

Building the Future



Greenspun Hall will centralize departments in the College of Urban Affairs and pave the way for high-tech collaborative research.

By Laurie Fruth

Drive down Maryland Parkway and you'll be hard pressed to miss the massive construction site on the corner of University Road. Although the building is still a few months away from a grand opening, students and faculty in the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs are already making plans for the day when they can set foot in Greenspun Hall, their long-awaited new home on the UNLV campus.

When it opens this fall, the new building will be the fifth largest academic facility on campus. It will provide office, laboratory, and classroom space for the departments of criminal justice, environmental studies, communication studies, and public administration, as well as the School of Social Work and Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies.

Centralizing college faculty and staff in one location on campus is expected to enhance networking and research collaboration.

"This will be the first time most of our schools and departments have lived under the same roof," explains Martha Watson, dean of the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs. "Having everyone together will lead to conversations among faculty, and these conversations may stimulate new ideas for collaborative research and innovative teaching."

Criminal justice chair Joel Lieberman agrees, adding that Greenspun Hall will enable faculty members to work more closely with graduate and

Artist's rendering of Greenspun Hall

undergraduate students involved in faculty research projects.

“Our department has several research laboratories spread out across the campus,” he says. “In Greenspun Hall, all of our labs will be in one place, including our Center for the Analysis of Crime Statistics. Our new facilities will be far more suitable for conducting research and working with students.”

Space and facilities to conduct research are also important to Lee Bernick, chair of the department of public administration.

“Greenspun Hall will give us the space we need for students to work in groups,” Bernick says. “We also plan to take advantage of the auditorium to host national scholars in public forums.”

In addition to offices for faculty, staff, and graduate students, Greenspun Hall will house the college’s advising center, a debate squad room, high-tech laboratories, conference rooms, smart classrooms, a technologically sophisticated auditorium, and media facilities for KUNV radio and UNLV TV.

“We planned our part of the new building to include digital, high-definition media facilities that we’ll use to engage students in conducting research,” says Ardyth Sohn, director of the Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies. “We’ll be exploring the limits of new technologies, testing media products at various stages of development, and looking for ways to bridge the gap between traditional and emerging media.”

The Planning Process

The idea of Greenspun Hall began to take shape many years ago when Las Vegas Sun publisher Brian Greenspun sat down with his family to discuss how they could contribute to UNLV.

“We came up with the idea of the Hank Greenspun School

of Journalism to honor my father’s legacy. But we knew at the time that the school would be just the first step,” Greenspun says. The late Hank Greenspun was the founder and publisher of the Las Vegas Sun newspaper.

A few years later, the family presented UNLV with a second gift to establish the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs; it was then that talks began in earnest about the possibility of creating a building for the college. These discussions eventually led to the donation of a third gift from the Greenspun Family Foundation to build Greenspun Hall.

In June 2005, legislators approved the use of additional dollars from the state to help fund the building, establishing a successful public-private partnership that university administrators hope to establish with future donors.

At the groundbreaking ceremony for Greenspun Hall in early 2007, Brian Greenspun described the gift to UNLV as the “latest step on our journey to build a better community.”

“We didn’t want to compromise on the design of the building,” he says. “So when we were told that what we wanted wasn’t possible, we added more money to make it possible. The important thing is that we create a space for learning, for research, and for experimentation.”

To ensure that the new building would meet the growing needs of the College of Urban Affairs, the university hired a planning consultant to interview all of the potential users of the building.

“The purpose of these interviews was to determine what kinds of spaces people would need, not just now, but five years from now,” Watson says. “We then took this information to representatives of the architectural firm. They took our needs and translated them into the design of the building.”

One important design goal for Greenspun Hall was to obtain a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. LEED certification points are awarded to buildings on the basis of energy and water savings, indoor-air quality, and the use of sustainable building materials. Greenspun Hall will be eligible to apply for gold LEED status three years after completion. If awarded, Greenspun Hall will join approximately 350 other buildings in the United States that have earned this distinction.

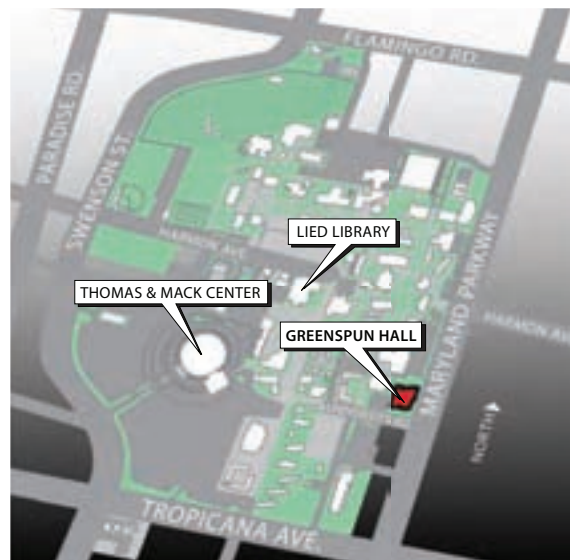
To this end, architects designed the building to include a louvered canopy to shade the courtyard, reduce the solar gain on the building façade, and support a large photovoltaic array. Once the building opens, this array will produce about 30 percent of the power required to run the building. Representatives from the design firm are hopeful that the canopy, a special system for heating and cooling, extensive desert landscaping, and the use of energy-saving interior and exterior materials will qualify the building for LEED gold status.

“And that will certainly be a selling point for students interested in studying environmental science,” says David



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MAP: DAVE MELTON; PHOTOGRAPH: R. MARSH STARKS



Hassenzahl, chair of the environmental studies department, which will also move into the facility.

Another important design goal for the building was to maximize its prominent location on the corner of Maryland Parkway and University Road. Designers suggested and university representatives approved a 125-foot tower bearing UNLV’s name at the southern boundary of the property. It is intended to bring attention to one of several entrances to the campus.

Watson says she is pleased with the design of the building and is looking forward to moving the college into the space.

“Greenspun Hall is aesthetically pleasing with exterior and interior colors specially selected to evoke a sense of the desert. It’s student-focused, with plenty of informal and formal areas for students to congregate, study, or work with state-of-the-art equipment. But, most importantly, it’s a permanent home for the wonderful faculty and students of the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs.”

Greenspun Hall Fast Facts

PROJECT COST:
\$90 million

SIZE: 122,000 square feet

ARCHITECTURE FIRM:
HKS Architects, Inc. in association with Robert A.M. Stern Architects

CONTRACTOR:
Clark Construction Group, LLC, Las Vegas

COMPLETION DATE:
Construction, June 2008;
Media Facility, April 2009

SPECIAL FEATURES:

- 190-seat auditorium designed for video, radio, and Internet production and equipped with a system to collect audience feedback
- High-definition media facilities for KUNV FM radio and UNLV TV; student newsrooms; and a technical operations center supporting a large-storage area network
- High-tech convergence laboratory for the Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies
- Specialized labs for criminal justice and the Center for Statistical Analysis
- Debate squad room for communication studies
- Chilled-beam heating and cooling system
- Photovoltaic array for energy conservation