



POPP MARTIN STUDENT UNION, CENTER FOR STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA-CHARLOTTE
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINE

 RENOVATION

SUBMITTED BY: ADAM BURDEN, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

CAMPUS TYPE: FOUR-YEAR, PUBLIC

FULL-TIME ENROLLMENT: 29,500

PROJECT BROKE GROUND: DECEMBER 2021

PROJECT COMPLETED: AUGUST 2022

TOTAL AREA: 9,400 SQ. FT.

FLOORS: 1

PROJECT COST: \$1.2 MILLION

ARCHITECTS: LITTLE DIVERSIFIED ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTING -
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA



PHOTOS BY ADAM BURDEN

From a maze of disconnected offices, winding hallways, and walls that blocked any opportunity for collaboration, the University of North Carolina–Charlotte's new Center for Student Involvement was unveiled as a replacement for the former Government Organization Complex in the Popp Martin Student Union. The “complex” is now far less complicated, according to Adam Burden, director of student involvement.

“The original layout did not allow anyone to fully see the amount of space available for use from the main entrance,” he said. “Staff were difficult to find, as they were spread out in a grid in between student org offices. There were just too many hallways and walls and not enough meeting and collaboration space.”

Student input called out the former space for a lack of personality, a need for more modern décor, and pointed out small opportunities for improvement, like student lockers that did not require a key to lock. Student leaders also offered a preferred floor plan for working spaces for student organizations.

Using the school color palette of white, Charlotte green, and Niner gold, the nearly 10,000-square-foot space has a fresh look with new, easily movable furniture that includes bean bags and individual seats. Walls are fresh with new paint and a variety of design elements that recall the connection between student involvement and academic success. Quotes from educators like Alexander Astin and Terrell Strayhorn are prominently displayed on walls in the welcome area and a makerspace, and student honorees of the Niner Nine and Golden Niner (replacements of the gendered homecoming king, queen, and court) are pictured in the space.

“It has been open less than a year, but we are already seeing daily use for new student orientations, none of which was taking place previously. Our ‘Admitted Student Days’ are also taking place here, and student athletic recruitment is also happening now,” Burden said. “Observationally, the space is busier for longer periods of time, with students opting to come hang out and stay rather than just coming in for a meeting or to use some supplies.”

With the dining commons in Popp Martin closed during the summer for renovations, the new center has also been doubling as a space to host parents and families during lunch and where new student break-out groups are being conducted.

“We’ve informally noticed coaches bringing around students and families to our space on what looks like a recruiting visit, which we never observed in our old space,” Burden added.

★ NEW FACILITIES

Center for Student Involvement: 9,400 sq. ft.

