

Strategic Planning Subcommittee
Meeting Agenda
March 23, 2021
3:00pm-4:00pm

1. Approval of minutes for the February 25, 2021 meeting
2. How to use college space post-pandemic (see attached article from the Chronicle on space)
3. Faculty hiring in the next five years
4. Potential uses of CRRSAA and ARP funds
5. New Business

Strategic Planning Subcommittee
Minutes
March 23, 2021

Present: Yi Li (*Chair*), Allison Pease (*Designated Chair*), Ned Benton, Brian Cortijo, Warren Eller, Mark Flower, Jay Gates, Heath Grant, Karen Kaplowitz, Dyanna Pooley, Amber Rivero, Andrew Sidman, Monika Son and Alison Orlando (*recorder*)

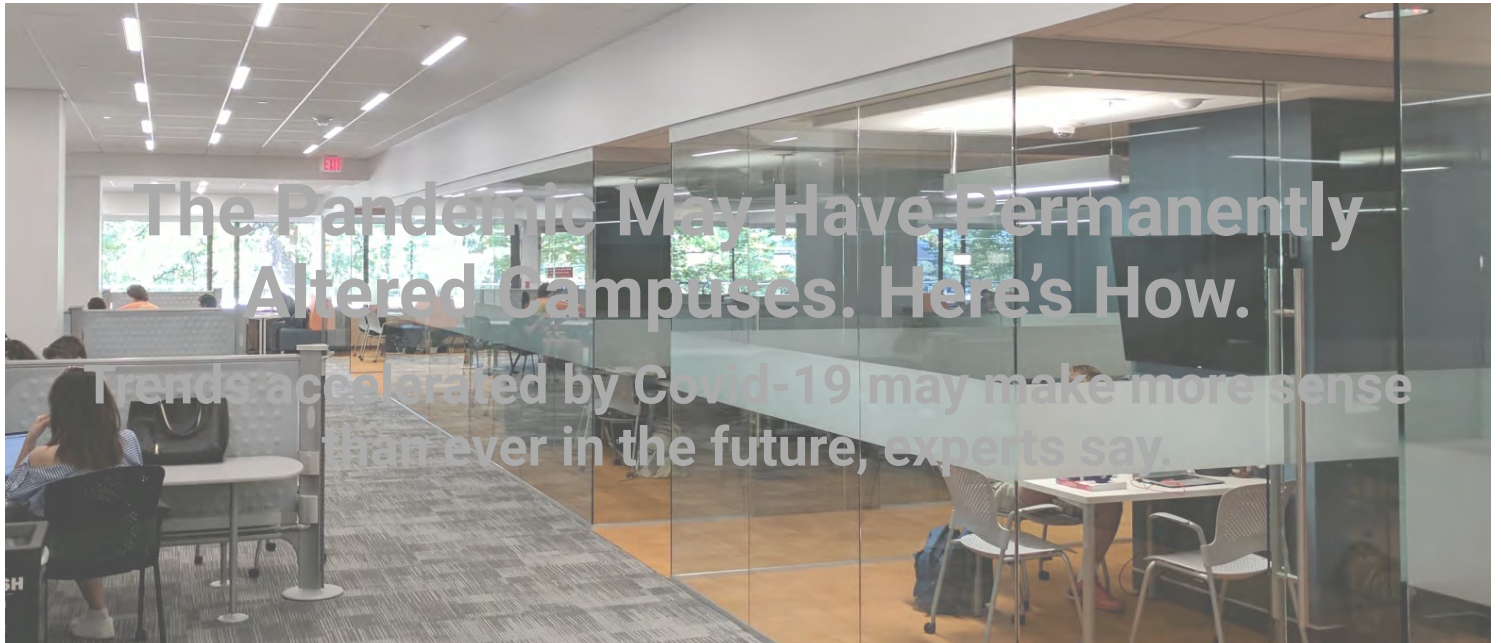
Guests: Hungde Chan, Rulisa Galloway-Perry, John Paul Narkunas, and Alena Ryjov

- 1. Approval of minutes from February 25, 2021.** The minutes were approved as proposed.
- 2. How to use College Space Post-Pandemic.** Allison P. started by explaining that space planning is included in the charge of the SPS. She then opened up the floor to the committee for their thoughts on using college space post-pandemic. Ned B. felt that we need to know what the culture and rules of the college will be post-pandemic to better figure out the role and demand for space. Karen K. added that we also need to know what the faculty will prefer as their post-pandemic mode of instruction. Allison P. said that the method of course delivery also depends on what will best benefit the students we serve with the limited resources we have. Brian C. spoke about scheduling, and what has been effective in the past to best serve our student's needs. Ned B. felt it is important to survey the students and try to schedule the classes towards their preferences. There was a short discussion on the continuation of community hour. Karen K. felt that community hour has allowed students to become more engaged. Allison P. added that although we can't make a causal link since we have incorporated community hour our retention and graduation rates have increased. Allison P. ended by asking the committee to continue to think proactively on our use of space post-pandemic, while, keeping in mind our priorities on how to best serve our students.
- 3. Faculty Hiring in the Next Five Years.** Yi L. opened by explaining that a five-year Faculty Hiring Plan was created in 2019. The plan was first implemented in academic year 2019-2020 and resulted in faculty hires. However, the second year of the plan was not carried out because the college did not receive a budget until recently. Yi L. said that going forward his full intention is to implement the hiring plan with any updates that are needed. He will consult with the President, the Interim Vice President of Finance & Administration, the academic chairs, and the faculty senate about any necessary changes. He added that for the upcoming year with the additional funding expected at the college that faculty hires should be a top priority. Ned B. then went over the "Resolution on Strategic Budget Planning for Post-Pandemic Period" that will be presented to the faculty senate. The resolution that includes a series of recommendations for financial planning over the next three fiscal years as we enter a period of post-pandemic recovery. These recommendations focus on full-time employment targets across the operational divisions, and academic division targets for faculty and non-faculty positions. He added we could use these three-year targets in the financial plan to set limits of employment within the various divisions. Allison P. asked for comments from the committee. Mark F. said that he liked the concept, and he is in support of it. Yi L. mentioned that he thinks transparency is key. He believes it's important to have a multi-year target but believes there should be some flexibility.
- 4. Potential uses of CRRSAA and ARP Funds.** Allison P. said that she would like to use the remainder of the meeting to talk about the use of the one-time funds. She asked Mark F. to speak about restrictions on using these funds. Mark F. said similar to CARES, the CRRSAA funds need to have a proportional amount go back to student financial support. He added that with student consent we will be able to direct a portion of the CRRSAA funds to the their accounts at the college. This will provide more opportunity to the students to clear

outstanding balances, and for the student to rely less on financial aid. The floor was then opened to questions and comments. Warren E. suggested that the college should use the funds to make an investment in technology to reduce transaction costs and streamline administrative functions. He also felt we should invest in our online capacity. Brian C. felt that we have to be prepared to make another switch to online. He believes we should use the funds to strengthen the college to be better prepared as we increase our online capacity in the years ahead. Yi L. advocated for an investment in enhancing programming for supporting faculty and students in online education. Paul N. felt that when we invest in the online infrastructure, we should look at meaningful robust systems that will last. He also felt that online resources should be more easily accessible, and there should be a place where we can view these resources along with a clear set of processes on how to obtain additional resources. Another suggestion he had is to use the funds to stack classes with lower students and higher faculty for more individual attention. Rulissa G. added that trainings and development for faculty, staff, and students are key when implementing any new systems. Andrew S. felt that there should be an investment in the library. Allison P. added that it is important to invest in students who have been underserved by the pandemic and failing behind. She felt that free courses and supporting paid internships would benefit our students. Amber R. agree with Allison P. and said that paid internships are a vital experience that many students could benefit from.

5. **New Business.** There was no new business.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION



ELLIOT FELIX

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

By *Francie Diep*

MARCH 15, 2021

The Covid-19 crisis has transformed all aspects of higher education, and the physical campus is no exception. The Chronicle recently released a special report, [Rethinking Campus Spaces](#), that offers strategies for doing more with less space, to save money and prepare for an uncertain future. Here is an adapted excerpt from the report.

One-way signs, sparsely furnished classrooms, and empty faculty offices are the norm now, but they won't last forever. Still, the pandemic may have permanently altered

campuses in other ways, accelerating changes that began years before.

The Chronicle asked more than 40 architects, campus planners, and leaders in student life and housing about how several categories of campus spaces might look different in the future. As colleges navigate difficult financial straits, many interviewees predicted more public-private partnerships, and renovations instead of new construction — which can be less costly and more environmentally friendly. Overall, their answers paint a picture of future campuses that are more adaptable, perhaps smaller, and focused on what's most valuable about seeing one's peers in person.

Classrooms

Even though online learning during the pandemic has had its hiccups, many of the experts *The Chronicle* spoke with expected hybrid classes to persist into the future. That trend will reshape the arrangement of classrooms.

Courses with at least some online, asynchronous components can be better for students who work or care for children during the day, who have health needs that are best taken care of at home, or who otherwise face barriers to coming to campus frequently. As students with more-diverse needs have enrolled in college, Doug Kozma, vice president and campus-planning director for the architecture firm SmithGroup, said he had seen “a really clear shift in space type.”

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“The changing demographics of America are front and center,” he said. “Students of all different shapes and sizes need different spaces, and they need different access to those spaces.”

RECOMMENDED READING



THE REVIEW

When Academic Bullies Claim the Mantle of Free Speech

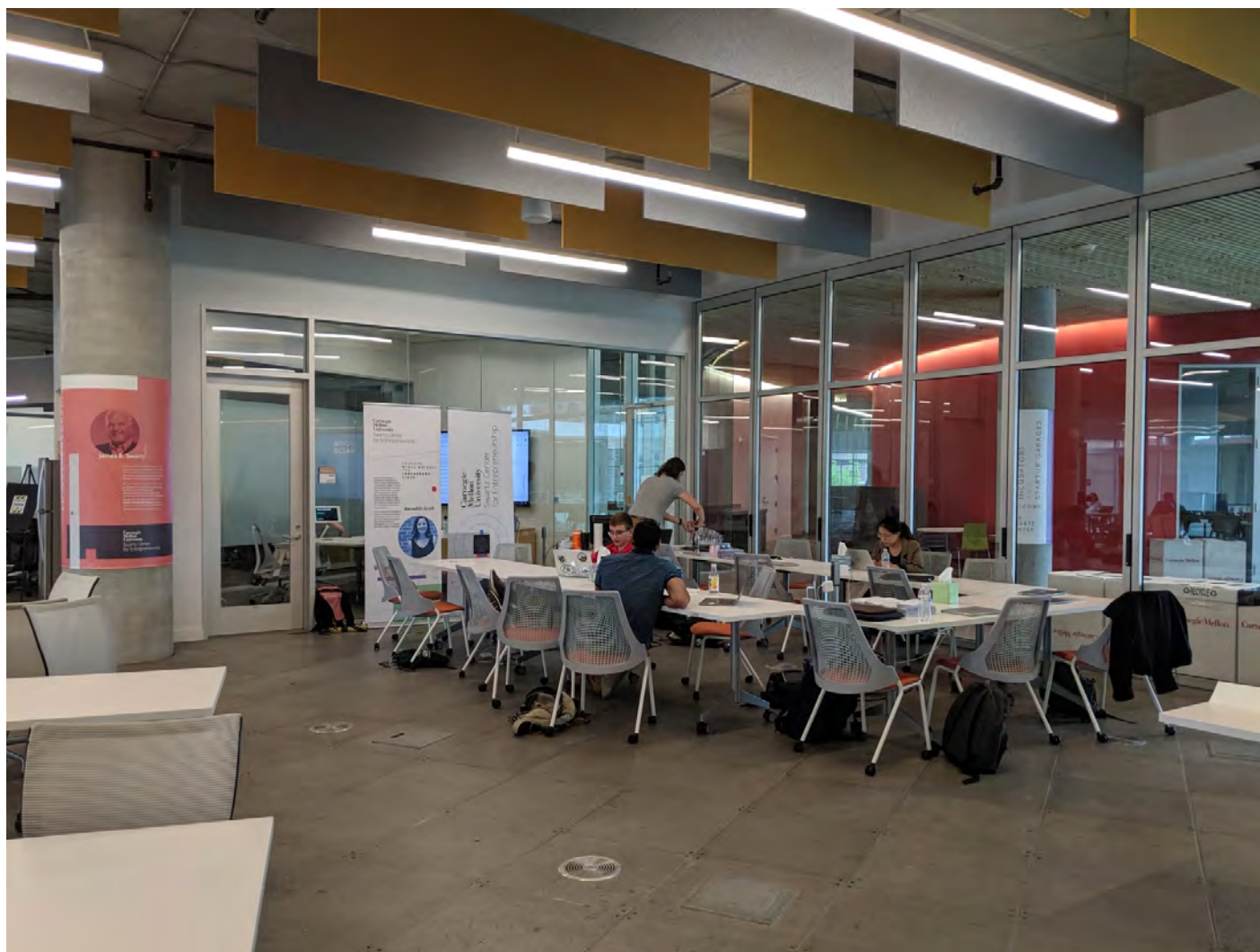
THE REVIEW

The Making of Edward Said's 'Orientalism'

Even “traditional” students — those who are easily able to attend college full time — want a greater ability to do things when it’s convenient for them. “Everybody wants more flexibility,” said Elliot Felix, chief executive of the consultancy brightspot strategy, “and flexibility generally means a mix of synchronous and asynchronous activities and more online.”

Hybrid and online learning may also help colleges deal with shrinking budgets. When officials with the California State University system and Arizona State University spoke with *The Chronicle* in the fall of 2020, they expected their enrollments to grow but feared not having the funds available to build additional classrooms. Cal State saw a \$299-million [budget cut](#) this year, a result of falling state revenues. Leaders at both institutions are looking to online learning to help fill the gap.

Flipped classes, in which students watch recorded lectures on their own before coming to campus for guided hands-on and group activities, were widely discussed and put in use before the pandemic. They might become even more common in the years ahead, which could stoke demand for flexible classrooms that can be quickly rearranged for different activities.



ELLOTT FELIX

The Swartz Center for Entrepreneurship at Carnegie Mellon U's business school has open, reconfigurable spaces for classes, workshops, and events, as well as for incubating new ventures.

Large lecture halls, with their immobile and tightly packed seating, might decline, or so many consultants hope, believing that they're not ideal for learning. "I typically say that when you have a large lecture hall, distance learning starts at the 10th row," said Persis C. Rickes, a higher-education space planner who runs her own firm. "You might as well not be in the classroom at that point, because you are not engaged." The realization during the pandemic that large lectures can work well online might push colleges to keep at least some of those courses in that format, several planners said.

In an atmosphere of scarcity, institutions will examine closely whether they're making the most out of their physical spaces and face-to-face time. "We're going to go into

every room and we're going to say, 'Is meaningful connection going to happen in this space? Is something going to happen in this space that cannot happen online, that cannot happen at Starbucks?'" said Shannon Dowling, an architect with the firm Ayers Saint Gross. If the answer's no, the next question is whether the space is worth keeping.

Meanwhile, a move to more online learning might create the need for a different kind of space.

In 2014, the Georgia Institute of Technology started an online master's-degree program in computer science that costs most students around \$7,000. To date, the program has graduated 3,795 students, most of them over the age of 25 and already employed.

Although they were not required to meet in person, students liked to do so anyway. They organized meet-ups in cities including San Francisco, Austin, and Bangalore. They formed groups like Nerdy Bones, for women, who made up 19 percent of the students in the fall of 2020. Administrators found that as many as 80 percent of the U.S.-based students in each cohort lived within a two-hour drive of one of 10 major population centers. That gave the administrators an idea: Build co-working spaces in those cities, where online students could work and meet one another. Each space, called an atrium, would have career and advising services too.

The university is in the early stages of developing several atria, including one in Georgia. But the need has become more urgent as the pandemic has moved more Georgia Tech students online. Administrators are seeing that students are talking with their professors and with each other less than they did before.

"The sort of interactions that happen outside the classroom, those are all missing," said Stephen Harmon, associate dean of research for Georgia Tech Professional Education. "Even the ones that happen five minutes before class and five minutes

after class, those informal learning opportunities are really important to building learning communities.” Students report feeling isolated.

If more students take at least some classes online or in a hybrid format long after the threat of Covid-19 is over, Georgia Tech will want to find ways to make sure those students feel engaged, which just might mean creating more physical spaces for them.

Faculty offices

At Ayers Saint Gross, architects used to call faculty offices the third rail.

Many campus planners have long advocated for fewer traditional, individual, closed-door offices, and more shared workspaces for faculty and staff members, like what many private companies have. The idea is that open, common work rooms will foster collaboration and make instructors more visible and less intimidating to students. A few phone rooms, meeting rooms, and lockers could serve for whenever somebody needed quiet, privacy, and somewhere to store belongings.

Having fewer private offices could also save on heating and electricity costs. On average, 19 percent of campuses' indoor square footage is dedicated to offices, according to a [2007 survey](#) (the latest available) of 276 institutions that are members of the Society for College and University Planning. (Only housing, at 20 percent, commands a larger area.) Using that much space more efficiently could make a big difference to a college's bottom line.

Especially if faculty and staff members will continue to work from home more often, leaving their desks unoccupied some days of the week, colleges could save by having people who come in on different days share the same private office. As Paul Dale, president of Paradise Valley Community College, in Phoenix, Ariz. put it, it's a way of fitting “30 pounds of potatoes in a 20-pound bag.”

Faculty members accustomed to their own offices can be loath to give them up, however. Private faculty-office space is a marker of accomplishment and prestige, said Luanne Greene, president of Ayers Saint Gross. Sometimes it's even written into tenure contracts. But with the pandemic-driven increase in working from home, Greene and her team have seen a shift.

"I've heard many faculty members on the phone going, 'Huh, maybe I don't need this private office space after all,'" Dowling said.



KARL CONNOLLY

Open faculty offices for flexibility and collaboration are shared by the Johns Hopkins U. and the Maryland Institute College of Art at the JHU-MICA Film Centre.

The University of Washington at Bothell is one campus where switching to smaller private offices and more shared workspace for some faculty members has turned out well. In 2015 the university hired 27 tenure-track faculty members — when it had only one or two private offices available. “We were in crisis mode,” said Amy Van Dyke,

director of physical planning and space management. Susan Jeffords, vice chancellor for academic affairs at the time, came up with the idea of moving some administrative units off campus, then reconfiguring that space as shared faculty work areas.

David Socha, an associate professor of computing and software systems who was on the remodeling team, suggested that it first find out who would be interested in occupying the new style of office. Faculty members who said they were interested included many members of his own department, who were scattered in buildings across the campus and wanted to be nearer one another. "We're a very social group," he said.

There were trade-offs: His colleagues would be giving up 140-square-foot offices for 80-square-foot ones. In return, they would get a big conference room and numerous smaller collaboration areas situated among their offices.

Socha said the trade-off was worth it. It's so easy to pop over to ask a colleague a question. Instructors often hold office hours in the collaboration areas, which can accommodate more students than traditional offices can, so the same questions don't get repeated as much. It gives adjunct faculty members a dedicated place on campus to work and keep their stuff.

Of course, few faculty members have gone to work on campus since the university shut down most in-person operations, in March 2020. Whenever they can go back, however, Socha is looking forward to it.

He credited the office plan's overall success to the fact that it "supports each faculty member's uniqueness." They can still personalize their 80-square-foot individual offices with posters and plants. And those who preferred their traditional setups didn't have to give them up. "If we really want the faculty to be their best, and I think that's what students want, then it's prudent to not force structure," he said. "We are not

machines. The work we do really has to be creative.” It helps if the office kind of feels like home.

Student services, libraries, and administrators' offices

Outside of the faculty, planners have also advocated for more-open floor plans for administrators and staff offices. These kinds of spaces have also been subject to the trend toward consolidation in the quest to save money and retain students.

Where real estate is at a premium, colleges have moved non-student-facing functions to the edges of campus, or even off campus. Before the pandemic, university advancement and information technology were among the departments commonly located away from the campus core. In addition, many universities with large library collections moved less-accessed stacks out of campus libraries.

The result is space freed at the heart of campus for student services. Staff members at several architecture-and-planning firms said they've seen a trend toward one-stop shops for academic or financial support, for example, where writing and tutoring centers are housed in the main undergraduate library, alongside study spaces.



MARK HERBOTH

At the James B. Hunt Jr. Library at North Carolina State U., an open layout with moveable tables enables reconfiguration based on how people flow and how busy the library is.

The library and its services may become even more important if more students take classes online. “Given some of their home situations, they may want to come on campus and use their laptop in the library to take advantage of the Wi-Fi,” said Christine Wolff-Eisenberg, a researcher who has been surveying college librarians for Ithaka S+R, an education consultancy. “They may have families of their own and want some quiet space.”

Or look at what Normandale Community College built just before it went remote in the spring of 2020. Worried that first-generation students found its bureaucracy confusing, the college, in Bloomington, Minn., created an integrated office where students can come with questions for the financial-aid, records, and payments departments. Right inside the front door is a large, open space where the staff and

coaches can answer most questions. For students with tougher queries, private consultation rooms provide space for coaches or staff members to meet with them. Complex questions that previously might have required students to stand in line at several different offices can now be handled in one smooth visit.

At least that was the plan. Covid-19 means the college hasn't had much opportunity to use the center as designed. Nevertheless, it has come in handy for those students who come to campus seeking help. The large welcome area has been good for social distancing, and staff members direct students to the consultation rooms to teleconference with coaches who are working remotely. The rooms are cleaned between visits.

The Covid-19 crisis has sharpened higher education's focus on low-income, first-generation, and other vulnerable students, who are dropping out of college in disproportionate numbers. Where smarter use of space can ease their journeys, architects say, expect those trends to continue.

Dorms and dining

As residential colleges reopened in the fall of 2020, many reduced the number of students who shared rooms in residence halls. Where they felt they could, they gave students their own rooms. Meanwhile, at some institutions that allowed roommates, residence halls became coronavirus hotspots.

Having seen their predecessors go through that experience, will future students be wary of sharing a bathroom with dozens of other people living on their floor? Will more of them demand singles?

Many experts say there's long been a trend toward more privacy and single rooms. "It was driven by consumer demand," said Frankie Minor, housing director at the University of Rhode Island. "About 90 to 95 percent of our incoming students have

their own rooms at home, so the concept of sharing space with anyone is a little unfamiliar and uncomfortable, initially.”

In addition, colleges that find themselves serving more-diverse students may also want more single rooms. “There are students with learning differences. There are students with different medical conditions, mental-health conditions,” said Dennis Lynch, an architect at Ayers Saint Gross who specializes in housing and dining. “Singles help give flexibility to be able to accommodate students with a variety of needs.”

When the coronavirus pandemic arrived, it favored those institutions that already had more private-student housing. Minor is on the Executive Board of the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International, which has been tracking the capacity of college housing. The institutions that have been able to book their rooms close to normal levels — and therefore didn't take a big hit to that budget line — are the ones with more apartment- and suite-style housing, he said.

The University of Rhode Island eliminated triples for the fall of 2020, and ultimately decided not to bring the vast majority of them back. They were already unpopular with students, and administrators had discussed phasing them out. Covid-19 accelerated that conversation.





SMITHGROUP

During the pandemic, many colleges rearranged their dining halls for grab-and-go meals. In the long run, however, administrators want to see cafeterias return to being places where students can gather and make friends.

Minor thinks similar discussions are happening at institutions that, like his, had packed extra students in rooms to try to meet demand. The downside of the new arrangement may be that fewer people who want on-campus housing will be able to get it.

Rickes, the space planner, predicted more micro rooms, like the University of British Columbia's "nano suites," which pack a private bathroom, kitchenette, and Murphy bed/desk into 140 square feet. Such a shift might have further space-use implications. "You start pulling on that thread," Rickes said. "What happens if you have micro rooms? Well, you might see increased use of the library because students are looking for study space."

Other planners and housing officers pointed out that over the long term, many institutions can't afford to rent out their doubles as singles. In addition, barring an infectious-disease epidemic, colleges may want their newer students, especially, to live with roommates.

At Presbyterian College, in Clinton, S.C., many first- and second-year students live in double rooms that share a bathroom with another double. The college believes double rooms teach students valuable lessons about thinking of others and help them make friends early on, said Andrew Peterson, associate dean of students.

On the other side of the country, the California State University institutions have traditionally been commuter campuses, but in recent years, they've sought to build housing that would allow more students to live like those at Presbyterian. "Even with the pandemic, campuses still have, in their five-year plans, additional bed spaces and are trying to increase the amount of lower-division students that are on campus," said Elvyra San Juan, assistant vice chancellor for capital planning, design, and construction.

To further improve retention, Cal State universities have also planned to include counseling, tutoring, and faculty living spaces in their residence halls, a trend architects say they're seeing nationwide.

In contrast, housing officers and planners say that the age of luxurious dorms, crammed with amenities that would seem to have little to do with academic matters, is over. It had already been declining, as students and families became more conscious of college costs and student debt. The current recession is the last nail. "You're going to see emerging a more heads-down generation," Rickes said. "They want to be reassured that they can get a job at the other end."

Other parts of student-life operations that looked very different in the fall of 2020 are expected to return to their pre-pandemic configurations as soon as possible.

In the fall, many dining halls were rearranged for grab-and-go meals, but in the long run, administrators want to see cafeterias as a place where students spend time together. "We haven't seen people disinvesting in them," said Kozma, the campus planner. "These are social spaces in which students make memories. They are likely not going to go away."

Outdoor spaces

There is one post-pandemic change in space use that campus planners see as an unmitigated improvement: Covid-19 has pushed colleges to make greater use of their

wide green lawns, quads, and terraces.

As the coronavirus crisis progressed through the summer of 2020, it became clear that spending time with other people outdoors was much safer than doing so indoors. Several colleges ordered tents so faculty members could teach outside. Most of those came down as fall turned into winter, but across the country, in varied climates, administrators have made improvements in their grounds that they say they're glad to keep.



CHARLIE LEIGHT, ARIZONA STATE U.

Students chat in the outdoor classroom on the Tempe campus of Arizona State U., which provides many outdoor areas for study and socializing.

Colleges bought new outdoor furniture or made sure their existing picnic tables were in good repair. Arizona State built permanent aluminum shade structures to make hanging out under the Phoenix sun more appealing. Arizona State, Cornell University,

and the University of California at San Diego are among the campuses that improved Wi-Fi coverage and the availability of outdoor electrical outlets.

San Juan, of Cal State, expects these Wi-Fi hotspots to stay even after the system returns to predominantly in-person instruction. In addition, she has seen constituent institutions submit requests for small amphitheaters and landscaping upgrades.

Before the pandemic, there had been a big push for colleges to better use their outdoor green spaces, which studies show can relieve stress and improve concentration. But tasks such as fixing shade umbrellas often fell low on the priorities list, said Peterson, of Presbyterian College.

Now those umbrellas have gotten respect, and the campus environment is better for it.

Join Francie Diep and a panel of experts to discuss the future of campus spaces during a [virtual forum](#) on Wednesday, March 31, from 2-3 p.m. EDT.

We welcome your thoughts and questions about this article. Please [email the editors](#) or [submit a letter](#) for publication.

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Francie Diep

Francie Diep is a senior reporter covering money in higher education.

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