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## Beyond the classroom: GGC to open residence halls, student center, library this fall

Georgia Gwinnett College is about to undergo the biggest change of its brief history. Just four years after it opened, the college is preparing to open its residence halls, student center and new Library and Learning Center. [Photo slide show inside](#)

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Staff Photos: Jason Braverman  
Maurice Blount, facilities director for Georgia Gwinnett College, gives a tour of the campus' new Library and Learning Center. The library, new student center and residence halls are in final stages of construction and set to open in the fall.

LAWRENCEVILLE — Georgia Gwinnett College is about to undergo the biggest change of its brief history.

Just four years after it opened, the college is preparing to open its residence halls, student center and new Library and Learning Center.

“The housing is particularly important for the college as it represents an important step in building the ‘Campus of Tomorrow,’” GGC President Daniel J. Kaufman said Wednesday during a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the student housing. “These first residence halls represent Georgia Gwinnett’s historic transformation from a commuter-only college to a full-service residential campus.”

In August, about 1,000 students will move into the college’s new residence halls. The \$100 million project was supported by the Georgia Gwinnett College Foundation and will be repaid by housing fees, which range from \$595 to \$725 per month.

The first phase of student housing includes a cluster of three buildings, containing space for 1,029 students. The second phase will house another 1,500 students and will include a parking deck.

Not your typical dorms

Kaufman said the residence halls are not just “warehouses for students.” They are a critical aspect of the integrated learning experience on campus.

The residence halls feature suites of two to 12 private bedrooms designed to establish a culture of collaboration and cooperation, said Maurice Blount, GGC's facilities director.

Bathrooms are shared by only two students, and each student has a separate sink and vanity. But each suite has a shared living space, which includes a wall-mounted, flat-screen LCD high-definition TV and a kitchenette with a microwave, full-sized refrigerator, dishwasher and large pantry.

The rooms do not, however, have stoves, and Blount said that is by design. All students who live on campus will be required to have a meal plan, and the student housing is only a short walk away from the dining hall in the new student center.

Student residents will use the newest technology in card keys to gain access to the building and their rooms. They will also use a system that allows them to go online to schedule laundry time. The laundry equipment will be capable of sending students e-mails to alert them when their laundry is ready to be moved from washer to dryer or when the drying cycle is done.

The residence halls also contain academic spaces for classes, study groups, seminars and other activities.

"What an opportunity for student development to take place," said Jim Fatzinger, GGC's associate vice president for student affairs. "The opening of residential life provides an extension of the sense of electricity that has permeated the campus since Georgia Gwinnett College has opened, both for students and staff and members of the community."

Fatzinger said many features of the student housing, along with the student center and the Library and Learning Center, will allow learning to easily extend beyond the classroom.

#### Integrated learning experience

A walk through the Library and Learning Center and the student center shows how the buildings have been designed to support students' academic growth.

The new library, which is tentatively scheduled to open in the beginning of August, has study spaces throughout, with areas for quiet study located on the second and third floor. Designed to hold up to 250,000 volumes, the library will be much bigger than the space it currently occupies on campus. The new library's main entrance leads into the information commons, which will feature computer stations and tables.

"The information commons is the most public space in the building and probably where you'll see the most interaction with the students," Blount said.

The second floor will house the reference desk and study rooms, many of which will contain audio-visual equipment.

"One of the most impressive things about this library is the use of the technology," Blount said. "Introducing technology in every aspect for students is a big thematic unit for the library."

The third floor will contain a quiet reading room, archives and special collections, and administrative offices.

The library will also have a coffee bar and space for tutoring and programs run by the Student Success Center.

“It will be a very different place than what we have,” Blount said.

The neighboring student center, scheduled to open in two phases, will house the dining hall, a two-story Barnes & Noble bookstore and student affairs offices.

“The student center connects the residential life with the academic life, with the (new) quad being the center of campus,” Blount said.

Looking toward the future

Jonelle Faal, the Student Government Association president and member of the college’s first freshmen class, said it has been inspiring to watch the campus grow.

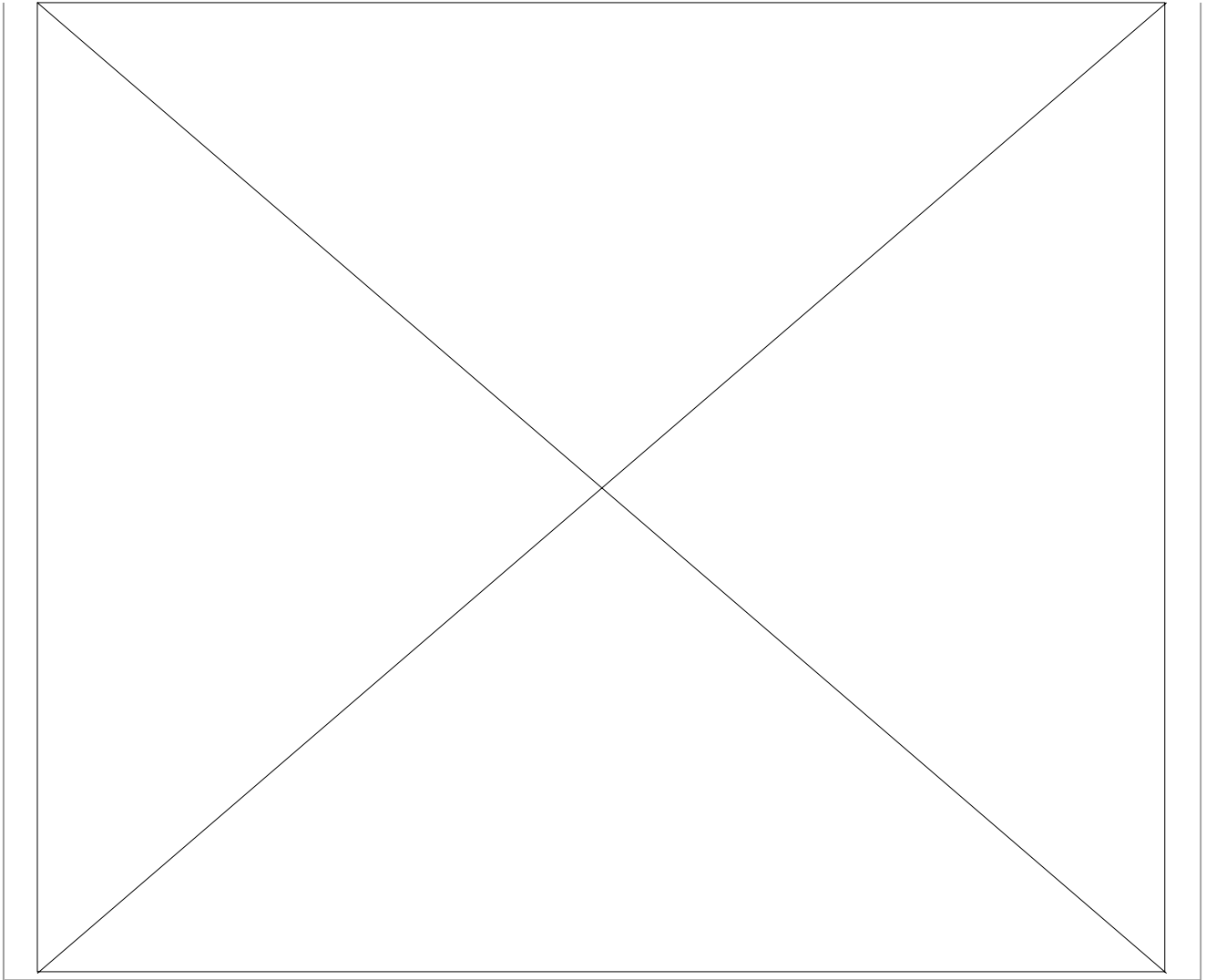
“I’m glad we took a chance on GGC and believed in the vision,” she said.

Richard Tucker, a member of the University System of Georgia’s Board of Regents, said he is proud of the college’s many accomplishments and looks forward to great things to come.

“Growing from 112 students four years ago to over 3,000 students now, with student housing, full accreditation and 40 academic programs is a remarkable achievement,” Tucker said.

As the college’s president looks toward Georgia Gwinnett’s fifth year, a campus filled with 5,000 students and even more construction as the college continues its growth, Kaufman is also enthusiastic.

“Creating a new model for educational innovation, and then implementing it, is no small task, and we knew that from the start,” Kaufman said. “Our growth and successes are proof that the experiment is working, and we look forward to continuing to serve the students of Georgia.”



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