not include computers or audio-video display equipment. Electrical outlets are too few and far apart. Spotty signal renders the wireless Internet available only in parts of the building, and connection issues often arise with different computers.

Solutions

Install wireless routers throughout the building and increase the number of electrical outlets so that LaFortune fully supports modern mobility platforms and anticipates future technological advances. Install digital projectors and computer stations in conference rooms and office spaces (a la classrooms in DeBartolo Hall). Enable office printers for wireless printing.

STORAGE SPACE

Current Status

A closet in the Student Government offices, a slightly larger closet in the Student Union Board offices, and a third closet in the Club Resource Center on the third floor.

Deficiencies

A shortage of space and lack of storage utilities such as shelving units, pegboards, wall hooks, etc. The shortage is particularly acute in Student Union Board and Club Resource Center offices.

Solutions

Consider future expansions to student and administrative offices that include expansive storage areas for items needing storage. Converting existing maintenance closets may alleviate storage space shortages in the short term. Upon construction of a new Student Activities Center near modern-day Stepan Center, vacate smaller, existing LaFortune offices and convert them to storage space.

CONCLUSION

LaFortune Student Center serves as the centerpiece of residence life at Notre Dame. It provides common space for academics, dining, social interaction, and the administration of myriad student resources. We recommend that the University implement these changes and integrate them into the Campus Master Plan.

