Carolina Union Feasibility Study

SUMMARY

As the Carolina Union approaches its 50-year anniversary, our student- and staff-comprised Board of Directors wants to envision what our next 50 years will look like. Our existing facilities are aging and the needs of UNC-CH students are changing, so we decided something must be done.

In striving to continue as an integral part of student life, the Board initiated a feasibility study in May 2016 with the help of Raleigh-based Vines Architecture. The project was approved under former Board Chair Jaelyn Coates and carried forward by current Board Chair Boateng Kubi.

The study spanned 10 months and included focus groups, user interviews, benchmark research, and a campus-wide survey, which received a 19.6% response rate. Because the Union is a building for the students and by the students, they remained a central and integral part of the study. With the study complete, the Board is excited to share the findings of our research.

In addition to the work they provided for the study, Vines Architecture also produced a concept to help the Carolina community visualize what a future Union could look like. The concept is entirely informed by the research findings, which include student needs and existing facility assessments. This concept was created outside of the feasibility study project scope.

The Board of Directors is reviewing the study findings and awaiting the final project report from Vines Architecture. We will provide our recommendation for moving forward with the project in the near future. Stay tuned for updates and please reach out with your thoughts and questions.

SCOPE & SCHEDULE  

Source: Vines Architecture
KEY FACTS

- The Carolina Union FPG Student Union facility opened in January 1969.

- The feasibility study project budget was $299,000.

- Benchmark research included nine peer student union facilities; it found them to provide 4.13 more square feet per student, on average, than the FPG Student Union.

- The feasibility study included eight student and staff workshop sessions and 20 student user focus groups.

- Students and staff, alongside Vines Architecture, toured the following institutions: University of Houston; Texas A&M; University of Texas at Austin; Duke University; North Carolina State University; Ryerson University; University of California, Berkeley; and High Point University.

- The feasibility study interviewed 986 students at FallFest and 75 students at Treat Yo Self Thursdays, engaged students 4,823 times on social media with #UNCUnionIdeas, and received 386 Twitter poll votes and 2,392 total video views.

- The feasibility study #UNCUnionIdeas Survey was sent to the entire student body and 5,715 responses were received, a 19.6% response rate.

- Student survey participants indicated that the Carolina Union is the best place on campus to interact informally with other students. However, the top reason they don’t visit more often is that the building is overcrowded.

- 24.67% of student survey participants involved in a student organization indicated that their organization doesn’t have a dedicated space on campus.

- 83.18% of student survey participants said constructing a new union or improving the Carolina Union should be a priority at UNC-CH.

- 6.81% of student survey participants believe the current facilities are satisfactory to meet the current and short term needs.

- Vines Architecture’s proposed concept for a future Carolina Union includes 292,086 total square feet, 149,064 square feet more than our existing facility has. A building of this size would cost approximately $221M.

- The proposed concept would provide space for organizations and student groups that are currently not located in the Union, including the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life and Community Involvement and graduate/professional students.

- The proposed concept would preserve The Gift artwork and make it a central part of the design.

- The proposed concept would increase/add the following spaces:
  - Food Service
  - Great Hall Facilities
  - Conference/Meeting
  - Retail (not previously included)
  - Multipurpose/Event Space
  - Recreation/Entertainment
  - Lounge Space
  - Student Organization
  - Administrative & Facilities Management
  - Diversity & Inclusion (not previously included)
  - Special/Miscellaneous
  - Performance & Visual Arts

- The project will need to be approved by a student vote via the referendum process.
PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS AND COLLABORATORS

PLANNING TEAM:

Vines Architecture
Victor Vines, AIA, LEED AP, Principal-in-Charge / Programming
Robert Thomas, AIA, Design Director / Principal
Jolie Thomas, AIA, Managing Principal / Project Designer
Meredith Smith, Project Designer

Brailsford & Dunlavey, Facility Financial Planners
Bart Hall, Director, Research and Methods
Wilson Jones, Project Manager
Matt Bohannon, Survey Specialist

Cooper Carry, Student Life Advisors
C. Timothy Fish, AIA, LEED AP, Principal-in-Charge
Lesley Braxton, AIA, IIDA, LEED AP, Programmer

Cole Jenest & Stone, Landscape Architecture / Civil Engineering
Brian C. Jenest, RLA, Principal-in-Charge
Scott A. Hazard, RLA, Project Manager / Lead Designer
Sean P. Gleason, PE, Civil Engineer

Dewberry, Mechanical / Electrical / Plumbing Engineering
Jeffrey Roney, PE, LEED AP, Electrical Engineer
Kenneth R. Wehner, PE, LEED AP, Mechanical Engineer

Stewart, Structural Engineering
J. Craig Fisher, PE, Structural Engineer

Cumming, Project Management and Cost Consulting
Jeremy Holt, Regional Director / Estimator

STUDENT LEADERS:

Boateng Kubi, Carolina Union Board Of Directors Chair 2016–2017
Bradley Opere, Student Body President 2016–2017
Madelin Percy, Graduate & Professional Students Federation Secretary 2016–2017
Allie Barton, Carolina Union Employee Forum President 2016–2017

CAROLINA UNION STAFF:

Crystal King, Director
Joe Singer, Sr. Assoc. Director for Events Services
Bobby Kunstman, Sr. Assoc. Director for Student Life & Leadership
Lisa Bonsor, Assoc. Director for Business & Finance
Megan Johnson, Assoc. Director for Communications & Creative Services
Scott Hudson, Sr. Assoc. Director for Facility Management

STUDENT AFFAIRS EXECUTIVE TEAM:

Winston Crisp, J.D., Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
Dr. Bettina Shuford, Assoc. Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
Christi Hurt Assistant, Vice Chancellor & Chief of Staff for Student Affairs
Jonathan Sauls, J.D., Dean of Students for Student Affairs
Dr. Christopher Payne, Assoc. Vice Chancellor & Chief Operating Officer for Student Affairs

CAROLINA UNION BOARD OF DIRECTORS LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE:

Ayoub Ouederni, Carolina Union Board Of Directors LRP Chair
Crystal King, Carolina Union Director
Boateng Kubi, Carolina Union Board Of Directors Chair
Scott Myers, Carolina Dining Services Director
Tristan Routh, Carolina Union Board Of Directors
McKenzie Folan, Carolina Union Board Of Directors
Travis Broadhurst, Carolina Union Board Of Directors

U S C FACILITIES:

Anna Wu, Associate Vice Chancellor for Facility Services
Bob Cwikla, Facilities Architect, Former Project Manager
Jerry Guerrier, Assistant Director Facilities Planning & Design
### TIMELINE

**2016**

**MAY**
- 12 Kickoff & Carolina Union Building Tours
- Work Session 1: Planning Committee
- Work Session 2: Executive Planning Committee

**JUNE**
- 15 Case Study Tour: High Point University
- Work Session 3: Planning Committee
- 24 Focus Groups: UNC Stakeholders
- 28-30 Case Study Tours: Houston, Texas A&M, UT Austin

**JULY**
- 20 Work Session 4: Executive Planning Committee

**AUGUST**
- 8 Case Study Tours: Duke + NCSU
- 10-14 Case Study Tours: Ryerson + UC Berkeley
- 17 Focus Groups: Carolina Union Student Employees
- 18 Design Review Committee Building Tour
- 21 FallFest
- 31 Work Session 5: Planning Committee + Executive Planning Committee

**SEPTEMBER**
- 1 Student Focus Groups: Board of Directors, CUAB, GPSF
- 6-19 #UNCUnionIdeas Survey
- 9 Facilities Review Meeting
- 15 Treat Yo Self Thursday
- 16 Pop Up Twitter Poll Party
- 24 Family Weekend #UNCUnionIdeas Cookies + Conversation

**OCTOBER**
- 10 Work Session 6: Executive Committee, Finalize Programming Exercise
- 19 Student Experience Master Plan Workshop
- 26 Work Session 7: Planning Committee, Review Survey Results

**NOVEMBER**
- 16 Work Session 8: Executive Planning Committee

**DECEMBER**
- 15 Design Review Committee Meeting

**2017**

**JANUARY**
- 18 BOD Results Reveal Presentation from Vines Architecture

**FEBRUARY**
- 27 Feasibility Study Results Reveal

**MARCH**
- Feasibility Study Final Report Delivered by Vines Architecture

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Thoughts/Questions?**
- Email: UNCunionideas@unc.edu
- Connect with us on social media
  - Twitter: [@CarolinaUnion](https://twitter.com/CarolinaUnion)
  - Facebook: [FPG.StudentUnion](https://www.facebook.com/FPG.StudentUnion)
  - Instagram: [carolinaunion](https://www.instagram.com/carolinaunion)
  - YouTube: [Carolina Union](https://www.youtube.com/user/carolinaunion)
  - Snapchat: [carolinaunion](https://www.snapchat.com/add/carolinaunion)

**High-Resolution Imagery**
- Photo credit: Carolina Union