

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The recommendation to undertake a Master Plan for the University Center and UC Satellite recognized in part the pressing need to address student demand on a campus which is significantly growing in both population and physical development. Corresponding with this growth are national trends which indicate that prospective students and their families are more concerned today about convenient access to amenities on campus than ever before. Such factors drive the demand for contemporary social and service facilities that enhance the college experience.

Findings from the study of the University Center and UC Satellite showed that improvements and expansion were necessary in the following areas:

- Gathering and lounge spaces
- Dining facilities
- Bookstore
- Student organization and activity areas
- Meeting rooms

UH currently does not provide its students with the variety, quality, or amount of space required to meet present or future needs for extracurricular activity and social engagement. The most obvious present deficit is the shortage of accessible and appealing space for student organization use in the UC Underground. This lack of desirable space undermines efforts to increase student participation on campus.

Secondly, the fact that the lounge areas in UC are uninviting and undistinguished sends a message that the University is not particularly interested in supporting its students' desire to gather and socialize. There is an evident dearth of attractive, spirited places in which students can hang out, study, or congregate.



Hand in hand with social spaces in any successful student life facility are food and retail amenities. For a university center to become a destination, it must offer modern conveniences that student's desire. The paucity of food choices, places to dine, contemporary facilities, and services for students and the campus community severely limits UC's ability to sustain repeat visitation.

The key to drawing the greatest population of students is to provide the right mix of services, amenities, and programs. There is no formulaic approach to what must be housed in a university center, and no facility can ever expect to meet the desires and needs of each individual student. While some programs, such as the Cougar One Card, are destinations, it is often these types of services that introduce students to other attractions within the building. On the converse, it is equally plausible that students coming to a facility to attend a film, or grab lunch, might also take interest in joining a student organization by passing its





workspace. The present configuration of space within the UC does not offer the best arrangement of programs to bolster impromptu participation and encourage exploration.

Lastly, retail food options are lacking; students and faculty complain of limited menu selections and a scarcity of healthy foods. Most notably, the reliance on quick-serve options, scant choice in seating areas, and long lines at food venues, discourage lingering and socializing.

The Master Plan provides direction on the steps required to enhance student life at the UC specifically, with some consideration given to the UC Satellite as well. Recommendations are based on the following guiding principles.

Creating a one-of-a-kind experience, that epitomizes student life and student success at UH

- Attract more users to the UC for longer periods of time
- Make the UC an invaluable resource for all members of the UH community
- Provide facilities and outdoor spaces which are unique reflections of the University's spirit, regional attributes, and campus culture
- Reorganize spaces so offices are easy to locate and there is improved efficiency and wayfinding among people and departments
- Increase the level of activities and programs to increase the presence of students on campus during weekends, evenings, as well as between classes that will allow for shared experience and community
- Provide more visible connections between the facility and UH/Cougar Brand

Guiding Principles

- Provide an environment that is conducive to innovation, learning, empowerment and creative thought
- Provide opportunities for student leadership development through volunteerism, boards, committees, student organizations and student employment

Become the Provider of Choice for Activities, Services and Facilities for the UH community

- Create a destination for students, faculty, staff and visitors alike
- Provide enhanced program amenities and a contemporary aesthetic environment
- Provide accessibility for the physically challenged in the UC and its exterior landscape, conforming not only to the legal minimums, but maximizing the number of people who can use the facility
- Optimize the UC as a central location that strengthens connections to neighboring student-life facilities
- Serve as a unifying force - a point of identification - for the University community as a whole
- Enhance and ensure facilities are clean, safe and comfortable, while fostering a climate that is welcoming to all students and the UH community
- Further diversify the portfolio of meeting/conference facilities and program locations
- Improve the availability and accessibility for wireless and other technology and information services

Foster a Sense of Place by Enhanced Formal and Informal Spaces

- Increase lounge and informal seating locations throughout the UC complex
- Provide a dynamic mix of space types and activities and give students choice in how they wish to engage with the building and others
- Enhance the number and quality of outdoor program spaces
- Develop open spaces which allow for individual relaxation, recreation, outdoor dining, or simply hanging out
- Foster opportunities for interactions among students, faculty and staff
- Create a 24-hour zone



Enhance the Food Service Program

- Improve the level of customer service and flow for retail food service operations
- Provide greater dining variety and options
- Enhance the overall quality of food services (retail, catering, convenience store)

Cultivate a Convenient and Centralized Retail Zone

- Provide greater visibility, space and ease of access to the UH Bookstore
- Create a central corridor of retail enterprises to enhance customer satisfaction and profitability
- Increase the variety of self-operated and contracted retail service and conveniences which are responsive to the diverse needs of the UH community

Create a Synergistic Student Organization Center

- Provide versatile, easily identifiable and accessible facilities where students can meet and pursue extracurricular interests
- Increase office and support space for Student Organizations
- Provide a "One Stop Shop" by the repositioning of offices which support student organizations

