

Centered Around Community:

The Case for a New CCNY Student Center



Figure 1. Idea of New CCNY Student Center

CCNY Community Constructors:

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Introduction

On any college campus, certain areas define the campus's identity, which in turn influences how students relate to, learn from, and perceive their college. The City College of New York (CCNY) boasts diverse neighborhoods, cultures, and academic backgrounds. Still, most students are linked by the same fact: the lack of a centralized, welcoming student space to support them in their community life, beyond academic collaboration. As it stands, CCNY has its campus facilities spread in various places, and the majority of them are aged, making the students have a hard time interacting with each other, attending meetings in clubs, having a rest between courses, or accessing support services all in one place. Such disengagement not only curtails the student interaction but also influences the morale of the campus and student success in general.

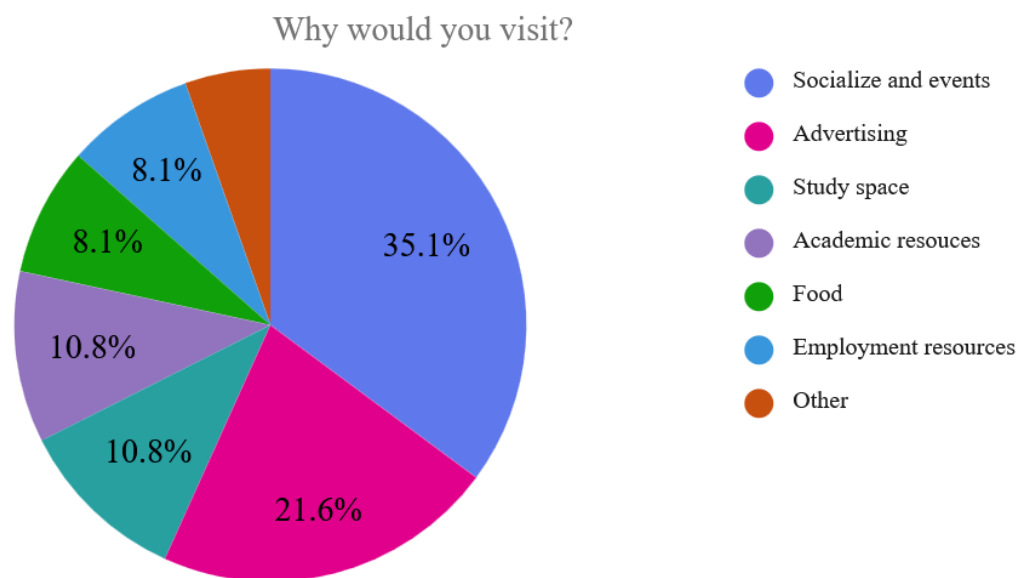


Figure 2. What the students want

Hence, CCNY is in critical need of a new student center, one that is current, accessible, and strategically planned to help in building community, student well-being, and collaboration

among organizations. In order to get an insight into the priorities of the student body, we used a primary survey of 40 CCNY students of various majors and years. It was found that there is a high demand to have more communal study spaces, a place for students to relax, and a socializing area in a single building. These results show that the lack of a student center is not just a nuisance, but a severe deficiency in the lives of campuses and the experiences of students(refer to the appendix for more results).

It is based on this that our project suggests the development and design of a new CCNY Student Center, which will meet these needs in terms of functionality, inclusivity, and sustainability. This experiment aims at developing a theoretical building design that comprises the most important spaces, including study lounges, cafes, recreational areas, and fitness equipment, all in a single architectural composition that promotes interaction and access. Because this project suggests examining student feedback and simulating an efficient spatial organization, the hypothesis that motivates this project is that a high-quality, well-located student center will have a great impact on the interaction between students, their sense of belonging to the campus, and their general well-being. With this proposal, we would like to show how considerate design will help transform the CCNY experience from a disjointed campus into a community center.

Action Plan

The new CCNY student center has a plethora of proposed amenities. The highlighted feature is a hybrid social study lounge. It is both a casual place to meet up with friends and other students, as well as a place to have a study group meet and study their most difficult subjects. The lounge will have sofas and comfortable seating for lounging and socialization, and more traditional desks and seating setups for studying, too. This relaxed setting will be an inviting area for students to come, meet, and make connections. It will also be a great space to book club events and other social gatherings. The other feedback we received was that students wanted a place to be able to socialize and have food. To address this, we included a lovely cafe with plenty of seating to grab a bite. In our floor plan, you can see the open seating that invites students to grab a bite and meet others. This will be both a revenue generator with food sales as well as an area that can spark connection and community between students. In addition to the cafe and lounge, there will be a computer lab, a game room, as well as a new fitness center. The computer lab will house 24 workstation computers, such as those seen in many of the existing computer labs. This will be a central location for students to come and work on projects for classes that require specific software. The game room will hold two pool tables and two table tennis tables. These activities will allow students to decompress from the intensive workloads that are often seen among CCNY students. An open signup format will allow students to get to know one another in a low-pressure situation, such as a game of billiards or table tennis. Finally, a new fitness center would be a large draw to prospective students looking at CCNY. The fitness center would take up the entirety of the second floor and have durable and modern gym equipment. There will be a large free weights area. Free weights are a more efficient use of space than

weightlifting machines; thus, the majority of weight training space will be dedicated to them. Finally, a new set of dedicated cardio machines will be on the floor: eight treadmills and four cardio bikes (refer to the appendix for visuals). The improved fitness facilities will draw more students to stay on campus to do their physical activity, which will foster a larger sense of community.

To gather support, a petition will be sent around to current and prospective students, which will provide concrete proof of interest in a new student center at CCNY. Once we reach 2,500 signatures, approximately 25 percent of the student body, we will finalize our proposal. Then we will present the CCNY budget office and Ismael Perez, the CFO and vice president of finances, with our findings. Following our meetings with the budget office and Mr. Perez, we will move forward with the necessary steps to build our project.

After approval from the budget office, a site must be determined. Tentatively, the CCNY Community Constructors have identified the courtyard just north of Wingate Hall as an ideal location for the new student center. The timeline for a new construction project as large as a student center is in the range of 18 to 24 months. This would likely be in line with the similar construction timeline as the University of Chicago Student Wellness Center. That project took 17 months, from May 2019 until October 2020. Our new student center is of comparable size in a large metropolitan city like Chicago. Thus, it is reasonable to believe that the construction would fall within the 18-month construction estimate. A construction timeline of 18 months includes demolition of the current courtyard north of Wingate Hall. The smaller size of the project will avoid the lengthy construction timeline of 48 months seen in the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg Student Center. After demolition, there would be preparation for a new foundation, and finally, construction would begin. We estimate demolition will take approximately one month because

there are no large structures or buildings in the proposed courtyard area. Following the demolition would be preparation for a concrete foundation. According to Platinum Concrete Works LLC, we have a reasonable expectation that it will take approximately one month to cure. Construction on the project will begin, and a fair construction estimate would be approximately 14 months. This mirrors the timeline of the University of Chicago Student Wellness Center, which was completed in October 2020. In total, we estimate 18 months of construction with the possibility of an early finish if there are no delays during construction.

Costs and Benefits

Room	Total Cost (Median)	Estimated Time of Completion (approx. median)
Student Lounge	\$4,679,383	~ 5.5 months
Gaming and Activity	\$4,740,881	~ 6.5 months
Café	\$5,970,841	~ 9 months
Fitness Center	\$9,789,251	~ 11 months
Computer Room	\$5,355,861	~ 6.5 months
Study Room	\$9,235,769	~ 6.5 months

The CCNY Student Center will have long-term social, academic, and economic advantages, which will greatly exceed the original construction expenses. The center will make the campus a more community-oriented place by the centralization of key student services, recreational facilities, as well as study space. There will be a trusted and balanced environment where students can work on their projects, host events, and relax in between classes, enhancing academic results and their psychological state. Moreover, the availability of special-purpose facilities like a cafe, fitness center, games room, and computer lab will minimize the process of the students to travel within the campus or out of the school, which will save them time and contribute more time to the school setting.

Financially, the student center should be considered as an investment that is justified by the fact that it can bring in higher student retention, new applications, as well as improve the overall image of CCNY. A student-friendly, modern, and sustainable building will not only boost the recruitment and pride among the alumni but will also be an all-purpose conference and

community facility, and student organizations- generating facility. Simply put, the CCNY Student Center is not just an architectural add-on to the college, but a long-term investment in the college culture, health, and prosperity.

Our Team- CCNY Community Constructors

The CCNY Community Constructors team consists of committed and proficient engineering students who come with a wide range of talents, technical expertise, and creativity in solving problems across all projects. They will all share their mutual interest in innovation, design, and teamwork to develop useful and significant solutions for the City College of New York campus population.

Nicholas Mercado - Nicholas Mercado is a first-year Electrical Engineering student at The City College of New York. He grew up in Mamaroneck, Westchester County, attending Mamaroneck High School. He is bilingual in both English and Spanish and has his own private tutoring business, which he continues throughout the semester. He enjoys playing video games, chess, and video editing for his own entertainment. He is also proficient in Microsoft Excel, and wants to become more financially literate to live stably.

Arman Rahman - Arman Rahman is an undecided major leaning towards Electrical Engineering who is in his second year at the City College of New York. His interests include circuit design, computer hardware, and automotive technology. Fluent in Bengali, Arman is a person who has good technical knowledge, good communication with others, and leadership capabilities. Considered an innovative person, a team worker, and detail-oriented, he always shows reliability and dedication to quality. Arman can also be able to perform physically demanding duties that require a hands-on approach safely and efficiently. He is quiet when faced with pressure and imaginative in problem-solving scenarios, and this gives discipline and flexibility to any project he will be doing.

Daniel Kaplan - Daniel Kaplan is a third-year undergraduate student majoring in Mechanical Engineering. His interests include automotive engineering, robotics, film, and rock music. Daniel is fluent in both English and Spanish, enabling effective communication between a diverse team or client base. His multiyear experience with SOLIDWORKS, AutoCAD, and MATLAB makes him a valuable addition to the CCNY Community Constructors. He has experience working under high pressure and adapting to rapidly changing client demands, and he always does his best to please the client. When Daniel is not studying or learning, you can find him at his local revival cinema, taking in a classic movie on the big screen.

Clarence Cruz - Clarence Cruz is an undergraduate transfer student majoring in Mechanical Engineering. Before this semester, he held an associate's degree in Engineering Sciences. Along with it, he has prior experience in both MATLAB and C++. Coupled with his current experience with SOLIDWORKS, he aims to produce the best results to his ability, as well as contribute to his community alongside the CCNY Community Constructors. His interests include cars, motorsport, motorcycles, and even jazz, the first two of which are his top passions. He has aspirations to work in the automotive industry after college, along with becoming a mechanical engineer, first and foremost.

Conclusion

To conclude, the CCNY Student Center proposal is not only a new building, but also a promise of a more powerful, more interconnected, and student-focused campus. This project directly helps to fill the already existing gaps in the student life, as the existing physical areas, such as study spaces, recreation, and wellness, along with community services, are brought under the same roof, fostering interaction and collaboration as well as well-being. Its layout, accessibility, and sustainability are well thought out and planned so that it will be used by the current and a new generation of students at the CCNY.

Moving forward, this proposal will provide the basis of a campus that appreciates unity, innovation, and inclusiveness. By establishing this new student center, CCNY can rebrand the meaning of belonging to the school community, turning the college experience into one that not only guarantees academic excellence but also personal development and a lifelong bond. The CCNY Community Constructors consider that it will be a landmark of progress and pride in years to come because, in the case of the right investment and mutual dedication, this project will be successful.

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Appendix:

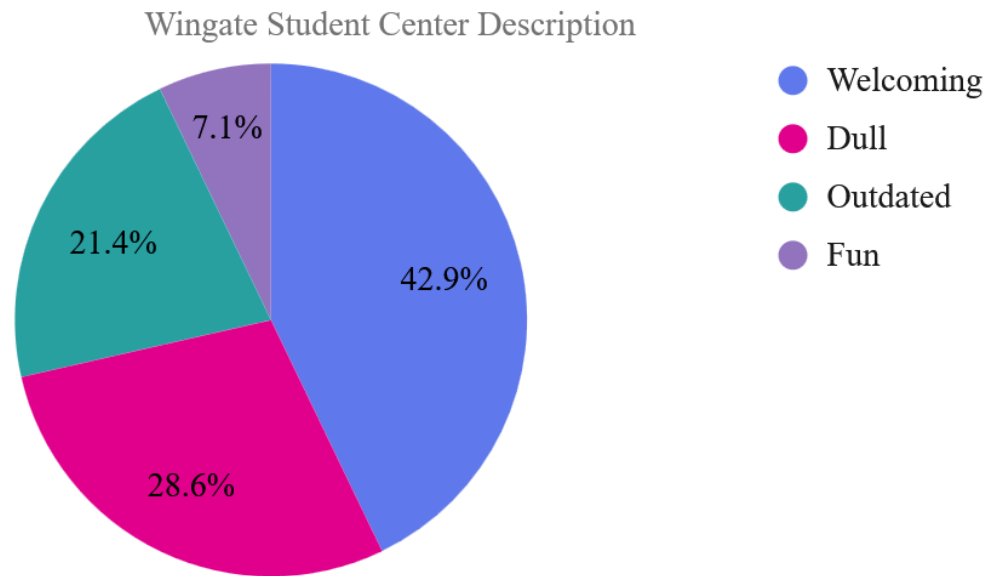


Figure 3. Description of Current Student Center

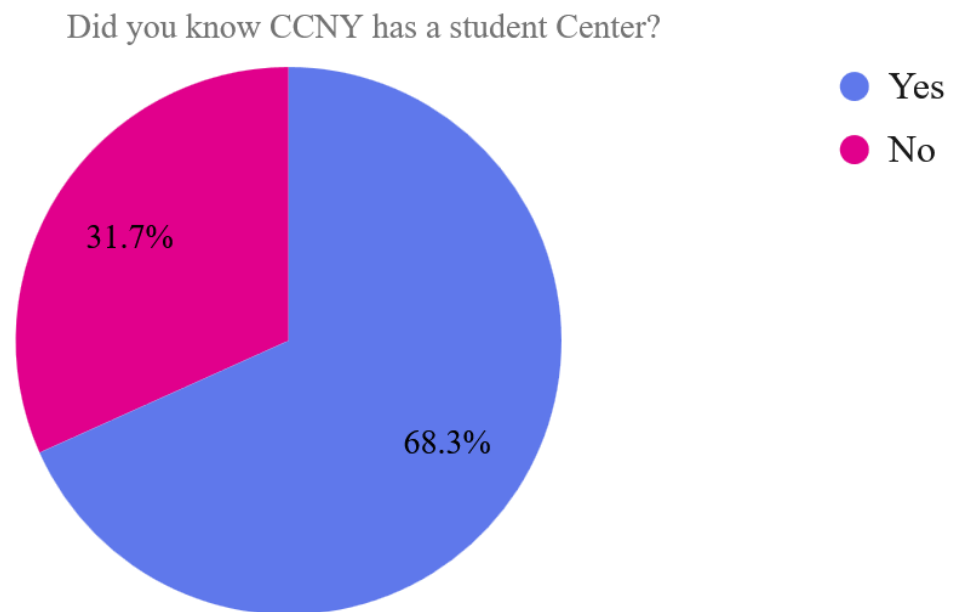


Figure 4. Do the students know that CCNY has a Student Center

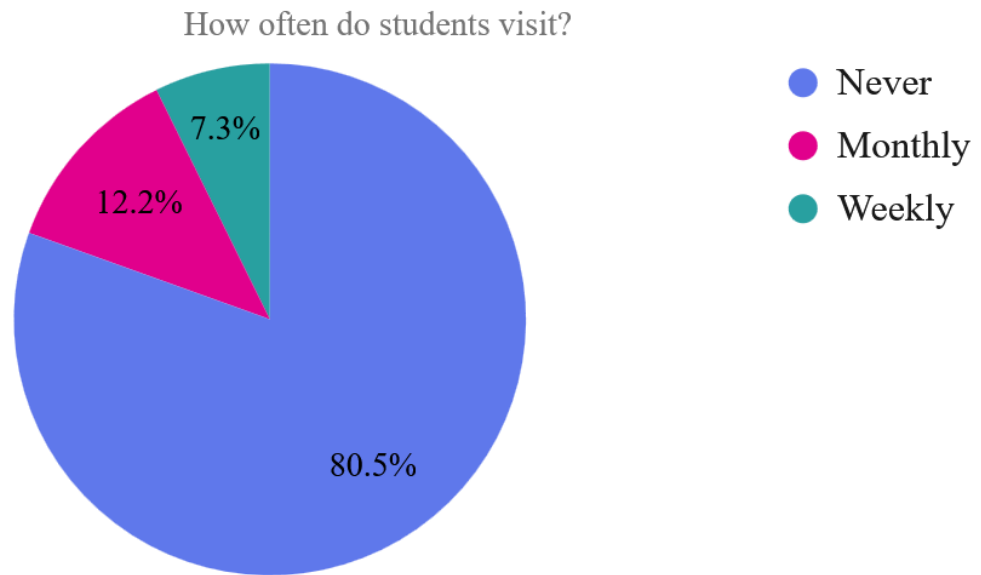


Figure 5. How often do students visit

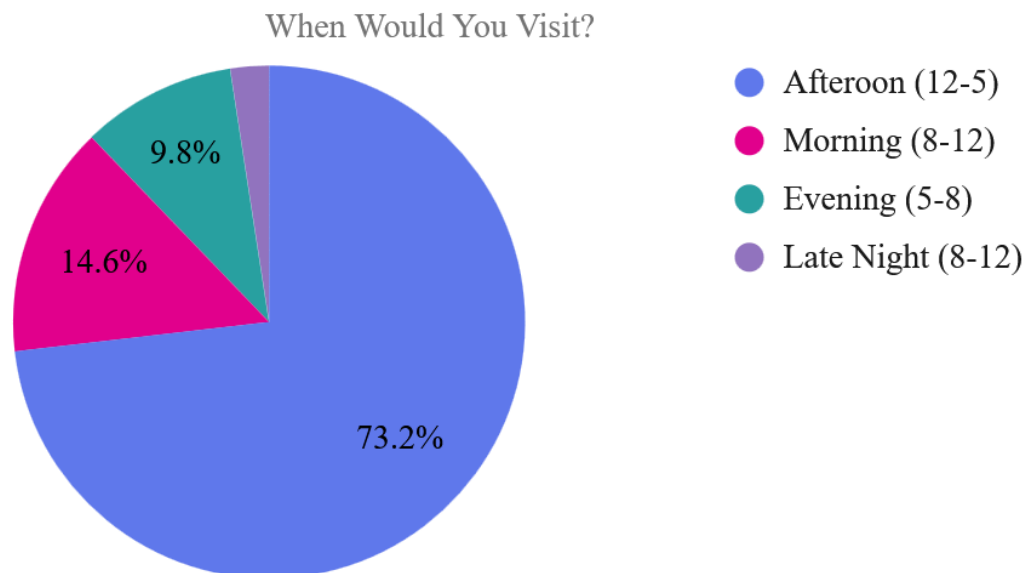


Figure 6. When would students visit

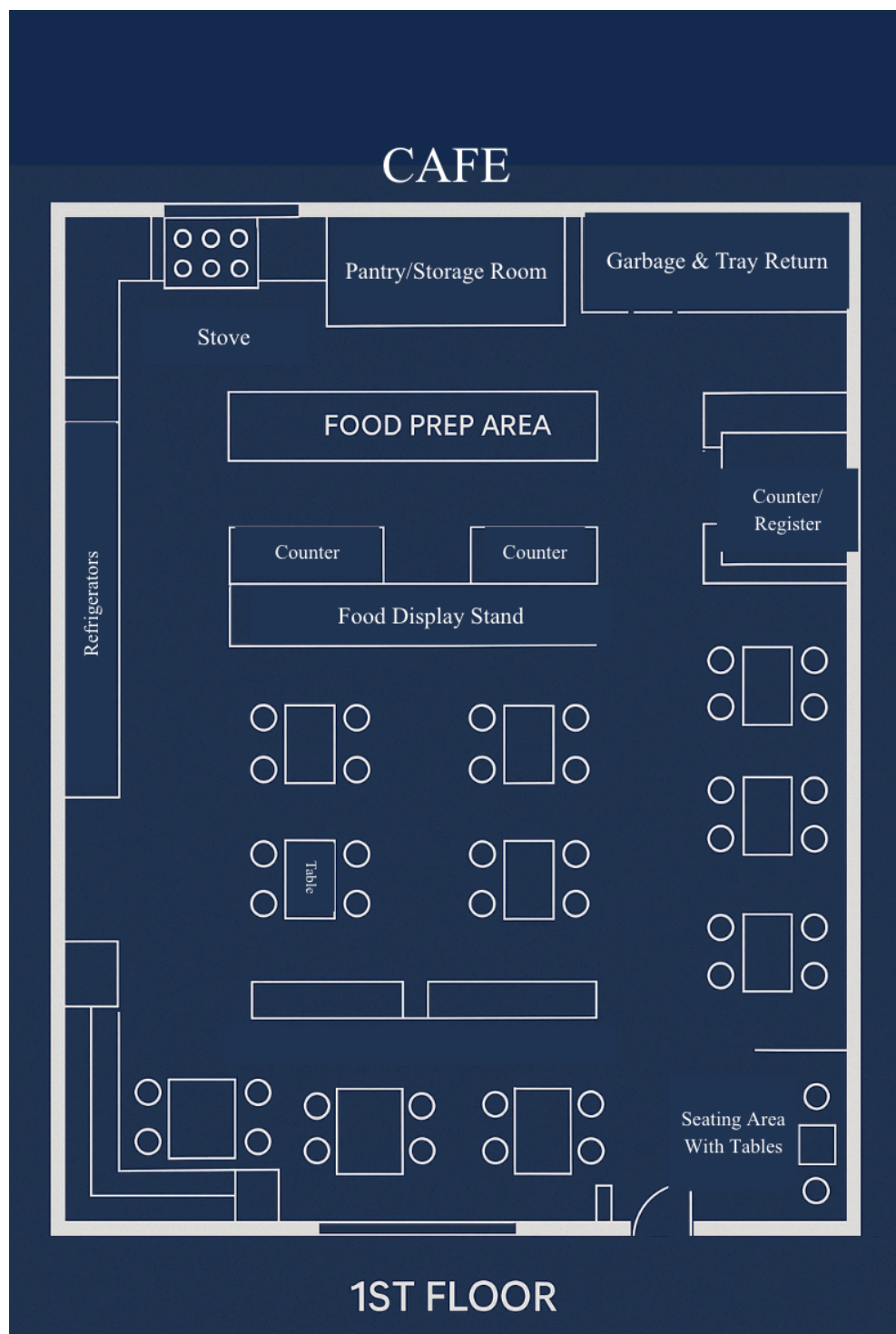


Figure 7. Cafe

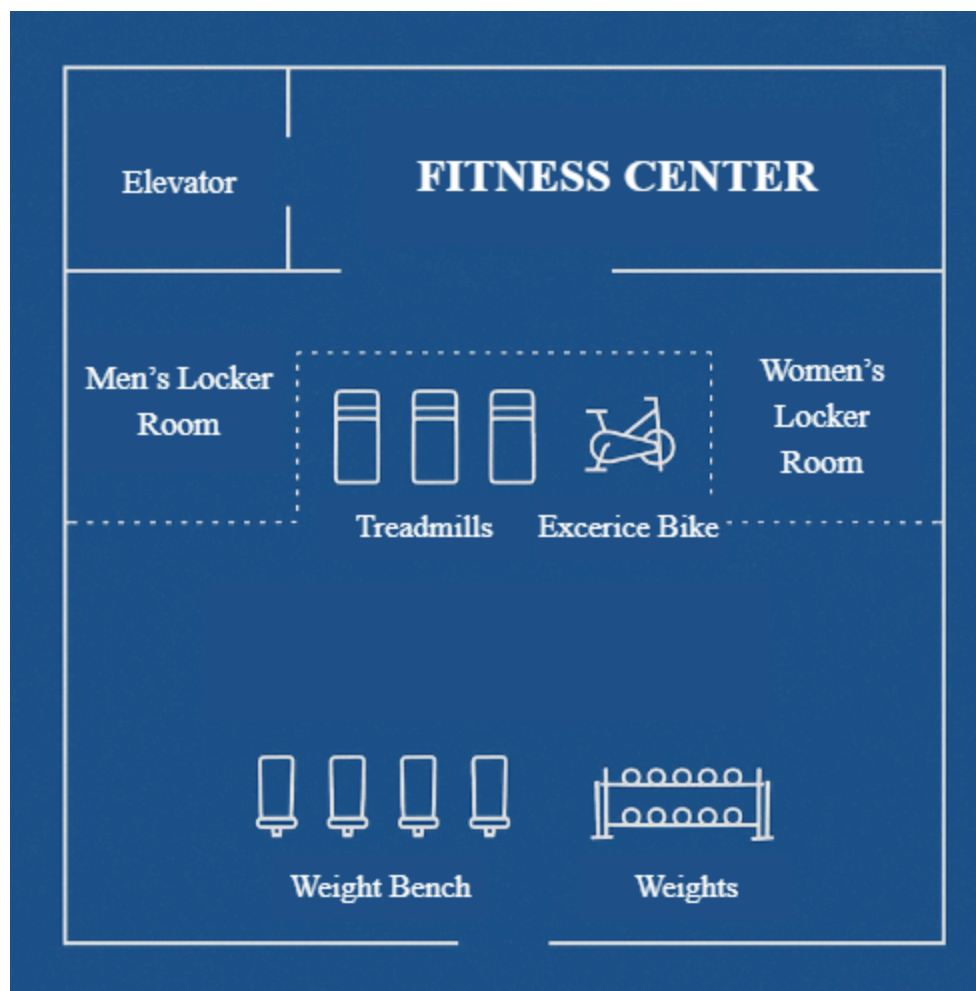


Figure 8. Fitness Center

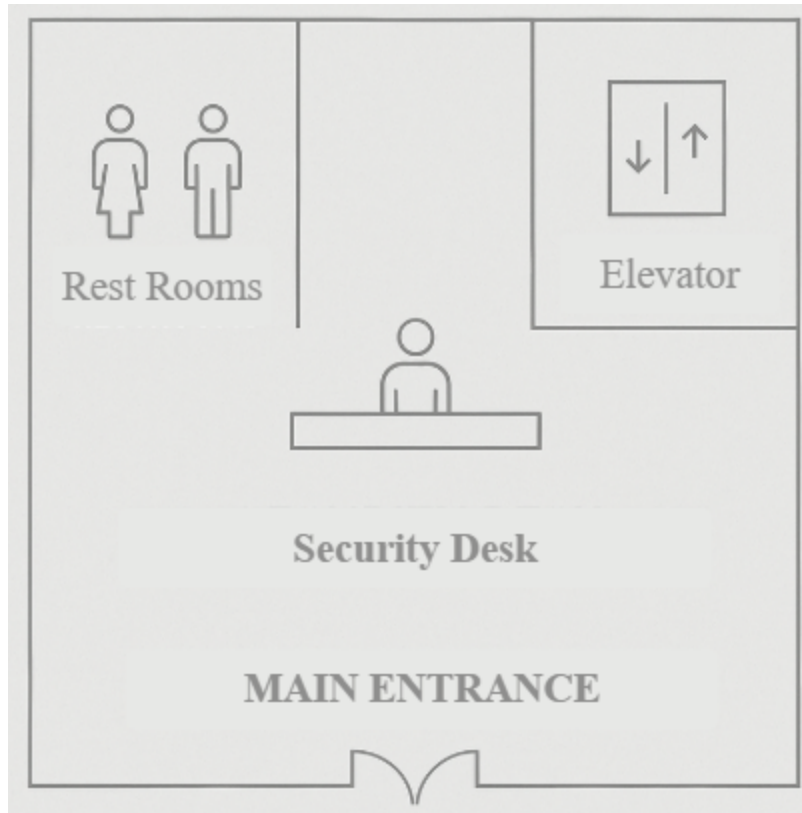


Figure 9. Main Entrance



Figure 10. Gaming Room

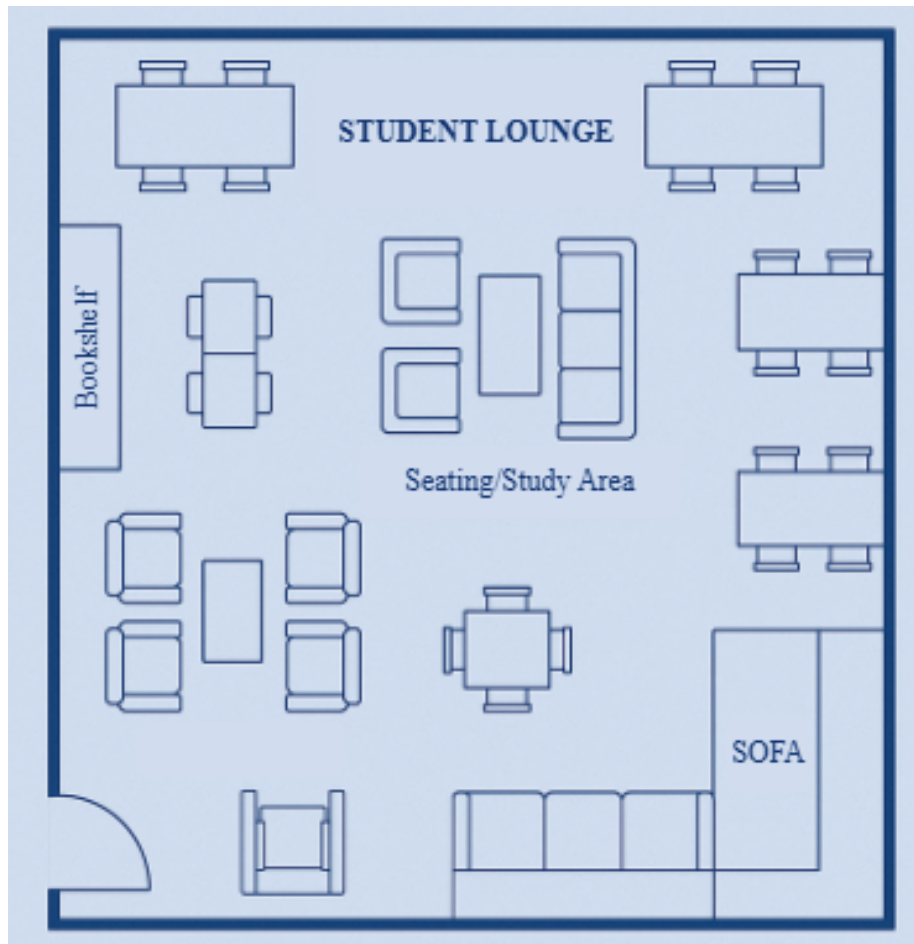


Figure 11. Student Lounge

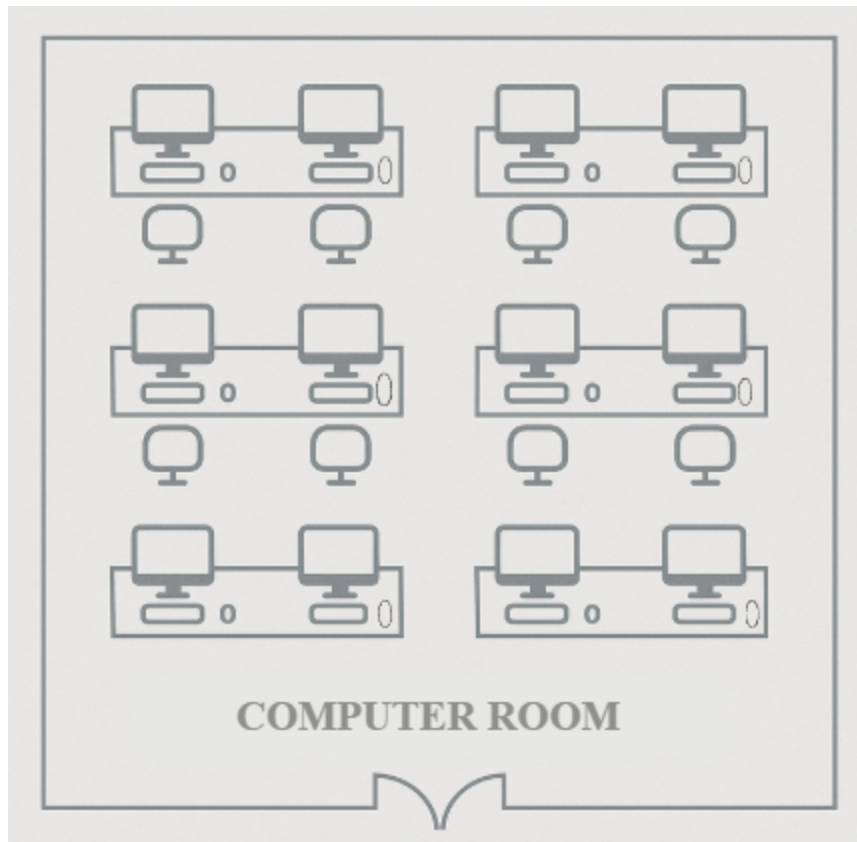


Figure 12. Computer Room

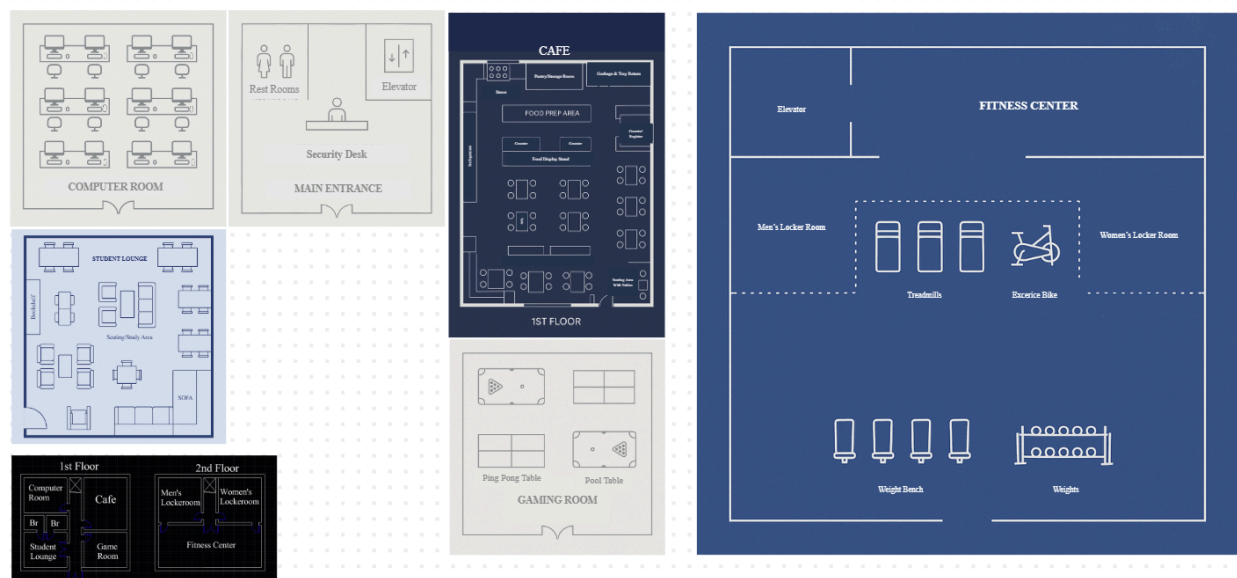


Figure 13. Complete Student Center Layout

