

Designing Residence Enhancements At Moravian

DREAM COMMISSION REPORT

December 2006

1. HOW DO WE DEFINE ‘RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE’ AT MORAVIAN?

We believe that being a “residential college” means...

- Providing an environment for students to learn in and out of the classroom; to grow intellectually, socially, and personally through developmental programming, educational workshops and social networking; and to experience the full advantages of community life.
- Creating opportunities for students of mixed years to live in one location so that upper-class students can serve as role models and mentors, helping new students to make better choices and to minimize misjudgments which may cost them academic success, social capital, and satisfaction and, in so doing, bolster persistence and retention.
- Requiring dependent students who are not commuting from the home of a parent or guardian, unless released by the College upon special request, to live in housing on campus or in approved housing within several blocks of campus so as to facilitate the benefits above.

2. IF OUR ENROLLMENT GOAL IS 1600, WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THOSE STUDENTS, IDEALLY, SHOULD LIVE IN PROPERTY THAT WE OWN?

We believe that having students in residence is an important institutional priority. If what we seek is an engaged student body then, clearly, it follows that students must *be here*. Off-campus releases (OCRs) and overflow houses remove students from our environment – often our more mature students, whom we expect to be campus leaders and role models -- and compromise their connections with the College.

Many of the current overflow houses and residences in the area that support the OCR population are not the kind of safe, quality housing that we consider to be most appropriate for students. In addition, increasing the number of off-campus residents creates town-gown tensions and takes attention away from the business of student development. If we are to create a fully engaged campus, we must create an environment that supports it; residential space is critical to that objective.

Historically Moravian has been between 70-80% residential, with the remaining students split between commuters (roughly 20%) and off-campus residents (>10%). Given the sentiment articulated by many (the higher the residence percentage the better) and the opportunities before us now (BAM Project on the Hurd Campus; potential partnership with the developers of the Silk Mill project), we propose a goal of having ~85% of our students living in housing on campus or in approved housing within several blocks of campus, ~10% commuting from home, and ~5% (or fewer) living in other off-campus properties due to special circumstances (e.g., medical reasons, ADA needs, financial parameters). See “loading plan” in appendix.

3. WHAT KIND OF RESIDENTIAL LIVING SPACE DO WE NEED? WHAT OTHER SPACES DO WE NEED (I.E., ACADEMICS, DINING, ETC.)?

We believe that Moravian College needs residential living space that is attractive to students and is conducive to student development and academic needs. As Chickering¹ suggests, college student development should focus on developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity developing purpose, and developing integrity. Any new residence hall should be constructed with these objectives in mind.

A new residence hall should include single rooms clustered around common areas that include lounges, quiet areas for studying, bathrooms, and, in some cases, kitchen facilities. These single rooms can be clustered in 1) suites of four to accommodate small groups of same gender friends that wish to live together, 2) suites of 15 to 20 students with two restrooms to facilitate living space shared by both genders to accommodate living-learning communities, and 3) suites of eight to ten students with two restrooms to facilitate living space shared by both genders to accommodate special interest housing. The latter two configurations could also accommodate generic living arrangements for students who do not share a common interest. In all cases, the restrooms should be designed to accommodate the use by multiple students at peak times.

New living space must meet expectations regarding safety and security by having sprinkler systems, card access, emergency phones, adequate exterior lighting, and other such provisions. Staffing coverage by Campus Safety personnel must be at a level appropriate for the total number of residents and for “day” traffic (e.g., faculty, staff, community guests).

The space should include rooms for Resident Assistants in accordance with the staffing ratio developed by the Dean of Student Life and his staff, and an attractive and spacious apartment should be created either in the residence facility or close by for a live-in Student Life professional. The space should include two bedrooms, a full kitchen, bathroom, living room, dining room, and office.

Other essential areas of dedicated space and amenities would include the following: a 24-hour computer resource area, fitness center, laundry room(s), bus stop, bike racks, storage areas for facilities to keep supplies, dining facilities in two different venues to accommodate up to 300 students, coffeeshop/coffeehouse space, and a mailroom with at least 300 mailboxes. The residential living space should be developed with “green” techniques as much as financially feasible, and existing Hurd Campus residence spaces should be revamped to be more attractive to students.

4. WHAT SHOULD ACADEMIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE RESIDENCE HALL BE?

We believe that our academic spaces in an otherwise residential facility should serve two primary purposes: 1) they must facilitate the linkage between in-the-classroom and out-of-the-classroom learning; 2) they must be functional even if we decide to abandon, for whatever reason, living-learning communities. In order to maximize scheduling options, which includes moving some “traditional” north campus classes southward, as well as creating living/learning communities, we need at least two classrooms that are flexible enough to allow for a variety of classroom arrangements and teaching methods. On the Hurd Campus, the College presently has a desperate need for additional classroom space of any type. These additional classrooms would allow us to move 100-level art history courses down south, meaning that students would no longer be able to choose their M6 requirement based exclusively on whether or not they will have to go “down there;”

¹Chickering, A.W.,. *Education and Identity*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (1969).

this would have the advantage of moving all students down south for at least one course in a 4-year period, and will create greater balance among the M6 course options.

We need classrooms:

1. with resident technology, duplicating what is in PPHAC [resident projector and computer with CD/DVD player, internet and cable connectivity, and, ideally, an ELMO];
2. which are large enough to accommodate both small seminars as well as to comfortably accommodate classes enrolling up to 35 students [the enrollment cap on 100-level courses in art history and political science]; and
3. with furniture that is easily moved to facilitate small group discussions.

With our current class schedule, two such classrooms would give us the potential for scheduling up to 22 different sections “down south” (day schedule only).

A small number of faculty members have expressed an interest in developing living/learning communities on our campus. To an even greater degree, faculty members have expressed an interest in providing greater connectivity between classes – such as a Medieval literature course and a Medieval history course. We can imagine a living/learning community in which courses dedicated to these connected interdisciplinary studies are taught in the same classrooms within the new residence hall, very close by to the students who wish to participate.

Ideally, we would also have at least one seminar room and one larger (perhaps 75-seats) tiered space which could be used for public presentations and lectures as well as for meetings.

5. HOW DO WE ADDRESS PARKING?

We believe that parking should be available to those who truly need it and that it should be treated as a luxury for those who do not.

Those who need it, quite obviously, are those who travel to campus every day (e.g., commuters, faculty, staff), those who travel to campus for a single event (e.g., prospective students, visitors, friends of the College), and those who live here but have documented need for a car in close proximity (e.g., because of medical, employment, or other recognized reasons). Acknowledging that parking rivals housing in terms of being the coin of the realm at Moravian, other individuals, theoretically, should be able to do without a car or park their cars in one of Bethlehem’s parking lots or garages.

The demand for parking spaces, at our existing enrollment level, exceeds the supply of available parking spaces. Given our plan to increase enrollment levels, we must either increase the supply of parking spaces or decrease the demand for those spaces.

Increasing the supply of spaces will be a challenge. The limited supply of and extraordinary demand for space within our existing campus footprint prevents us from creating a parking alternative on either campus that will provide “enough” spaces. Decreasing the demand may be a possibility, and one way to do so may be to make it less affordable. With the exception of our premium spaces, Moravian parking is presently a high-value, low-supply item available to virtually everyone other than freshmen at an extremely reasonable price.

We believe that, in order to address parking, we must take some combination of the following possible actions:

- Increase the fee for parking permits
- Create as many new spaces on the Hurd Campus as reasonable and responsible
- Create more “premium parking” areas (e.g., in front of proposed Hurd residence hall)
- Create designated faculty/staff/commuter only parking on Hurd Campus
- Create spaces for visitors on Hurd Campus
- Provide a second vehicle/driver to travel between campuses, providing continuous runs, seven days a week
- Develop a color-coded tag system and require Main Street Campus residents to park (only) on Main Street Campus, and Hurd Campus residents to park (only) on Hurd Campus
- Enhance enforcement mechanisms for existing regulations and create additional mechanisms for new ones (e.g., the above)
- Request that the City of Bethlehem designate one of the City lots adjacent to Hurd Campus as “Moravian College parking” for all but the 10 weeks of the fall term when City festivals preclude use
- Explore potential to lease part of the lot (and perhaps the outbuilding) owned by the Depot Restaurant
- Consider means to promote the use of bicycles, scooters, etc.

6. WE HAVE ONE SCHOOL WITH TWO CAMPUSES. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR MORAVIAN?

We believe that by maintaining two distinct campuses, Moravian is distinguished among small liberal arts colleges. Because of its history, unique architecture, and its role as center of cultural and community functions, the Hurd Campus stands as one of the College’s most significant assets and enhancements to the Hurd Campus must be a priority. The Main Street Campus is home to the majority of the College’s academic, athletic, and student life facilities. Because of that, the Main Street Campus is seen as the center of campus activity, and the effort to restore and refurbish the facilities must be sustained.

What lies between the two campuses is simply magnificent. The Moravian Mile and Historic Main Street have joined hands to become one of America’s most distinctive thoroughfares. We believe that in the future, Moravian students, faculty, and staff will be able to take more advantage of the unique town-gown atmosphere that such a setting provides.

Maintaining two campuses provides the College with both a significant asset and a formidable challenge to academic and facility planning. We believe it is critically important that the College take whatever steps are feasible over the next few years to make both campuses as attractive as possible and to more fully integrate the Hurd Campus into the College’s daily culture. We believe such enhancements will make the College a more compelling option for students, faculty and staff, and local community organizations.

7. HOW WOULD BUILDING THE RESIDENCE HALL NOW POSITION US FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS, WHEN WE CONSIDER DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US IN REGARD TO FUTURE TRENDS FOR STUDENT ENROLLMENT?

We believe that any new residence space must be constructed in a manner which anticipates the possibility of changing student demographics. As the next decade unfolds, the higher education landscape will be dominated by a dwindling number of traditional college-bound students, a dwindling number of males in the college-bound population, a slightly older college-bound population, and an increase in students from lower income brackets. The College should consider this changing population when designing new residence space.

In order to compete for students and to have Moravian seen as a more compelling option for prospective students, any new housing should *meet their expectations*:

- It should be attractive and comfortable, featuring the amenities listed previously and sitting in close proximity to transportation, dining, and social options.
- It should be safe, featuring a sprinkler system, card access, emergency phones, and adequate exterior lighting.
- It should be accessible to differently-abled students.
- It should be “green.”

In order to meet the needs of the students Moravian attracts in the future – perhaps a student body that looks “different” than it does at the present time and different from one time to another within the decades ahead - any new housing should be *flexible*:

- It should be comprised largely, if not entirely, of single rooms.
- It should be accommodating to “special interest housing,” featuring some pod configurations.
- It should be designed to allow for mixed gender floors, providing leeway in years of fewer male students.
- It should be designed to acknowledge that future students may require more separate space and/or more special support, as a result of their interests, ages, genders, or backgrounds.
- It should be designed to allow for the relatively easy transformation of residence space into instructional space or gathering space; this becomes increasingly important if a larger number of students choose to live at home and the College is unable to attract the number of residents currently being projected.

8. HOW WOULD THE CONSTRUCTION OF A HURD CAMPUS RESIDENCE HALL COMPLEX IMPACT CURRENT ACADEMIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Note: “Community” is defined in two ways. The first addresses the impact on the existing academic community on “south/Hurd campus”, the second, on the impact on the downtown Bethlehem community.

INTERNAL IMPACT -- HURD CAMPUS

We believe that any future construction on the Hurd Campus should support a broader plan to more fully integrate the Campus into the life of the College, refurbish and enhance the facilities currently in use, and not disrupt the internal and external academic and cultural activities found there.

Although the Music and Art departments are large, productive, dynamic, and visible departments, there is a history of their marginalization and neglect caused largely by geography and attitude. Aside from a major expansion to the facilities in 1982, the majority of facilities in general are not ADA compliant, and are dilapidated to the degree that much is unusable and unsafe.

Moravian College could, however, build on one of its great strengths, and use Music and Art—the most vivid expressions of a culture’s voice—to market Moravian College’s distinctive difference among small private colleges. The Hurd Campus is unique and historic; the creative work done there by musicians/artist-teachers/students is cutting-edge, but grounded in tradition. The historic setting of the Hurd Campus is enhanced by its importance as a culture center, which includes the Payne Art Gallery, the musical performances in Foy and Peter Halls, and the lively artistic and musical culture which fills the classrooms,

studios and hallways throughout the rest of the complex. In order to maintain excellence and/or grow the College in any way, we must include wider considerations, and growth must include a larger academic vision, including upgrading any existing facilities which are in need.

Internal impact on Hurd Campus performances during the short term, while construction is going on, may include the inconveniencing of groups and disruption of activities. The noise of the construction, for example, may seriously affect the ability of the choir to rehearse, musical performances to occur, students and faculty to practice on their instruments, the teaching of classes, and the functioning of special public events. Internal impact on Hurd Campus performances in the longer term has the potential to be positive, and needs associated with the organizations, clubs, ensembles, and other activities that currently make use of the limited space found on the Hurd Campus should be considered as plans are developed for a new residence hall. For example, we may have to identify new rehearsal space for the Marching Band. And, as previously noted, the significant issue of parking must be addressed.

EXTERNAL IMPACT -- ENGAGING WITH OUR COMMUNITY: MAIN STREET + HURD CAMPUS

We believe that the Hurd Campus is where most of the College’s external activities are rooted and the town-gown atmosphere is most evident. Better facilities would attract more prestigious programs, increasing the College’s visibility and position in the greater community.

An increased student presence on Hurd Campus would enhance the visibility of Moravian College in Bethlehem, add to the vitality of downtown, and provide economic opportunities for Main Street stores and restaurants, especially if we are able to establish a College “Gold Card” program similar to the one in operation at Lehigh University. It would also mean students being on the street late at night. The potential of students being loud after drinking and increased risks to personal safety and property exist. Main Street would be brought to life by more Moravian students being present, but not always in the way that everyone likes or at the time they like.