Plans for the New LITC Under Way
Building enhances Oxford’s educational mission and the way students learn today

Sophomore Jamie Rogers hops off the treadmill, grabs her biology textbook, and heads for the Refectory down the aisle. There, she weaves through her classmates working on laptops and holding study sessions, orders a latte, and sits down to review her psychology notes online. Is this a high-tech library fantasy? Believe it or not, this scene may be played out at the new Library and Information Technology Center (LITC) in the not-so-distant future—treadmill and all.

Plans for expanding the Oxford College library are underway, and the resulting facility will not only enhance Oxford’s mission of learning and teaching, but will reflect a new take on the way students study and use technology.

The new LITC will link Phi Gamma Hall, which will be renovated and restored, with a new library facility. The structure will house technology, learning spaces, and academic resources, and the building will reach closer to the college Green, expanding the library’s role as a campus center. In addition, the building is planned to be a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)–certified building, a designation bestowed by the United States Green Building Council on buildings that are environmentally efficient in use and design.

Kitty McNeill, associate dean for library services, and Myra Frady, dean for resource planning and CFO, are involved in the planning phase of the project, which is inspired by the Net Generation, social scientists’ label for today’s students.

The Net Generation is not like the previous generation of students, who worked in their rooms by themselves. Rather, this generation needs community, communication, and collaboration. They study and learn in groups through team projects and discussion. These students are also multitaskers, who combine activities like exercising, eating, socializing, and studying. And they use technology like no generation before them. “The Internet is oxygen to them,” says Frady.

Indeed, the Net Generation wants technology that is new and customizable, as well as seamless. These students use laptops, iPods, PDAs, and cell phones, and they move from their residence halls to the library to the cafeteria with no worries about plugging in or availability.

The task facing McNeill, Frady, and the Gund Partnership, the design consultants planning the LITC, is to create a library to serve not only the Net Generation but generations of students to come, to enrich the faculty who teach them, and to enhance Oxford’s mission of learning. The library will be designed to include flexible spaces designed for a variety of activities. In addition to housing traditional learning tools such as books and...
From Picket Lines to Battle Lines:
Suzie Pope’s Journey as an Agent of Change

Not every third grader writes letters to protest unfair labor conditions. And not every nineteen-year-old visits the Middle East to study the Israel/Palestine conflict. For Oxford sophomore Lucinda (Suzie) Pope 07OX, these actions stem from a desire to improve the human condition. According to Oxford Chaplain Judy Shema, this desire was nurtured from an early age. “Suzie’s an exceptional young woman with a heart for social issues,” Rev. Shema says.

Pope also credits her attendance in Emory’s Youth Theological Initiative with “opening my eyes to what was going on” in the world.

The daughter of a labor union vice president, Pope grew up on picket lines. Her mother’s and her church’s concern over the Israel/Palestine conflict led Pope to discover the Peacemaking Program, a journey of 100 Presbyterians to the Middle East to study Israeli/Palestinian issues and identify advocacy opportunities. Of her acceptance to the program, Pope says, “Since I was young, they felt this experience would be part of my life for a long time.”

She approached the opportunity with characteristic thoughtfulness. Since her church supported the Palestinians, Pope felt she might be biased. “Before traveling overseas, I spoke to (Oxford professors) Dr. Shapiro and Dr. McQuaide to get their views on the conflict,” she explains. According to Professor of Sociology Mike McQuaide, “Suzie elevates the level of discourse in the classroom and asks deep questions.”

During their ten-day trip, the Presbyterians stayed at the International Center of Bethlehem, attending lectures and learning from Palestinians. They visited a refugee camp and school where Pope learned that 80 percent of the children are traumatized by war. The group also visited Israel, spoke with Israelis, including rabbis, and visited the Holocaust Museum.

Even while feeling “overwhelming responsibility” to help because “both sides feel such despair,” Pope enjoyed a children’s musical and tour of gardens created by Reverend Dr. Mitri Raheb.

Pope returned home with sobering lessons. “I learned there are 12,000 refugees living on one square kilometer of land and that the separation wall not only separates countries, it separates people from their humanity.”

Pope feels the Presbyterians’ mission was to carry Palestinian voices beyond the walls. “We hear the Jewish voice in America, we don’t hear the Palestinian voice,” she comments.

No stranger to the struggle to understand both sides of an issue, this daughter of social activists hopes for a career related to peacemaking. With her courage and conviction, one can expect she will be a force for positive change in the world.

Go Oxford Eagles!

Tennis Finishes Best Year Ever

This past spring, for the first time in Oxford athletics history, a team has brought home a national championship trophy. The men’s tennis team, having finished third and second at the previous two NJCAA III national tournaments, earned their first team win by overcoming strong opponents and capturing six of the eight matches.

“If we go from not being in the tournament five years ago, to improving every year to get to the championship is impressive in itself,” said Head Coach Brandon Feldman. “But when you look at our school’s small size, the selectivity of our students, and the academic strength of our particular athletes, it makes everything more special.”

Feldman added to the team’s success when he was named Max Grubbs Coach of the Tournament for Division III.

The Oxford men’s tennis team, champions at the 2006 NJCAA Division III national tournament.
A campus master plan defines the institution’s official goals for development of buildings and other facilities, green spaces and landscaping, utility infrastructure, transportation systems, and the costs of these developments. As with most plans, campus master plans represent the best thinking at the time they were prepared, but they need to be updated as circumstances change.

Two circumstances changed that made it necessary for Oxford to substantially revise its master plan this spring. One was the decision in April 2004, that “the experiment was over,” and it was time for Oxford to enter fully into the Emory fold as one of the nine University divisions. From that, it followed that the facilities and grounds on the Oxford campus should become “more Emory-like.” A much-improved library with integrated spaces for individual and group study, more ample and better-equipped science teaching laboratories, and spaces for student social and club activities are key additions needed to reach that standard.

A second changed circumstance is our newly adopted plan to grow. At the conclusion of a nine-month dialog within the Oxford community, we decided to pursue growth by as many as fifty students per year to a total enrollment of 1,200, provided several conditions are met. One of those conditions is that we must have adequate facilities to support additional students.

Our master-planning project began with a space needs analysis conducted by Daniel Paulien and Associates, followed by systematic design process lead by The Szemere Group, a firm of architects in Atlanta. Faculty, staff, students, counselors, alumni, and townspeople all participated in the process. The result is an exciting, comprehensive plan that describes the size and location of the new library, science center, student center, residence halls, athletics field house, and administrative/classroom buildings. From the beginning, our working concept was Oxford’s traditional image of a “Temple in the Trees,” and the new campus design is planned to complement both our historic buildings and our sylvan setting.

The planning process is not yet complete. Emory’s Board of Trustees Real Estate, Buildings, and Grounds Committee will meet on the Oxford campus on September 27 to review and potentially to approve the new plan. Once approved, we will be able to share the details. In anticipation of their endorsement, we have begun the demanding work of developing sequencing strategies and cost models that will guide our financial planning. Philanthropy, support from the University, and tuition and room fees will all be needed to make the plan a reality over approximately the next ten years.

An unusual facet of the master-planning process has been the collaboration between Oxford the college and Oxford the city. With financial support from the college, the city undertook development of a new city master plan in fall 2003. The result calls for several improvements to enhance the sense of community, most notably the development of a city center, which would include city administrative offices, a new post office, a professional office space, and some limited commercial development. Each of the city center designs now being considered would be located within a block or two of campus and would provide services to students as well as other townspeople. We have formed a joint college/city committee that is meeting monthly to find ways we can support our complementary and connected master plans.

This is a huge and complex undertaking, but there can be nothing more important for Oxford. Although Oxford has made a tradition of overcoming limitations, our facilities ultimately define what we can do. The appearance of our buildings and grounds makes a statement: a visually interesting, well-appointed, and carefully maintained campus bespeaks an engaging, thorough, and thoughtful education. Our students deserve nothing less.

Stephen H. Bowen
stephen.bowen@emory.edu

The Oxford College Campus Master Plan

The LITC was designed with an eye toward the ways students work. The facility will provide spaces for individual study as well as areas for collaborative learning.

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periodicals, the LITC will house study areas, classrooms, technology support, and academic centers.

Study areas will be modular, so students can create group learning spaces as well as solitary study spots. There will be an information commons with computer workstations, a digital technology laboratory, a writing center, a language and music laboratory, and tutoring spaces. Classrooms will be interactive, with the latest technology. To ensure efficient study, the library will be divided into zones, which will include quiet, social, and twenty-four-hour access areas, so students can change location to fit their study habits.

“We want this to be a place where students want to study, and that means providing the resources, services, and assistance they’re looking for,” says McNeill. These services, as many colleges have learned, include installing a coffee shop, tentatively called the Refectory. As for the treadmills, they’re not that far-fetched an idea.

“Treadmills are an idea one of our faculty members threw out there,” says McNeill. “We want to create a place that offers options for the students to study today. As we walked through one campus workout facility, we saw students on exercise bikes and treadmills with textbooks in front of them, so we haven’t ruled them out.”

The LITC will also house academic centers, including the new Center for Academic Excellence, which will support and enrich the work of the Oxford faculty, and the Pierce Institute for Leadership and Community Engagement, which coordinates student leadership and engagement programs. Phi Gamma will be restored to a multipurpose space suitable for small lectures, receptions, and faculty meetings. The resources featured will be varied and new, but their goal is in keeping with Oxford’s foundation. As Frady says, the LITC “is not about trying to be something different than Oxford, it’s about providing learning opportunities that support Oxford’s mission.”

So far the project has had overwhelming support, including that from students. When strategic planning architects asked Oxford students what would they do with campus facilities if they had $1 million, the number-one answer was expand the library.

Unfortunately, the project will cost a lot more than $1 million. Right now, projected costs total $25 million for the facility, and Tom Wilfong, director of Development and University Relations (DUR) at Oxford, says that to date, approximately $3 million has been raised. “This includes a $396,000 challenge grant from the University that has recently been met by the members of Oxford’s Board of Counselors,” he says. “The library staff, the DUR Oxford staff, and Gund Partnership have developed a list of naming opportunities ranging from $10,000 to $10 million for the new LITC. These gifts are the beginning of what we need to make the LITC the valuable resource it can be.

“The LITC is what our current students and faculty are looking for and need right now,” says McNeill, “and it will be crucial for providing support for student learning now and in the future.”
Rivers of Influence
An alumnus returns to campus to take part in the OIEE

For teachers, few experiences are more rewarding than witnessing a student’s passion for learning. When a student translates that passion into a career that ignites the spark of learning in others, the experience intensifies. So when Kip Hart 94OX 96C, attended the Oxford Institute for Environmental Education (OIEE) this past summer, it was a special event for him and for his former biology professor, Eloise Carter.

Hart applied for the OIEE after reading about it in Oxford Outlook. He realized the outdoor learning lab was an ideal venue for increasing his knowledge of schoolyard ecology. Concepts presented during two weeks of hands-on study would enhance Hart’s skills in his job as a science teacher at Toombs County High School in Lyons, Georgia.

The fact that Hart collaborated with Carter made the opportunity more meaningful. “Oxford is where I got inspired about science. The professors were excited about science and conveyed that to students,” Hart recalls, adding, “To come back and work with Dr. Carter in a professional setting was truly a full-circle experience.”

OIEE participants start each day with field trips to rivers, lakes, and woods, collecting data samples to share with colleagues. All attendees “from kindergarten teachers to college professors work toward a common goal,” Hart says. He contemplated his own schoolyard and how to apply OIEE concepts there. Hart is convinced OIEE will help him meet Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) for increased hands-on study. At an agricultural setting directly adjacent to his school, Hart plans to lead students through a study measuring the number of invertebrates before and after pesticide is applied. The students will then prepare a report for the local farmer.

According to Carter, hands-on instruction improves student motivation and memory. A recent $150,000 grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation will enable OIEE to implement the Live Oak Initiative. The Initiative has three goals: 1) extending OIEE recruitment to teachers in South Georgia and North Florida, 2) providing online schoolyard ecology lesson plans for teachers who cannot attend, and 3) hosting a science education symposium. At the symposium, attendees such as Hart will demonstrate how they have implemented concepts in their schools.

“It’s always good to have students you’ve taught out there teaching,” Carter says. In this way, she feels “Oxford extends into the wider community, into other classrooms.” Borrowing a metaphor from ecology, she compares former students–teachers to “all the little tributaries that make up a larger river.”

The Old Well
—Joe Bartenfeld 64OX 66C

The Old Well had been donated, in memory, to Emory at Oxford (Oxford College) by the Class of 1930. Its location was just outside of the old Oxford bookstore and next to the sidewalk, which ran between the men’s dormitories and the library. Its location made it unavoidable when one walked to the library or to Mr. Gregory’s lecture room above the bookstore. The well was shallow, being only a couple of feet in depth. The water in the well was only replenished by annual rainfall. There was always a sense of decay, for any misfortunate creature that entered never left, merely adding substance to the rot. In the late fall and spring small bubbles of noxious gas formed and raced to the surface, causing an odiferous smell, which would signal to all their proximity to the well. Few would risk lingering near the well during warm weather. Its contents could only be described as putrid.

There are traditions and then there are traditions! It was around the Old Well that my classmates and I created a new tradition, which quickly rose to epidemic proportions; however, this tradition would be short lived. Students who had birthdays between the end of one academic year and the beginning of next were fortunate indeed, because as a reward for having a birthday, it became popular to pounce upon the unsuspecting victim, strip them to their shorts, and carry him struggling to the Old Well. Once his energy was exhausted we would invert him, then lift him to others who had positioned themselves atop the well, and then we would immerse him headfirst into the slime. He would then be lifted out, wiping his eyes, spitting, snorting, swearing revenge, and using such profanities that might have caused Dean Eady to glare with disgust. We were victorious gladiators who had won their match and had just thrust a sword into their hapless adversary. Then, we would all run, leaving the birthday boy to his own devices, which normally included a three-day shower.

My own appointment with destiny came on a cold and rather nasty mid-January evening in 1963. Fearful of the inevitable, I decided to hide in a place I hoped the guys would not locate me and hopefully give up their quest. After having spent the better part of six hours underneath the shrubbery across the street from Dowman Hall, I crept silently back to my bed around two a.m. Feeling extremely smug, I undressed and climbed into bed in a manner so extremely smug that I was able to sleep contentedly, as my classmates in this photograph from 1963.
There are many reasons that Oxford College attracts me. I love the beautiful campus; the sense of closeness; the relationships that exist among students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community; and the sense of being part of the larger Emory University. I have always treasured the Oxford experience and what it means in the lives of the young men and women who come to this campus as freshmen. The transformation that takes place in their lives during these two years is apparent to all of us who live and work on the Oxford campus. But nothing has been as rewarding to me as my recent work with alumni leaders as we enter into a monumental effort to rebuild and renovate the physical plant at Oxford College and to double the size of our scholarship endowment. Since August 31, 2005, not a single person has declined our request for volunteer leadership in this campaign. We have had a number of significant gifts—cash, pledges, and bequests—and, more important, there is a spirit of quiet confidence and assuredness that is beginning to spread to all segments of the Oxford College family. More and more of our alumni and friends are stepping forward and sharing with us their dreams of what they want to do for Oxford and asking for our help in making their dreams a reality.

Let me illustrate this point by applauding a member of our Board of Counselors who has a particular interest in the new Library and Information Technology Center (LITC). This individual met with the dean and with faculty and staff advisers to the Technology Center (LITC). When he was made aware of the fact that we were drawing up a list of LITC naming opportunities, he called Kitty McNell, the director of Oxford College’s library, and me and said very quietly that he wanted to reserve the first naming opportunity in the new library to honor Mrs. Freda Oliver. She and Mrs. Elizer decided together to name the new gallery and exhibition space in the LITC in her honor. As I’ve said many times, my only regret is that I don’t have an OX after my name.

W. Thomas Wilfong
Director of Development
Tom.Wilfong@emory.edu