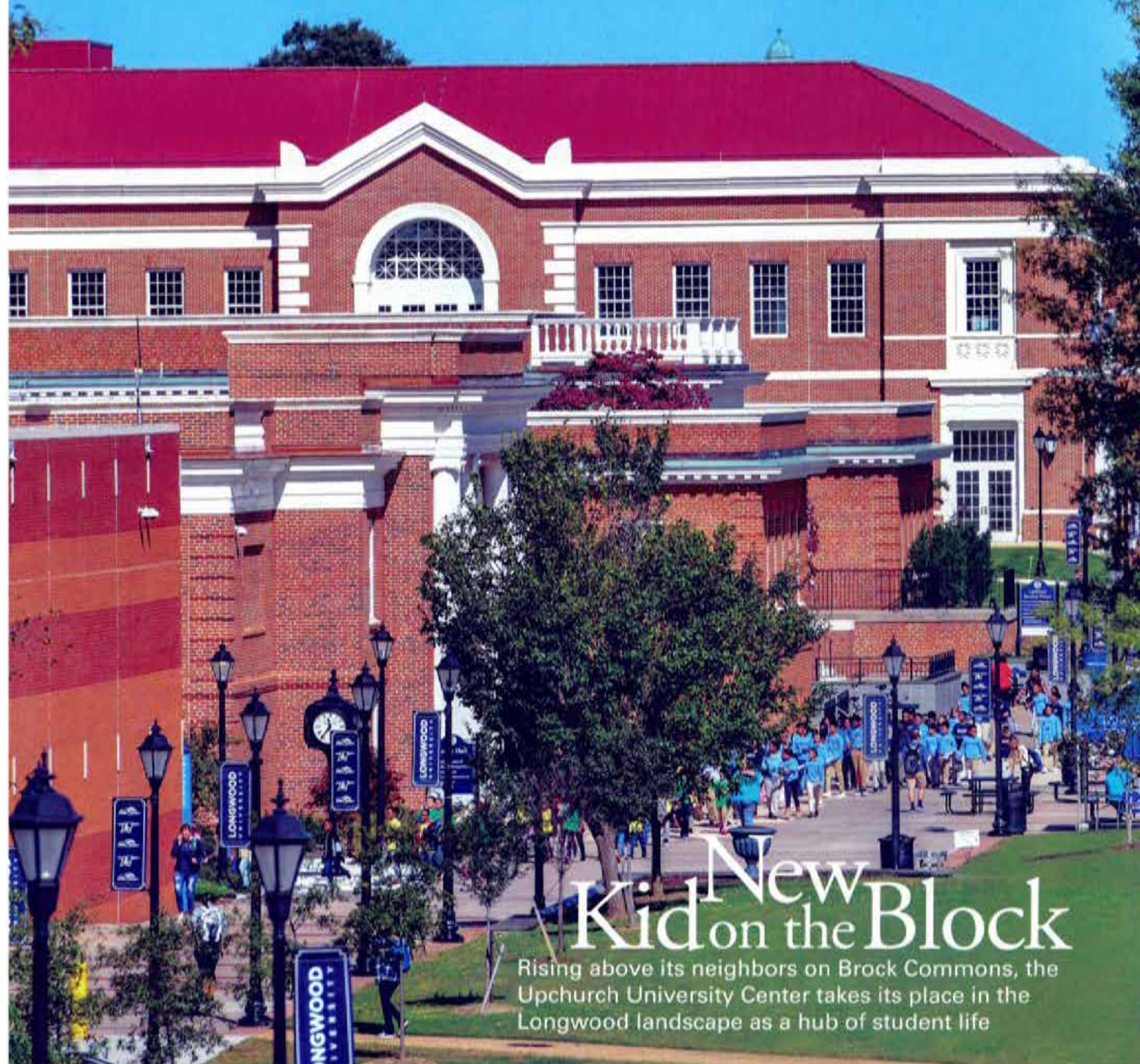


# Longwood

A MAGAZINE  
FOR ALUMNI  
AND FRIENDS  
OF LONGWOOD  
UNIVERSITY

FALL 2018

Welcoming new faculty members  
Q&A: The basketball court as classroom  
Alumnus keeps the commonwealth's wheels turning



## New Kid on the Block

Rising above its neighbors on Brock Commons, the Upchurch University Center takes its place in the Longwood landscape as a hub of student life





# Thumbs

Careful planning pays off as new Upchurch University Center is an instant hit with Longwood community

BY LAUREN WHITTINGTON

# UP





The 84,000-square-foot Norman H. and Elsie Stossel Upchurch University Center is the largest nonresidential building on Longwood's campus. With its central location just off Brock Commons, it provides a welcoming, student-centered environment for studying, eating and socializing.



As the Longwood community gathered together on a Friday afternoon in late October for the Norman H. and Elsie Stossel Upchurch University Center's official grand opening, the new building already felt both magnificently new—and like something that had always been a part of the university.

It is a modern marvel—a high-tech, state-of-the-art home for Longwood's distinctive culture of community and student engagement in the 21st century. Yet on the outside, the new building's stately brick architecture and elegant white columns fit seamlessly into the classical surroundings of its central location at the intersection of Wheeler Mall and Brock Commons.

And on the inside, just days after the doors first opened, students had quickly claimed it as their own—moving boxes in as student organization offices came to life, staking out favorite new study nooks and excitedly devouring new dining options including Panda Express. There was no need for a warm-up period. From the moment the doors opened, Upchurch took its place as a hub of student life at Longwood, vibrant from the early morning coffee hours through late at night.

The Upchurch Center is the new anchor of student engagement at Longwood—a space designed to carry forth the strong traditions of self-governance and active campus involvement to future generations. Its location at the very center of campus is no accident.



(above) The new university center is named for Elsie Stossel Upchurch '43 and her late husband, Norman. Elsie Upchurch attended the grand opening celebration and ribbon-cutting on Oct. 26, when the couple's portrait in the new center was dedicated. (opposite page) Students were excited to be the first inside the new Upchurch University Center when the doors opened on Oct. 17.

"This building is a manifestation of citizen leadership, student self-governance and student learning," said Dr. Tim Pierson, vice president for student affairs. "It's a physical embodiment of the fact that Longwood is not a passive place—it's an engaged place. As much as it is a beautiful building on the outside, the activities that go on inside its walls will make all the difference in the world to our students."

Upchurch is now home to more than 175 student organizations that are central

to Longwood's core mission of preparing citizen leaders. A majority of students are actively involved in one or more student organizations, a tradition dating back generations.

Longwood's vibrant student-life culture had long outgrown the Lankford Student Union, which lacked both versatile space and the amenities that serve both to attract students and make them feel valued.

"If you look at student centers across the country, they really are the living room of a college campus," said Susan Sullivan, director of the university center and student activities. "Lankford really wasn't serving that purpose anymore. We had outgrown the meeting rooms and needed more space for campus events. Plus, there was no real space for students to gather and hang out."

On Upchurch's opening day, as students lined up around the food court and looked so at ease using the space it was as if they had never known campus without it, tears welled up in Sullivan's eyes.

"Whether it's to meet for coffee, hang out in a lounge, play pool, have a student organization meeting or listen to a poet on the performance stage, students now have a place where they can gather," Sullivan said. "It's definitely bringing the campus community closer. It's a convenient nonacademic space where students can learn and grow."

At the ribbon-cutting ceremony on Oct. 26, with hundreds of dignitaries and students in attendance, President W. Taylor Reveley IV paid tribute to Elsie Stossel



**'The outside looks like Longwood—it's very traditional—but the inside is modern enough to meet the needs of today's students and those in the future.'**

—Susan Sullivan, Director of the University Center and Student Activities





**UPCHURCH UNIVERSITY CENTER**

**STUDENT OPENING**  
Wednesday, October 17 - 11AM

**GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION**  
Friday, October 26

Picnic - Music - Giveaways - Ribbon Cutting

[pe.jengwood.edu/upchurchoopening](http://pe.jengwood.edu/upchurchoopening)





(above) The Upchurch University Center houses student organizations, meeting rooms, lounge spaces, a gaming area, a food court, Soza Ballroom event space and administrative offices. It provides much-needed common space for students to hang out, study and meet. (opposite page, top) The Student Government Association Senate meets weekly in the Wilson Chamber, a stately space with tiered seating that can also be reserved by student organizations.



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—Dr. Tim Pierson, Vice President for Student Affairs

Upchurch '43, the building's namesake, whose \$4 million gift help make it possible.

"When I think of the beating heart of Longwood, I think of people like Elsie, who came here as students, were educated, inspired and transformed, and went out into the world to do great good in a career and life of citizen leadership," Reveley said. "In making this building possible, she has ensured that countless students here on campus now and into the far future will come to love Longwood as she has and be engaged fully in the vital culture of student life that is so distinctive here in building the habits of democracy."

## A Space for Engaged Learning

At 84,000 square feet, Upchurch is the third-largest building on campus—only the high-rise residence halls Curry and Frazer are larger. It's more than double the size of the Lankford, which was formally dedicated 50 years ago.

When Lankford opened, it had a bowling alley and pool tables for enter-

tainment. The mailroom was also located there for years.

Upchurch houses student organizations, meeting rooms, lounge spaces, a gaming area, food court, a large ballroom event space and administrative offices.

While plans for the building evolved over time, the core vision stayed the same: to serve as a hub of student involvement on a diverse, residential campus, and to foster citizen leadership.

"There's no doubt that the academic experience is what prepares a student to be ready for the real world," said Dean of Students Larry Robertson '90. "But it's the co-curricular experiences and the opportunities to interact with people who have different opinions or different ideas or different experiences that truly create a college experience."

Recent National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results show that Longwood students seek out more leadership roles and are engaging in collaborative learning more than their peers at other universities. The survey data also show a large majority of Longwood students have frequent discussions with





others of diverse backgrounds.

The professional offices located in Upchurch include Citizen Leadership and Social Justice Education, the dean of student engagement, the University Center and Student Activities, and Fraternity and Sorority Life.

One goal of the new center is to facilitate interpersonal experiences and exchanges in an age when face-to-face communication has rapidly declined due to technology.

"Student learning happens at all levels but engagement is the difference between being passive learners and being engaged learners," Pierson said. "Being involved in some of these organizations that students find at Upchurch will be the way they find out what they want to do with their lives."

## A Home for Student Organizations

Speaking on behalf of the student body at the ribbon-cutting, Kellen Spradlin '19 said students' excitement about the building goes beyond the new food options.

"As a member of a number of campus organizations that will have their homes here in this building, I have learned so many skills that have helped me grow and develop into who I am today," she said. "With Upchurch becoming the new focus of student life, we will now have all the resources, supplies and spaces we need to lead our student clubs and organizations to the next level."

Particular standouts are the new spaces for the Student Government Association; *The Rotunda*, Longwood's student newspaper; and Lancer Productions, which oversees major campus events including Spring Weekend. Prior to the opening of



Among the student organizations that have prominent office space in the new center is *The Rotunda*, Longwood's student newspaper. Previously, the newspaper staff mostly worked remotely because their old office was cramped and antiquated.

Upchurch, those organizations were meeting at different locations across campus because they lacked centralized space that met their needs.

"*The Rotunda* is going into its 100th year. This new space reflects our stature and signals that we are an established and

important part of campus," said Christine Rindfleisch '19, editor-in-chief. The newspaper's staff previously often worked remotely or tried to find space to work in the library because their basement office in Lankford was cramped and antiquated. Now *The Rotunda* is in a spacious spot with its own entrance off of Brock Commons.

"I think the university did a good job of taking into consideration what students need with the study spaces, with the food choices and with the space for collaboration. I am so excited to be in here—all the time," Rindfleisch said.

Meanwhile, at the grand opening, as alumni and special guests marveled at the student spaces and sparkling new amenities, the Wilson Chamber—the stately room with tiered seating where the SGA Senate and other student organizations now meet—drew audible "wows."

The SGA at Longwood continues the tradition of a large and active membership that works closely with the faculty and administration on a range of issues. Upchurch will only further increase the organization's visibility, said SGA President Josh Darst '19. Since the new building opened, Darst said students are poking their heads in and asking to learn more about SGA.

"These spaces are important because they aren't just some rooms where you can do homework and some rooms where meetings can be held," Darst said. "They are opportunities for students to grow and learn student advocacy."

President Reveley delivered a similar message to the roughly 40 members





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1 The food court area features Panda Express, Au Bon Pain and FarmGrill, as well as ample seating. 2 Among those joining President W. Taylor Reveley IV for the ribbon-cutting were Robert H. 'Bob' Upchurch (left), brother-in-law of Elsie Stossel Upchurch '43 (second from left), and Board of Visitors Colleen McCrink Margiloff '97, who was rector of the board when ground was broken for the new center. 3 Those on hand for the ribbon-cutting and dedication of Lankford Student Union 50 years ago included Fred O. Wygal (second from left), Longwood acting president from 1962-63 and 1967-68, and Ruth B. Wilson (second from right), then dean of women. 4 The center houses a full-service Starbucks. 5 The N.H. 'Cookie' Scott Multicultural Center is a popular gathering place. 6 Susan Eddy Soza '62 (center) is flanked by her daughters, Elizabeth Stewart (left) and Stephanie Marsh, at the dedication of the Susan Soza Ballroom, whose hardwood floors were reclaimed from the North Cunningham residence hall built in 1928. 7 The late Phyllis Mable, beloved vice president for student affairs from 1982 until her retirement in 2001, inspired many at Longwood to recognize the importance of extracurricular activities in a college education.



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**'...[I]t's the co-curricular experiences and the opportunities to interact with people who have ... different ideas or different experiences that truly create a college experience.'**

—Larry Robertson '90, Dean of Students

who attended SGA's first meeting in the Wilson Chamber. Among the agenda items were the approval of two new student clubs and a discussion of how SGA successfully sought a change in the food service hours in Upchurch to better meet students' needs.

"An education at Longwood is not just about learning how to have a career, but really learning how to live a life, particularly learning how to be a citizen leader in a democracy that desperately needs you all. It needs the habits that you learn and practice in this room. It makes my heart sing to see you all sitting in here," Reveley told the group.

## 'Aunt Phyllis' Would Be Proud

A new student center was identified as a priority among building projects in the Longwood capital campaign that concluded in 2013. An idea to renovate the old student union had proved cost-prohibitive. The Campus Master Plan completed in 2008 called for the new university center to be built in the center of campus at the location of the old Cunningham residence halls, which were found to be decrepit beyond use and repair. The Upchurch Center honors the Cunninghams through the hardwood floors in the Susan Soza Ballroom, which were reclaimed from the North Cunningham residence hall built in 1928.

The process of determining what the new student center should be involved the entire Longwood community, including students.



**'Now I get to watch current students use this building to find their passions and bloom.'**

—Ashley Crute '10, Longwood Director of Scholarships, who helped with planning for the new center when she was a student

"I blossomed into who I am through my Longwood experience," said Ashley Crute '10, director of scholarships at Longwood, who, as a student, took part in the discussions and planning, including looking at other facilities across the state for ideas about the details students would most value and appreciate.

"Being on SGA and having the opportunity to join all these different organizations—I wouldn't change it for the world," she said. "Now I get to watch current students use this building to find their passions and bloom."

Longwood's emphasis on student engagement goes back much longer than the planning process for the new building. One of its great champions was the late Phyllis Mable, a beloved former vice president and a national leader in the student affairs field.

"Generations of students called her 'Aunt Phyllis' because she always genuinely cared about them and their needs," said Pierson, who was hired by Mable to be dean of students in 1992. "She always challenged students to live, love, learn and leave a legacy. She had a genuine interest in watching students grow."

Today it's Pierson, Sullivan, Robertson—and many others—who are carrying that torch, challenging students to consider their legacy at Longwood, in their communities and in the world.

"This building is truly dedicated to providing opportunity for students to interact, to have good conversations and at the same time just have fun," Sullivan said. "It is important for students to know that they are cared about, and this new university center truly is a symbol reflecting that."

And as she pulled open the doors and students began to stream inside for the first time, Sullivan greeted them with two words that said it all: "Welcome home." ©