

The Barbara Walters Campus Center: A Work in Progress

By Micaela Eckett, The Phoenix
Published November 12, 2017



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The projected view of the campus center

At the end of October, President Cristle Collins Judd held information sessions to update the Sarah Lawrence Community on the status of the Barbara Walters Campus Center. In the sessions, President Judd shared details on the design of the new building while also addressing what's next in the construction process.

The new \$35 million building, to which Barbara Walters donated a generous \$15 million, is set to be the biggest addition to Sarah Lawrence since the college purchased Hill House. With an innovative design, a focus on sustainability, and more student space, plans for the Campus Center are bound to impress.

The new Campus Center has one main function: to serve as a utility for the students. More student space, better dining accommodations and an innovative, modern look to match Heimbold are all features included in the design of the new building. The blueprints also detail a "Green roof", covered in grass, benches and a terrace. The project is focused a lot

around sustainability. Builders plan to use locally sourced and recycled material for both the center and its furnishings. Some of the eco-friendly features include LED lighting and natural gas for heating and cooling.

And when the center isn't being used for student purposes, the cities of Yonkers and Bronxville are free to organize events to be held in it, typically ones that require larger venues, since the Campus Center will be the biggest facility of its kind in either town.

The new dining accommodations will replace the Pub, leaving that space completely empty. At this point, future plans for the Pub space are undeveloped. The same goes for certain spaces in Bates. As some of the student spaces from that building will be moved to the Campus Center areas left vacant will eventually be repurposed.

One important detail is that Yonkers is still refusing to allow SLC to create non-gendered bathrooms in the new Campus

Center. However, our new president has ensured that she is still fighting for Yonkers to lift that law and let Sarah Lawrence continue to try and accommodate our large LGBTQ community. In Ms. Collins Judd's words, Yonkers just "wasn't ready to wrap their brains around that" yet.

While the battle for non-gendered bathrooms continues, the battle for the old cherry tree on the construction sight has come to an end, and it will be torn down. To appease those students who were fighting to save the tree, parts of the tree were taken in order for the campus to replant more cherry trees. The wood from the tree itself will be re-used.

One other concern some students have is the possible increase in smoking congregation outside of the new Campus Center. When asked about the issue, Ms. Collins Judd replied that Yonkers, not SLC, owns Glenn Washington, therefore smoking on the sidewalks and in the streets can't be regulated by the campus.

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The entrance of the campus center



Interval view of the campus center

Another potential concern arises in designated parking areas. The new Campus Center will take over at least half of the space in Andrew's lot. Losing this parking space is concerning enough, but given that the new campus center will be available for public events, it is likely more parking will be required than Andrew's Lot even housed originally. Neighboring residents even have signs on their lawns in protest of "turning their yards into parking

lots." Some residents have even come up to Sarah Lawrence students during peaceful walks through the neighborhood and angrily confronted them about letting the Campus Center be built. Despite these concerns, the college seems confident in their ability to adequately address them, as they are moving forward with construction.

The ceremonial groundbreaking is set for January 18th, and construction will begin

immediately after. During construction, the campus will be notified of the loudest workdays, which will be Mondays through Fridays, with occasional weekends.

By Fall 2018, all of the external construction is scheduled to be finished, and the interior work should be done by Spring 2019. If all goes according to plan, the new Campus Center is will officially open in August of 2019.