Celebrate the opening of the Student Success District, a student-centric hub in the center of campus

Office of the Provost
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Imagine a one-stop shop where students could get help with financial aid, career advice, access to technology and overall support navigating college life.

What set out as a vision several years ago is now a reality. A grand opening will celebrate the completion of the Student Success District, a 9-acre area that includes the Main Library, the Bartlett Academic Success Center, Bear Down Building and the Albert B. Weaver Science-Engineering Library.

The District's grand opening is April 13 at Bear Down Building, formerly Bear Down Gymnasium, and will be livestreamed.

Construction on the $81 million project began in 2019 and transformed a busy segment of the campus into an interconnected space, anchored by four buildings, for students from all disciplines. The District was created by campus units working together to promote collaboration, wellness and support services for students.

"We shared an objective to bring these buildings into a new era of providing better support to facilitate every student's development inside and outside the classroom," said Shan Sutton, dean of University Libraries. That vision grew to include renovating two floors at Main Library, renovating two floors at the Weaver Library, completing three floors of renovation at Bear Down, and the new construction of the four-story Bartlett Academic Success Center, all as one interconnected, seamless student experience.

STUDENT SUCCESS DISTRICT CELEBRATION

- Grand Opening: April 13, 1:30 p.m., outside Bear Down Building
- Pre-grand opening activities:
- Livestream

Bear Down Building

At the heart of the District is the renovated Bear Down Building. Careful attention to historic preservation was given in order to retain important architectural elements and the character of the iconic building. The building remains on the National Register of Historic Places and was preserved per the Secretary of the Interior's guidelines, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office.

Today, Bear Down houses student support services and programs, study spaces, and health and wellness facilities.

In keeping with its history as a recreation space, the offices and services inside Bear Down focus on overall health and wellness. In addition to workspaces, there are quiet rooms that can be reserved by students. A 1,800-square foot fitness room is equipped with the latest cardio and strength machines. Students also have access to nutrition coaching, wellness workshops and mental health assistance. An interfaith and prayer room will open in the future.

Main Library

The renovation of the Main Library created a two-floor area dedicated to technology, skill development, collaborative research and experiential learning.

Particular focus was given to the collaborative and creative experience of students. Some of the unique features include CATalyst Studio, which occupies the east wing of the ground floor. It offers technologies such as virtual and augmented reality, data visualization and fabrication equipment. In the space's Maker Studio, students can use laser and vinyl cutters, 3D printers, sewing machines and other equipment.

Classes and workshops offered at CATalyst Studios are open to University students, staff and faculty as well as community members.

Albert B. Weaver Science-Engineering Library

A $7 million donation from the Frederick Gardner Cottrell Foundation renamed the Science-Engineering Library the Albert B. Weaver Science-Engineering Library. Weaver, who died in 2012, was recruited as the head of the physics
department in 1958. John P. Schaefer, then the University's president, later appointed him as provost for academic affairs and executive vice president.

"The Student Success District is greatly enhanced by generous private gifts," said John-Paul Roczniak, president and CEO of the University of Arizona Foundation. "Patricia and Bruce Bartlett and the Frederick Gardner Cottrell Foundation have made long-term investments in our students and in the University of Arizona's capacity to provide services and supports that will help them tremendously. I'm extremely grateful, and I know the students who use these facilities will be, as well."

The Weaver Library, which houses the first collaborative learning classroom created on campus, was renovated to improve access to individual and group study spaces and learning spaces students use on a daily basis. The library also has a collaborative faculty room.

In keeping with the holistic vision of the District, the Weaver Library also includes a family study room, a family-friendly space for University student parents, or guardians, and their children.

**Bartlett Academic Success Center**

The Bartlett Academic Success Center was named in recognition of Patricia and Bruce Bartlett, who made a $10 million lead gift to help launch fundraising for the District. The Bartletts are passionate supporters of the Strategic Alternative Learning Techniques Center, where students with learning and attention challenges receive support.

A satellite office for the SALT Center is now located in the Bartlett Academic Success Center.

President Robert C. Robbins has been very supportive of the SALT Center, THINK TANK and the "innovative holistic approach of the Student Success District to meet the needs of the students," Patricia Bartlett said.

"This project exemplifies to us that President Robbins is very forward-thinking in how we prepare our students in a rapidly changing world where we need to engage, embrace and inspire students to a higher level of excellence," she said. "This University of Arizona we have grown to love. It is a very special place."

The gift is one of many the Bartletts have made over the years to initiatives supporting students and health sciences. Their son, Ben, is an alumnus.

The Bartlett Academic Success Center is home to numerous services to help a student not only with instruction, but also life after college. Some of the services are:

- **The A Center**
- **Thrive Center**
- **Student Engagement & Career Development**
- **Student Success & Retention Innovation**
- **THINK TANK**

Having all these services under one roof makes all the difference in helping students adjust to college life, said Elaina Tellez, who is a senior majoring in Mexican American Studies.

"Having a district, or a hub, for students to have all these academic resources is incredibly beneficial to them," Tellez said.

Tellez, who used the services as a student, has worked at the Thrive Center for two years.

She says another university she attended before coming to the University of Arizona "didn't have resources like this."

"It was very isolating and a big culture shock," Tellez said. "Having this resource available helps students navigate and find what they want to be involved with. Here, they have community."

**Grand opening festivities**

The week leading up to the grand opening of the Student Success District will offer the campus community and the community at large an opportunity to see the district and partake in some of the services.

**Festivities** include guided tours, fitness classes, workshops and wellness talks.

"This new infrastructure allows us to serve our students better than ever before," said Liesl Folks, senior vice president for academic affairs and provost. "This center, with its full array of support services is particularly important as we come out of the pandemic. It is a delight to see the students using it."

Read previous stories about the Student Success District on the UA@Work website.

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Links