A look at the services and spaces offered in three Student Success District buildings

University Libraries
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Many of us have not been on main campus for the last year. But one central construction project – the Student Success District[1] – has been moving forward the whole time. To help you get caught up, here is the second installment in a series of articles about the new spaces and centralized resources students and employees will find as they return to campus.

It takes a village to create a Student Success District.

In 2015, leaders across campus decided to merge their construction and renovation projects to design something unique at the University of Arizona. Ideas from students, faculty, staff and architects – coupled with the support of donors – transformed an innovative concept into a concrete reality.

Six years later, three of the buildings that make up the District[1] – Main Library, Albert B. Weaver Science-Engineering Library and the Bartlett Academic Success Center – have been completed. Renovations at the fourth, Bear Down Gymnasium, are on track to be finished in early 2022. And this semester, as more students return to campus, several student service offices have set up shop in the District, providing a central location for the resources students use most.

What's happening at the libraries

Shan Sutton, dean of University Libraries[2], says that raising awareness about the array of services at the Main Library and the Albert B. Weaver Science-Engineering Library was a key motivator for becoming involved in the District. The physical proximity of the two libraries, which are located on the east and west sides of Bear Down Gym, presented an opportunity as renovations at all three facilities were in the early planning stages.

"Library services, resources, spaces and expertise are critical to the success of every student," said Sutton. "We recognized that student success is influenced by a variety of things, and we wanted to coordinate what we offer with a larger system of support on campus."

Entrances were redesigned, service desks with staff were relocated and different floors were reimagined for different types of research, learning and collaboration. According to Sutton, it's all about improving access and making connections for students.

Renovations at the Weaver Library, which were completed with support from the Frederick Gardner Cottrell Foundation, included redesigning the second and third floors as an extension of the library's existing collaborative learning space, which can accommodate up to 250 students. Family study rooms[3] are available on the fourth floor.

In both libraries, more study spaces were created for students who prefer working independently or with their peers.

The Main Library houses CATalyst Studios[4], where members of the campus community can:

- Explore creative technologies like 3D printing in the Maker Studio.
- Schedule time in the Terry Seligman Virtual Reality Studio.
- Learn computational research skills in the Data Studio.
- Try out the technology before borrowing it from the library at the Rhonda G. Tubbs Tech Toolshed. Just around the corner are the Office of Student Computing Resources Multimedia Zone[5] and the 24/7 IT Support Center[6].

The Main Library plans to fully reopen in fall 2021.

"Instead of operating independently, we see ourselves as a real partner and collaborator with various programs in the District," said Sutton. "Within this bigger network, we're all working together to ensure that students have what they need to be successful."

What's happening at the Bartlett Academic Success Center

The Bartlett Academic Success Center, which was completed in December, serves as a central place for serving and connecting with students. Students no longer need to go to multiple buildings to take full advantage of the student services, tutoring, mentoring and career services provided by programs such as Support, Outreach, Success[7], the Strategic Alternative Learning Techniques Center[8], the Thrive Center[9] and THINK TANK[10]. Most of these programs are part of Student Success & Retention Innovation[11], which aims to create a sense of belonging for students and ensure that they feel valued, respected and included as well as to increase retention and graduation rates for undergraduate students.
The SALT Center, a national leader in providing academic support services to those with learning and attention differences, enrolls as many as 700 students each year.

“This new space complements the services offered at our primary location,” said Gabrielle Miller, executive director of the SALT Center. “Students have convenient access to an entire community of campus partners poised to support them and also benefit from comfortable private and collaborative workspaces, which can be reconfigured into various arrangements to accommodate diverse learning styles and activities.”

Students will have access to academic advising from the A Center [12], the College of Humanities [13], the College of Science [14] and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences[15]. Kimberly Jones, vice dean for academic affairs from the College of Humanities says that many of the College of Humanities students are double and even triple majors. Having a single visible location for student services and academic advising from multiple units under one roof will benefit the students greatly. Staff members from Student Engagement & Career Development[16] plan to offer meaningful learning experiences and career services and development in collaboration with colleges, departments, student organizations, alumni and employers.

Abra McAndrew, assistant vice president for enrollment management, says student success happens when faculty, staff and students co-create experiences at the University that align with shared aspirations for academic, career and personal outcomes.

“The District puts the holistic student experience at the forefront and emphasizes many of the factors that lead to student success,” said McAndrew, who leads Student Engagement & Career Development.

One of those factors is donor support.

“The Student Success District is greatly enhanced by generous private gifts,” said John-Paul Rocznia, president and CEO of the University of Arizona Foundation[17]. “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 first story in this series was "5 things to know about the Student Success District[18]."

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