

University of Scranton Unveils Ambitious Campus Center Project ☐

Posted 31 January 2006

University of Scranton President Rev. Scott R. Pilarz, S.J., announced today the largest and most ambitious building project in the 118 year history of the Jesuit university, a \$30,000,000 new campus center that will transform the heart of the campus.

Pending approval from the Scranton and Lackawanna County planning commissions, the roughly 118,000 square foot, four-story building will be located along Mulberry Street in the rear of the existing Gunster Memorial Student Center and Weinberg Memorial Library. Construction is expected to begin in the late spring of 2006 with an anticipated completion in the fall of 2007.

Once construction of the new building is complete, the existing Gunster Center will be taken down to create a campus green in its place that is nearly the size of a football field.

"Among the hallmarks of The University of Scranton is our extraordinary sense of community, an essential element that sets us apart from many colleges," said Fr. Pilarz. "We intentionally refer to the new building as a 'campus' center, since it will encourage interaction among students, faculty and staff at the same time that it serves as a crossroads for the broader Scranton community."

In the announcement, Father Pilarz referenced dramatic growth and development of the university that has taken place over the more than four decades since the Gunster Center was dedicated in 1960.

"Over the past four decades, Scranton has evolved into a broadly regional, comprehensive institution with students coming from more than 30 states and more than 35 countries," Father Pilarz added. "The university has simply outgrown the 77,000 square foot Gunster Center, which was built for a time when only 228 of our total student enrollment of 2,300 lived on campus," Father Pilarz added.

The University of Scranton student enrollment for the fall of 2005 is 4,846, of which 2,075 are resident students. The university also employs 832 full-time and 253 part-time faculty and staff.

According to Vincent Carilli, Ph.D., Vice President for Student Affairs, the new campus center is designed to address the Gunster Center's limitations in dining and meeting spaces.

"With the help of our architects and the benefit of scores of visits to other campuses, we have developed an exciting design that addresses our serious need for increased dining areas and student gathering spaces, while consolidating many important functions that are now spread throughout the campus," Dr. Carilli said.

The first floor of the building includes a grand lobby, campus bookstore, retail dining with seating for 250, a student mail center and coffee shop. The second floor offers a fireplace lounge, offices for Student Affairs, Mission and Ministries and the student forum. The forum will serve as the nerve center for student clubs and activities, Wellness Center, Women's Center, Multicultural Center, and Center for Social Action and Service Initiatives.

"The design of the student forum will encourage interaction among clubs and organizations, and will also include our leadership library," said Dr. Carilli.

The third floor will serve as the primary dining space in the building and will have seating for 800. The fourth floor will be a hub both for student events and for the many University activities that are open to the public. It includes a subdividable 7,000 sq. ft. ballroom with dinner seating for 425 and lecture seating for more than 700, a theatre with 260 fixed seats, and three multi-purpose meeting rooms.

The center will have entrances from Mulberry Street, the Royal Way and the newly created green space that looks toward The Commons in the center of campus.



Rendering of The University of Scranton's new 118,000 square-foot Campus Center as seen from the Commons over the nearly football-field sized green space, which will be created at the heart of the Jesuit university's campus.



Interior rendering of the grand two-story lobby atrium of the The University of Scranton's new Campus Center, designed by Philadelphia architects Burt Hill Kosar Rittleman.

The design of the center by Philadelphia architects Burt Hill Kosar Rittleman incorporates windowed atriums and two-story open spaces into an airy interior design. Brown brick of various shades and tall windows dominate the exterior that features gabled roofs that blend nicely with existing campus buildings and the surrounding neighborhood.

Plans will be submitted to the City and County planning commissions in February for review and approval.

For more information and project updates, visit <http://matrix.scranton.edu/campuscenter>.

University of Scranton's New Campus Center Quick Facts

Building Total Square Footage: 118,000

Outdoor Campus Green Total Square Footage: 33,600 (*All outdoor space 50,000*)

Total Site and Building Square Footage: 168,000

Estimated Cost: \$30,000,000

Campus Center Floors: Four

Campus Center Rooms/Areas:

Dining facilities with seating for 800; retail dining areas with seating for 250; 10,000 square foot student forum area for student organizations; Student Affairs Office, Mission and Ministries Office, campus mailroom, fireplace lounge, campus bookstore, convenience store, theater, ballroom, and campus meeting rooms.

Architect: Burt Hill Kosar Rittleman, Philadelphia

Plans to Scranton Planning Commission: February 2006

Construction Start Date: Spring/Summer 2006

Construction Completion Date: Fall 2007

Quote from University of Scranton President Rev. Scott R. Pilarz, S.J.:

"Among the hallmarks of The University of Scranton is our extraordinary sense of community, an essential element that sets us apart from many colleges. We intentionally refer to the new building as a 'campus' center, since it will encourage interaction among students, faculty and staff at the same time that it serves as a crossroads for the broader Scranton community."

Gunster Student Center:

Built in 1959 and dedicated in **1960** to accommodate a **full-time student body of 1,358** (228 resident students and 1,130 off-campus/commuter students) and 924 adult part-time /graduate school students. **Today**, The University of Scranton **full-time student enrollment is 3,797** (2,075 resident students and 1,722 off-campus/commuter students) and 1,076 adult/graduate school students. The University also employs 832 full-time and 253 part-time faculty and staff. The Gunster Student Center will be taken down after construction of the new Campus Center to create a green nearly the size of a football field at the center of campus.