

## **Bringing Everyone Together to the Center:**

A Redevelopment Plan of the Student Center at The City College Of New York



*Fig. 1: Rendering of the proposed Clark Hall Center*

### ***Benny's Betterment Bureau***

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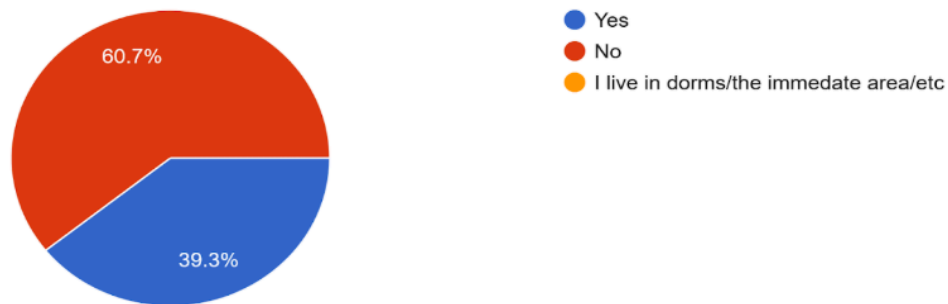
***Introduction:***

For many years, The City College of New York has functioned as a commuter school for the residents of New York City and beyond. That begs the question: what do those students do when they're in between classes? According to first-hand research, not much. This is largely in part due to the current lackluster student center at City College. The center currently residing in Wingate Hall is less than glamorous as it is currently filled with broken-down game equipment and barely has enough room to contain more than 20 people. That's why the Benny's Betterment Bureau has decided to propose a new and innovative center, which would completely overhaul the current one into an area that potential students would be attracted to, influencing their decision to choose CCNY. Our proposed center, which would be located near Aaron Davis Hall, would be exponentially bigger, with three floors that can host many different activities simultaneously. A reconstruction of the student center at CCNY would increase productivity for students, happiness, and enjoyment when on campus, and would be a place where students flourish and interconnect with one another.

But why does City College need a student center? Would this really be something that is valued by the student body? From our grassroots study, we can confirm that the answer is undoubtedly yes. In preparation for this project, we gathered survey results from a multitude of students concerning their thoughts and gained some validating answers. Based on our findings we can determine that the vast majority of CCNY students commute to school compared to living in the dorms. In fact, we couldn't find a single respondent who said that they used the dorms, firmly rooting City College's identity in that of a commuter school. Furthermore, within the category of those who commute to school, it takes almost all of them somewhere between 1 to 2 hours to come to school and go home. With so much of their day taken up by just

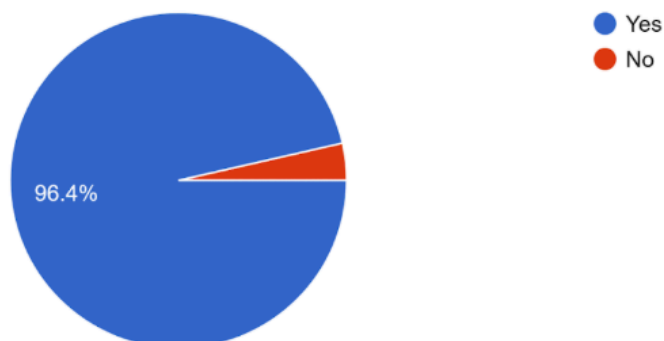
commuting, it is no wonder that 60.7% of respondents said that they have no place on campus to hang out and socialize. Now this is a minority of City College students, but if we were to take this percentage and apply it to the general student population of the school (14,403 according to the school's website), we would find that 8,743 students have no avenues to socialize on campus. Beyond even that, every respondent for the survey responded with a yes when asked if they would like an expanded student center at City College. For further details, you can refer to the appendix, but even without the extra data, it is overwhelmingly clear that an expansion of the student center is the path forward for this school.

If you commute to college, do you have a designated place to hang out?



*Fig. 2: A pie chart representing surveyors who have somewhere to go in between classes*

Would you be interested in a improved dedicated student center to hang out in



*Fig. 3: A pie chart visually representing surveyors who want a student center*

While we do have evidence that the CCNY community would love a student center, how could we prove its practical use? While we have limited options in proving its use, others are not, as evidenced by the research article “How Learning Centers Benefit the Campus Community,” written by Dolores Greenwalt, a renowned professor at Carroll University. In said article she highlights several key points regarding the positive impact of student centers. Among these was the fact that these hubs serve as spaces that foster student engagement, offer areas for collaboration, provide access to academic resources, and give opportunities for meaningful social interactions. Such centers create a sense of community and belonging, which are essential for student retention and overall success (Greenawalt, 2024). By providing dedicated areas for group study and workshops, student centers open opportunities for individuals to interact, build meaningful connections, and strengthen bonds. Simultaneously, these environments contribute to improved GPAs and cultivate a robust work ethic across the student body. Given these clear

benefits, City College must move forward with these changes with a structured and well-thought-out action plan to make this dream a reality.

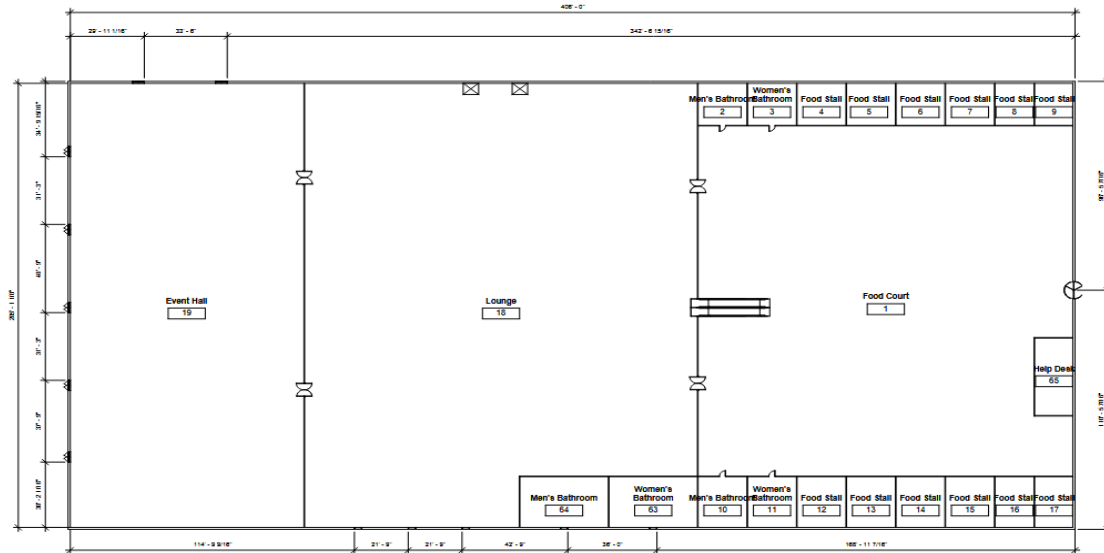
***Action Plan:***

Now that the necessity and value of a new and improved student center have been clearly established, it's time to translate this vision into actionable steps. Benny's Betterment Bureau proposes the construction of a state-of-the-art Student Center named "Clark Hall," named after the City College professor who testified at *Brown v. Board of Education*. Much like how the case represented a massive step towards racial unity in the educational space, this student center will stand as an example of how far we have come in that goal, as shown by the diverse student body of the school. As for the physical building, the center will be built near Aaron Davis Hall with an area of approximately 80,000 square feet. When designing it, we kept in mind the diverse needs of the CCNY student body, fostering an inclusive and engaging environment for all students. Below, we detail the carefully considered layout, key features, and amenities that will ensure the center's role as a vital campus landmark and community hub.

***First Floor:***

On the first floor, we plan to have a mall-like aesthetic incorporating a student help section and a food court. At the front entrance to the building, you'll be met by a help desk where you can ask any questions regarding the center. Once you walk past the help desk, you will be in the food court, which houses a variety of different food options, giving students a choice between established name brands and local Harlem offerings. At the far end of the food court, you will find stairs to the second floor, and right next to either side of them, there will be a

door to the lounge. This area can be used by students to relax in between classes, socialize, and participate in smaller activities hosted by students. Once you walk past the lounge, you will be greeted by the doors to the event hall. This is a large reservable space for the sake of larger events such as concerts, art competitions, public movie showings, or other events meant to include and excite the students of City College.



*Fig. 4: Floor Plan for first floor*

### ***Second Floor:***

After walking (or riding the elevator up) to the second floor, students will be greeted by a variety of options to study as they see fit. In the plaza area above the food court, there will be a large number of smaller private study rooms that students can reserve for certain periods. These rooms will be able to hold up to three people and are equipped with desks, seats, and charging stations to make studying comfortable. Once you walk further down, you'll be able to see larger study rooms on the second floor's midsection. In these rooms, students can have groups ranging from 7-10 people with the intended goal of working on group projects. As such these rooms will have long tables with office chairs and have a whiteboard along with markers you can borrow from the library to prevent stealing. Speaking of the Library, that is what is located at the very



recognizing that health plays a crucial role in student life, we decided to include a fully equipped gym on the third floor as well. This space supports both mental and physical well-being by offering modern fitness machines, group exercise classes, and ample room for stretching or yoga sessions. It provides students with a convenient way to stay active and healthy while balancing the demands of their academic responsibilities.

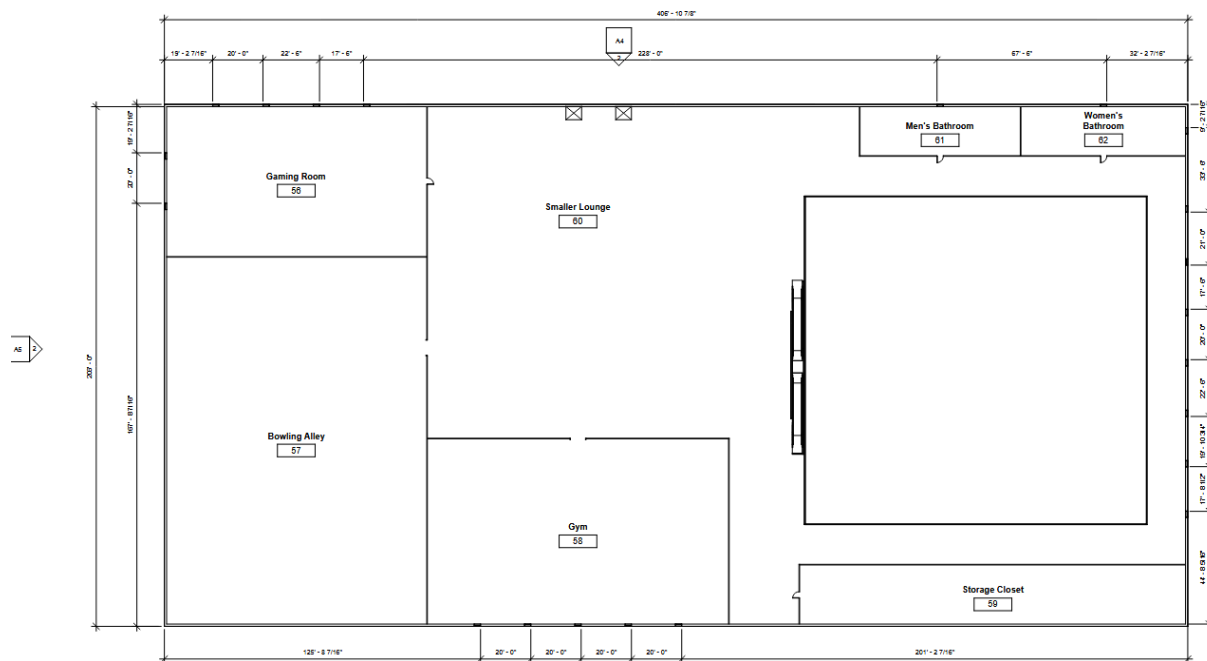


Fig. 6: Floor Plan for the third floor.

### **Construction Timetable:**

The following is a detailed schedule that breaks down every phase of the Clarke Hall's construction—from initial site preparation to final inspections. This timetable ensures that the project will stay on track, meet crucial milestones, and deliver the high-quality student center that is deserved.

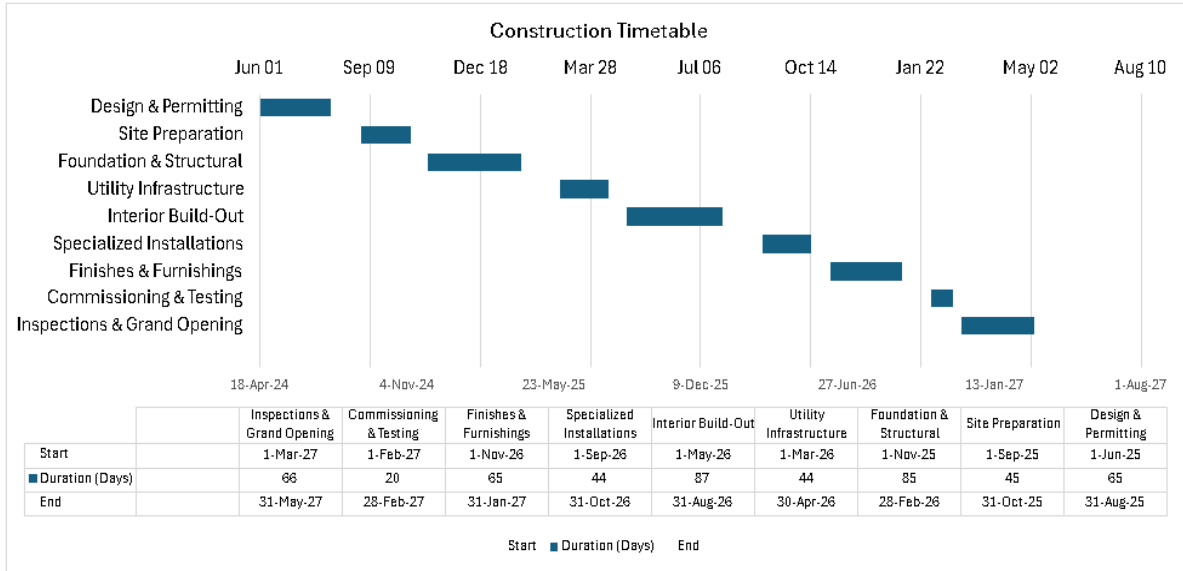


Fig. 7: Clark Hall’s Construction Timetable

**Costs and Benefits:**

To ensure that Clark Hall meets the diverse needs of the CCNY student body, we have carefully outlined the financial requirements for each component of the project—from area cost to the specialized entertainment equipment and state-of-the-art technology. The following budget chart provides a clear breakdown of these estimated expenditures, illustrating how every dollar contributes to creating a welcoming, innovative, and fully equipped student center.

<b>Cost Items</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Estimated Cost (USD)</b>
Site & Structural Construction	Site preparations, land allocation, and building structure(approx. 80,000 sq ft)	<b>Total: \$22,000,000</b> (based on NYC land prices)
First Floor: Food Court	Build-out of vendor stalls, kitchen equipment, and decor.	<b>Total cost: \$40,000</b>
First Floor: Lounge & Event Hall	event staging, sound/light systems, and decor.	Sound system(\$25,000) 8X Stage lights(\$1,200) <b>Total: \$26,200</b>
Second Floor: Library	Space filled with books, printers, and computers	3x Normal printers(\$1590) 2x 3D printers(\$500) <b>Total allotted budget:</b> \$93,750
Second Floor: Study Spaces	Amenities for private study areas.	4x Whiteboards(\$116) 4x office meeting table(\$760) <b>Total: \$876</b>
Third Floor: Gaming Room	Modern consoles, computers, high-speed internet, and gaming lounge furniture	4x Nintendo Switch(\$1200) 3x Digital Edition PS5(\$1200) 15x pc(\$14,000) Furniture(\$1,200) <b>Total: \$18,000</b>

Third Floor: Bowling Alley	Lanes, machinery, seating, scoring displays, accompanied by a variety of bowling equipment.	6x lanes(\$210,000) Bowling equipment(\$100,000) <b>Total: \$310,000</b>
Third Floor: Gym	Fitness equipment (treadmills, weights, etc), specialized rubber flooring for shock absorption	10x treadmills(\$6,900) 3x 300 lbs weight set(1500) Rubber flooring for 4000 sq ft (\$16000) <b>Total: \$24,440</b>
Miscellaneous & Contingency	All furniture, Unexpected costs, and additional fees	<b>Total: \$1,700,000</b>
<b>Total Estimated Cost</b>	—	<b>\$24,213,266</b>

*Fig. 8: Total budget for construction and contents.*

### **Benefits:**

With something this expensive, it's normal to wonder what could possibly be the benefit of funding this project. However, this can be explained with one simple word: investment. By funding this project, we are investing in the students of City College by cultivating a sense of community. As elaborated earlier in the introduction via Dolores Greenwalt's article "How Learning Centers Benefit the Campus Community," student centers can foster a sense of belonging within the student body. This is important since if students feel like they belong and

that they are being supported by the college, there is a good chance that this could lower stress in the average student and let them excel in their classes, which would make the school look a lot better. And since the school looks better due to the higher performance of the students, the school can attract even stronger students who will excel creating a positive feedback loop where the students of City College get better as time goes on.

***Experience:***

Allows us to introduce you to the crew that is turning big ideas into your new favorite hangout spot.

**Ivan Ona** is a first-year Civil Engineering student at CCNY. Previously, he attended a specialized high school that focused on construction, engineering, and architecture. Through this program and his experience in the construction trade, he developed a passion for engineering, which motivated him to pursue a career in Civil Engineering. During high school, he took advantage of opportunities to explore the field further, including an internship with Lehrer Cummings, where he toured job sites and gained insight into the technical aspects of construction. This role helped him build essential skills such as proper organization, document management, and writing technical reports based on on-site observations. He also honed his abilities with Excel, creating data tables and using various commands to streamline information. Prior to this internship, Ivan served as an assistant to a Civil Engineer, working on topographic maps of roads and other municipal infrastructure. His strong work ethic, dedication, and eagerness to complete tasks efficiently allowed him to excel in both positions. Outside of his academic and professional pursuits, Ivan enjoys exploring the city—particularly visiting markets

that feature unique and exotic products. He values the thrill of trying new things, whether they stand out visually or offer unique experiences.

**John Okoh** is a second-year Civil Engineering student with a Psychology minor; due to this, he has developed strong interpersonal, communication, and presentational skills needed to excel in a multitude of roles. A good example of this would be when he led a Revit class project where, in said position, he had to manage the group while they worked on the three components: the presentation, the written description, and the Revit project itself. This involved coordinating meeting times with the group while providing oversight on what was made. Finally, he led the presentation part of the project where groups had to present to the class their dream house and how it functioned. Beyond this, he also has skills in Python, Microsoft 365, QGIS, and Revit.

**Matthew Sales** is a first-year electrical engineering student at the City College of New York. He is committed, reliable, and adaptable. He is proficient in using Microsoft Office Suite applications and coding languages such as C++, Java, and Python. His skills can be fully displayed in his previous internship in the IT Department of Elmhurst Hospital, which required him to troubleshoot technical issues on a daily basis and multitask. Furthermore, his strong human relation skills enabled him to effectively connect with other staff members.

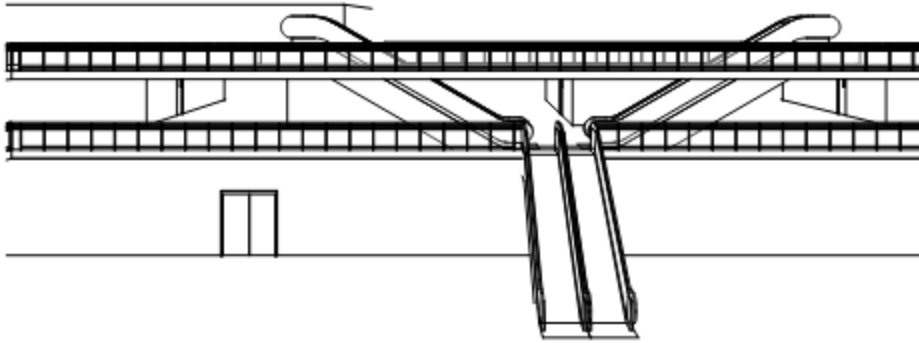
**Farrukh Zayniev** is a first-year Computer Science student at The City College of New York. He is motivated, and has excellent problem solving and analytical skills. His leadership qualities can be seen in his experience as an assistant day camp counselor where he consistently excelled in his duties and stood out among his peers. He had also worked very effectively in a team environment as he worked diligently with them with the responsibilities of being a leader at the camp. His motivation can be seen with his design and development of a fully functional game as a final project at JMHS that was written in Java. He is proficient in software engineering

languages such as C++, Java, and JavaScript and is fluent in all three which has excelled his problem solving and analytical skills.

***Conclusion:***

Overall, we believe that our proposal for the Clark Hall Student Center holds many aspects that will satisfy the student body of City College through the introduction of academic and recreational features such as a food court, study rooms, a gaming center, etc. Of course, the predicted total cost of \$24,213,266 is nothing to brush over; however, the host of benefits that this student center would provide would justify this investment such as a notable improvement to the general welfare of the student body while acting as a source of revenue for the college and function as an advertisement to attract more potential students. All in all, the benefits the Clark Hall Student Center would bring in would greatly improve the student experience here in CCNY and we hope to have it fully realized.

*Appendix:*

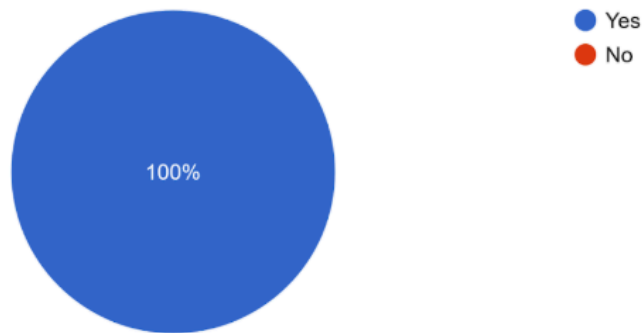


*Fig. 9: 3d view of the escalators that take you to the second and third floors*



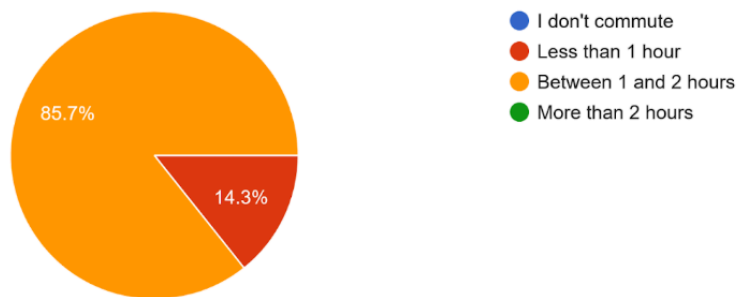
*Fig. 10: 3d view of elevators*

Do you commute to college?



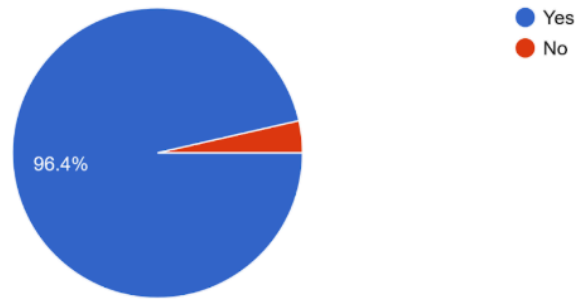
*Fig. 11: A pie chart representing surveyors who commute to college*

How long does it take you to commute?



*Fig. 12: A pie chart representing the commute time of the surveyors*

Would you be interested in a improved dedicated student center to hang out in



*Fig. 13: A pie chart representing the interest surveyors have in a new student center*

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