

Proposal

Wednesday, February 9, 2000

For: **JDUC Council**
From: **O. Minns**, Vice-president (Operations)
Copy: AMS Assembly, AMS BOD, AMS Council, University Administration
Subject: **Expansion of the JDUC**

Proposed Motion

(i) That JDUC Council recommend that Queen's University approve the expansion of the John Deutsch University Centre's assignable space into what is now the first floor of the Residence atop the existing assignable space of the JDUC, for use no later than September 1, 2000. The primary allocation of this new space will be much-needed Student Activity Space.

(ii) If the University accepts this proposal, JDUC Council authorizes the expenditure of up to \$80 000 on construction to renovate this space, for use no later than September 1, 2000, consistent with this document.

The Value of Community Space

According to its constitution, the JDUC is a student-centred community centre. The JDUC has a number of more specific and inter-related purposes that more precisely define its objectives. Most relevant to **this** document is the purpose that reads, "to offer a home for student governments, faculty societies, student clubs and organizations and the associated opportunities for self-directed programmes and services." The constitution also offers us the image of student government and clubs as the "vehicles of civic engagement." If that is so, we need more parking spaces!

It will be no surprise to members of the JDUC Council that there is a need for more useable Student Activity Space on campus. It is a common complaint of students that Queen's lacks space that fosters the development of a stronger sense of community. This is unfortunate, because the green fields of the touted "broader learning environment" are the informal gathering places, the shared safe spaces, the niches of diverse group pursuits, and the sanctuaries of those who meet to share their interests. The seeds of community and extracurricular growth appear to too often fall on relatively barren ground at Queen's. As we look forward to the opportunities that will be presented by projected enrolment growth in the next five years, the University must be prepared to provide physical infrastructure for the increased community-building that will be necessary to bring an even larger group together.

A Reference to the Williams Report

The 1998 Report of the Taskforce for the Implementation of the Williams Report indicates that "the JDUC is unable to satisfy all of the documented student needs within the space available to it. The decommissioning of the graduate residence and its conversion to satisfy all of the student government and club office needs, and some meeting space, is essential."

Ancillary Benefits of Expansion of the JDUC

Beyond the immediate and direct benefits of working to meet current demand for Student Activity Space, there are at least two other benefits that can be derived from expanding the JDUC's space in the proposed manner. First, a floor of relatively quiet Student Activity Space between sometimes-loud elements of the JDUC (e.g., Lower Ceilidh, Queen's Pub, Sutherland Room) and the quiet Residence that sits atop these communal uses will greatly decrease some existing tensions within the building. Although it is not tenable to require that a pub be absolutely quiet at all times, it will be possible to restrict tenancy of the new Student Activity Space to quiet uses. A functioning pub is a particularly awkward adjacency for a residence, but there are a number of much quieter

activities that can occupy the proposed new space. JDUC Council should accept a written understanding of the need to maintain a quiet environment on the new floor in the event that the proposed changes become reality.

Second, any renovations to the JDUC (e.g., preliminary plans and ideas that were discussed in the summer of 1999) will need “swing space”, and a temporary allocation of some of the proposed new JDUC space could be assigned for this purpose, making these other projects possible. As I wrote in an email to the President of the SGPS on November 19, 1999:

“One of the basic problems we encountered during our planning in the summer was the lack of swing space for phasing of the work. In particular, some of the ideas we were bouncing around (e.g., pushing the wall into the rooms that are now the CESA office and the Rector’s office, eliminating the current QEA office to create an attractive and open foyer) involve an absolute reduction in the amount of assignable space in the building. In order to give ourselves and our plans some room to breathe, it is clear that we need to increase the total amount of Student Activity Space in the JDUC before starting such renovations.”

While some plans have been put on the back burner due to cost concerns, some of the smaller projects envisioned in the summer should still become possible if this ‘swing space’ becomes available. These smaller projects include (i) opening up the area in front of the elevator in front of the SGPS offices, (ii) changes to the area of the Rector’s office, and (iii) changes to the 050 area.

Specific Requirements for Community Space

The need for more communal space is needed on campus does not necessarily mean that the space of the JDUC must be expanded. We must look at what spaces, in particular, should be improved, moved, created or expanded. Below are listed a number of needs for increased assignable space. It is almost certain that the proposed increase in JDUC will still leave some groups without the space they require, but we must start somewhere.

- More than 100 AMS-affiliated clubs can currently compete for access to assignable space. After so many years without space assigned to them, many campus groups that would benefit from having a home base have simply given up trying to get an office assigned to them. Of course, some don’t require space, either. Even so, for the 1999-2000 space allocation, the AMS received five worthy applications for office space that were rejected due to a lack of available space, and another set of groups were forced to share space with other users despite their articulated need for a separate space.
- One of the most commonly cited need for space is informal meeting space, perhaps describable as ‘seminar-style’ meeting rooms, in which clubs could hold meetings, groups could study together, teams could work on academic projects, and so forth. This is exactly the sort of space that the JDUC should have more of. These spaces might also include some new model of shared space that would suit some clubs, comprising lockable storage units attached to a larger communal work area.
- There are also a number of non-club student-run activities and services that would benefit from the allocation of space, for example, the Canadian Student Leadership Conference, which now occupies a crowded space in the ASUS Core, and the KingFest summer camp programme, which shares with CESA. Office space for student Trustees, Senators, the new Peer Support Centre and other student initiatives is also in demand. Naturally, this proposal could benefit any number of unmentioned undergraduate or graduate student groups.
- Finally, storage space should not be overlooked as a possible use of space.

Options for Increasing Community Space

There are a number of options that could be explored to meet some or all of the existing demand for additional assignable space. Here are four options for consideration:

- (1) The JDUC can simply wait for the development of this space a part of the ‘Student Life Complex’ project. In terms of the quality of the new spaces available, this is attractive, but it means a wait on the order of 10 or more years. While this appears to be the strongest long term solution and provides important direction for

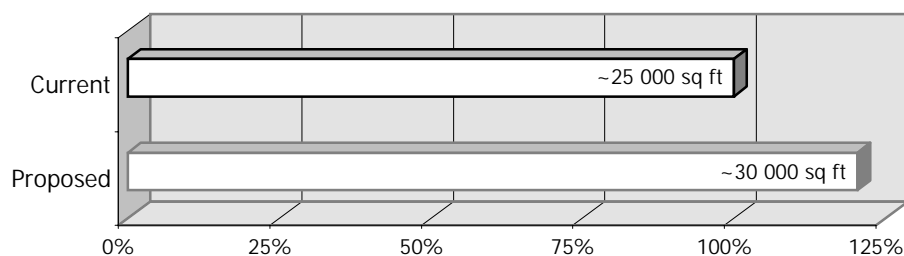
continued development, it is an insufficient solution for the immediate problem of needing to assign more space now, or for 2000-2001.

- (2) Develop 'satellite' locations, i.e., more locations like Journal House, the ASUS Core, and the Grey House. This does increase the amount of space available, but it flatly fails to achieve the JDUC's core objective, making it more difficult for a great diversity of students to come together. This also fails to capitalize on the JDUC's unique open-24h nature.
- (3) Although it seems an unlikely option, it is worth mentioning that units within the JDUC that are not currently Student Activity Spaces (e.g., Food Services' administrative offices) could be displaced. This would obviously increase the amount of space available, but this requires a broader scope of project, since it might mean assigning space in other buildings, and it might interact with contractual obligations of the University.
- (4) The JDUC could expand into the space that is currently the Residence atop the building. There are two clear sub-options here, as well; specifically, (i) this could be accomplished on a modest scale (e.g., one floor at a time, with only basic renovation, until all residents are well accommodated elsewhere in the Residence system, starting immediately), or (ii) on a grander scale (i.e., all at once, with a single larger dollar investment, likely in the medium term). Either of these sub-options can be accomplished in a manner that is complementary to the Student Life Complex planning and its ultimate implementation.

Of these four options, (4)(i) is clearly the most straightforward, realistic and progressive short-term solution. Therefore it is proposed that we immediately begin to actively pursue addition of one floor of the Residence to the JDUC's space.

More specifically, the space should be developed in such a way as to benefit the largest possible number of students at a minimum cost. A number of offices that might each support a club with 40 members would mean that the space would immediately benefit hundreds of students. The inclusion of one or two publicly available meeting rooms would guarantee universal utility for the space, and would address the need for such spaces. One or two rooms of storage might also be included, and the development of some new model of shared space (large lockable lockers in a common 'office' perhaps) should also be considered. Of course, it is not worth making very specific drawings for this new space without knowing if it will be assignable at all.

JDUC: Total Area Annually Assignable
for Student Activity Space



Costs

Like any significant project, there are financial and other costs attached to this proposal. Given that current planning does not call for the use of this space as Student Activity Space in the long term, it would be imprudent to spend a lot on this effort at present. The costs involved are either immediate or ongoing, and they include: one-time construction costs, long term changes to operating costs (JDUC and Residences), and the relocation of facilities from existing Student Activity Space to newly available space. The estimated annual operating cost for this space is \$24200, based on estimates of \$5200 for maintenance, \$10000 for utilities, and \$9000 for custodial service.

The less tangible cost to the Residence system of 16 beds is also relevant, since this represents a possible loss of annual net income of \$15316[†] to Queen’s Residences, approximately \$1 per student at Queen’s. If it becomes necessary, the means by which the Residence system might be ‘made whole,’ will be considered.

Pat Caulfield, at Queen’s Campus Planning, has provided some rough estimates of construction costs. He describes two basic options, (i) the basic conversion of the lowest floor of the Residence, an area of approximately 5400 square feet, and (ii) a thorough reconstruction of the space. It is also suggested that in light of the planning and construction of a Student Life Complex, current construction in this building should be as basic and minor as possible.

(i) Basic alterations to one floor

Re-key 25 doors	\$1 250
Paint out (\$3/square foot)	\$16 200
Lighting (\$5/square foot).....	\$27 000
Contingency	\$5 000
Total	\$49 450

(Note: allowance for lighting is based on Pat's assumption that bedroom lighting will prove insufficient for offices and meeting rooms. Specific consideration of the en suite washrooms, flooring, fire exits, rewiring, availability of washrooms to users of the space, and consideration of the space’s physical accessibility may also be necessary in determining the final costs of this option.)

(ii) Major alterations, at \$70 to \$100 per square foot would mean a total cost of between \$378 000 to \$540 000.

Conclusion

As described earlier, redevelopment, or perhaps 'redeployment' of the Residence (or at least the lowest floor thereof) has long been an objective of the JDUC. The opportunity to work towards this objective at hand. This proposal, which would decrease in the number of beds in the Residence system by approximately 0.4%, would mean an increase in assignable space in the JDUC of at least 20%. There are vacancies within the Queen’s Apartment & Housing system, and there is planning underway for possible Residence construction in the short term. It is suggested that an interim decrease the number of Residences rooms by 16 should be balanced against the opportunity to provide tangible and immediate benefit to the hundreds or thousands of students who would interact with the student groups occupying this newly available space in the JDUC.

This proposal is a sound investment for Queen’s University. Clearly, this proposed new use of the space above the existing communal spaces of the JDUC represents a significant increase in available Student Activity Space, something that is in great demand on campus. Such an increase is explicitly in the interests of all partners in the JDUC, and will enable to JDUC to better meet its mandate.

Owen Minns.

[†] [(\$55792 residence fee income for 16 single rooms) – (\$16276 mortgage cost per year, based on a total remaining mortgage of \$276 700, with 17 years left to run) – (\$24200 operating costs, maintenance, utilities, custodial)]