

# TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY SPACES



Dear students and families,

NCSSM has embarked on an exciting initiative that will continue over the next five years called Transforming CommUNITY Spaces – a series of construction and renovation projects that will vastly improve NCSSM-Durham facilities and the student experience. After these major investments, the bathrooms, lounges, and student rooms of every residence hall on campus will be renovated, refinished, and refurnished; we will have a new Academic Commons addition attached to the Bryan Center building with bright new gathering and collaboration spaces that will integrate dining, library and meeting spaces; the Educational Technology Center Auditorium will be significantly renovated; and we will complete a great deal of long-deferred maintenance on our historic buildings that started life in the early 20th century as Watts Hospital. One prominent example will be the renewal of the iconic windows in the Reynolds Breezeway.

This long-needed work can finally begin now because of substantial repair and renovation appropriations by the North Carolina General Assembly and because of private contributions made through the NCSSM Foundation’s ongoing \$50 million [Ignite + Transform comprehensive fundraising campaign](#), including [a lead gift of \\$7.5 million from an anonymous alum](#). We are working to secure some \$30 million in additional funding from the state and private donors over the next few years to allow us to complete all planned renovations.

While exciting, during construction, these projects will require us to adapt and to rise to a series of challenges as a community, making adjustments and even sacrifices now for the long-term good of NCSSM and future students just like you. Our [Transforming CommUNITY Spaces website](#) will always have the latest information about these projects, including what you need to do to help them proceed smoothly and quickly and meanwhile meet your needs as conveniently as possible. You’ll get updates in our Residential Connection weekly newsletter. You’ll also see Transforming CommUNITY Spaces signs around campus letting you know if traffic flow is changing or when an area may be closed for work.

And here is an overview of the plans, project by project:

## **Residence hall improvements**

All of our residence halls will be much nicer places for residential life at the end of this project. There will be all new flooring, fresh paint, all new furniture, and completely renovated

bathrooms with new fixtures and tile. Here you see our architects' renderings of a completed room and bathroom:



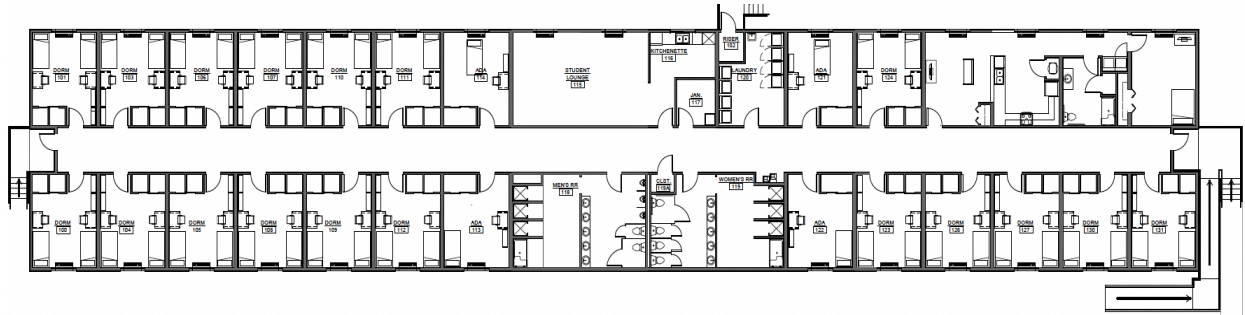
### **Summer 2023: Temporary residence hall installation**

To avoid reducing NCSSM-Durham enrollment during residence hall renovations, we will renovate residence halls a few at a time over the coming years while providing temporary housing on campus that will host the residents of the spaces under renovation. The Hill residence hall will be upgraded first beginning in summer 2023, with Reynolds residence halls scheduled to follow in January 2024. At the beginning of this summer, we will create Unicorn Village, or UniVille for short, which will provide temporary quarters for the residential life experience that is such an important part of our residential program.

UniVille will be located where the softball field is now. It will be composed of two long student housing units connected to each other and to the rest of campus by new sidewalks. It will include lounge spaces, Community Coordinator apartments, and student rooms similar in size and furnishings to our typical student rooms. Students assigned to Hill for next academic year will move into UniVille in August on Move-in Day to begin the year, while students assigned to Reynolds will move into Reynolds.



*Modular site location*



*Modular residence hall layout*

Hill students will move into their renovated residence hall when they return from Winter Break for J-Term, while Reynolds students returning to campus will move into UniVille, where they will complete the academic year. Student Life is exploring ways to make these moves as easy as possible for students and families and will provide details ahead of time.

This will be an adventure in all senses of the word, but halls will experience it together as a community. During all these transitions, residence hall community groups will remain intact, as you can see from the diagram above – and we will even seek to keep room neighbors close between moves to foster community.

**New Academic Commons**

This area between Bryan, Reynolds, and the FabLab is now known as The Pit, but it will be the location of a fantastic new Academic Commons extension to the Bryan building, scheduled to begin construction in the summer of 2024. The cafeteria renovation project underway now is actually the first phase of this project and has been designed to tie in seamlessly. As you can see in these photos, the dining hall and serving space has been completely stripped back to the underlying structure, and electrical work is underway.



We expect the cafeteria to be fully ready for use in early June. We hope to be able to have an event for students in the new dining space the last week of this school year. We appreciate everyone’s patience with our temporary food service arrangement over the course of this

academic year. Because the Academic Commons construction won't begin until summer 2024, current students should not be affected by that phase – but we look forward to showing you the space when you return to campus for your class reunions!

Here are some renderings of the new Academic Commons:



### **Auditorium renovations**

The ETC Auditorium has served us well, and thanks to a major gift from a Durham-based charitable foundation and support from the state, it will receive \$5 million in renovations. Design of the renovations will begin this spring, and we anticipate that the work will be done in phases over the next three years (2023-2026), primarily during summers. These renovations will include work to the exterior facade and grounds, as well as new seating, house lighting, flooring, backstage equipment, mechanical and electrical, and renovations to the restrooms.

As we go through this journey of Transforming CommUNITY Spaces, we'll all experience some expected inconveniences that come with renovations and, we're sure, some that are unexpected. We will be providing regular communications to our community on construction so that you will know in advance of any new work and stay updated on the progress of projects underway. We hope to minimize challenges or frustrations, but when they arise, let's try and embrace them with a spirit of ingenuity and adventure. While changes may sometimes feel annoying in the moment, be open to the idea that these adaptations may serve as real bonding experiences for your NCSSM classes. Certainly, the first several classes in the early 1980s still reminisce affectionately about walking down Ninth Street to eat all their meals at E.K. Powe Elementary School, and those in the 1990s remember living in a nearby motel while a new residence hall (Hunt) was being built. We will do just fine if we undertake these adaptations together as a community and focus on the fact that the NCSSM-Durham campus is getting the upgraded spaces we need to better serve all of you and many new Unicorns for decades to come.

Thank you for all that you will do to help transform our campus community.

Best regards,

Todd Roberts, Chancellor

Terry Lynch, Vice Chancellor for Student Life and Durham Chief Campus Officer

Robert Allen, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Operations