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8-22-2019

## A Bigger, Better Student Union

Michael Newsom

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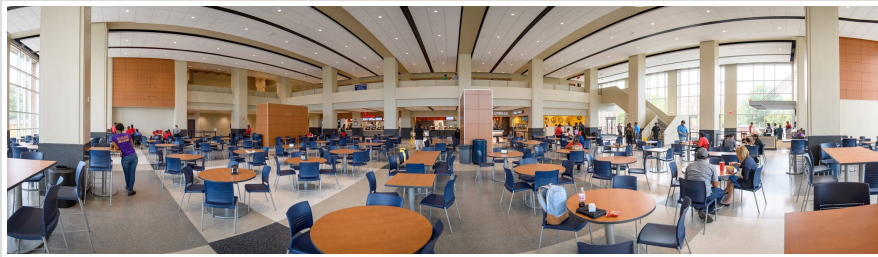
Newsom, Michael, "A Bigger, Better Student Union" (2019). *University of Mississippi News*. 589.  
<https://egrove.olemiss.edu/umnews/589>

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## A Bigger, Better Student Union

**UM facility has new features and better spaces for student activities, thanks to \$60 million renovation**

AUGUST 22, 2019 BY MICHAEL NEWSOM



University of Mississippi students can choose from a variety of options, including five well-known vendors, the new food court at the Ole Miss Student Union, which includes more seating for students and visitors. Photo by Robert Jordan/Ole Miss Digital Imaging Services

OXFORD, Miss. – The **University of Mississippi**'s new and improved Student Union is twice the size it used to be, and the \$60 million renovation also added many digital screens and more flexible meeting spaces, which creates countless opportunities for collaboration and community.

The **Ole Miss Student Union** opened in 1977 as a 98,000-square-foot center of campus life. In 2014, a massive renovation began that added 80,000 square feet. The project provided an enhanced **dining** space, five well-known food vendors, kitchens, a transit hub and a ballroom.

The updated Student Union opened at the end of the spring 2019 semester, but many students will get their first look at it when classes begin Monday (Aug. 26). The building will be dedicated in a ceremony at noon Thursday (Aug. 29) on the Union's front steps.

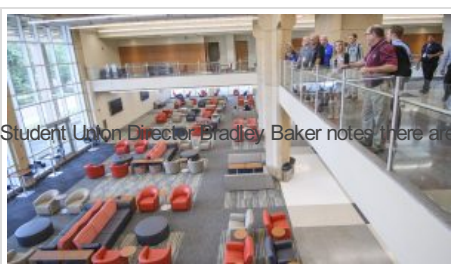
"The reopening of the Ole Miss Student Union is a big boost to our student experience," Interim Chancellor Larry Sparks said. "The Union is more than just a building – it is a gathering place for students and the hub of student life."

"The multiyear expansion and renovation provides new and updated spaces that create a more inviting and modern campus centerpiece."

A university committee spent years studying ways to upgrade the building, visiting student unions at Auburn University, Louisiana State University and others. Ultimately, the committee decided to renovate the existing facility, but also to increase its size to about 173,000 square feet.

The front of the building, which faces the Grove, is much more welcoming and less cramped feeling than the previous entrance.

The new Union is home to student organizations such as the **Student Activities Association**, Associated Student Body, RebelTHON and Ole Miss Big Event, as well departments such as the Ole Miss Student Union, Fraternal Leadership and Learning, and Center for Inclusion and Cross Cultural Engagement. It also includes a larger Barnes & Noble bookstore and coffee shop, conference rooms and a Mississippi Federal Credit Union.



Student Union Director Bradley Baker notes there are many upgrades to the building, which will offer much more for students, faculty and staff than the previous building.

The \$60 million renovation and expansion to the Ole Miss Student Union provides more space for events

The renovations included a new auditorium with theater-style seating that will be used for events.

From way-finding display boards on each floor to audio and video capability in each conference room, there is a large amount of technology

"From way-finding display boards on each floor to audio and video capability in each conference room, there is a large amount of technology

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### Students Learn 'Real Politics' in Washington, D.C., Winter Session

OXFORD, Miss. – Eleven University of Mississippi students spent their winter break learning about the people who work behind the scenes of the American government in Washington, D.C. Lead by Jonathan Klingler, assistant professor of political science, the students of Pol 391: Applied Politics met not with candidates, but with the people who make candidates'

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### Young Alumna Gives Back to School of Accountancy

OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy's new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying "thank you." "It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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### Reuters: Keep an Eye on the Money Supply

U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to abate. The Federal Reserve's

and collaboration. Photo by Thomas Graning/Ole Miss Digital Imaging Services

throughout the building,” Baker said. “Student organizations even have the capability of utilizing the screens for small, informal meetings in the Center for Student Organizations and Leadership Development on the first floor.”

Baker said he’s proud of the new Union and believes other members of the community will be, too.

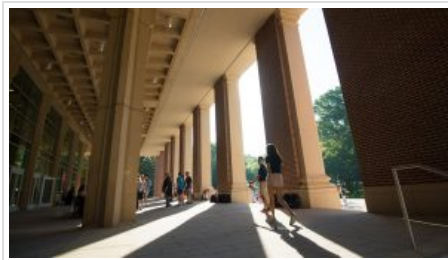
“As a former student and someone who has seen the changes on campus and within the Ole Miss Student Union, I am excited to welcome our Ole Miss family into the completed building when they return to campus,” Baker said. “Most importantly, we now have our true living room to campus where students can meet, get involved and, simply, hang out.”

Six large digital displays hang in the building’s common areas and three large televisions are in the lobby. The food court has projection screens, and the new Union Ballroom, which can handle almost any kind of event, has five projection screens.

The new auditorium, which will be used by ASB and other groups, has a large projection screen and four televisions. Meeting rooms are outfitted with TVs, and the Center for Student Organizations and Leadership Development has a digital display and four television screens, among other amenities.

ASB President Barron Mayfield is excited about the new ASB office and auditorium, which he believes will allow the ASB to serve the student body in new and better ways. Incorporating the leadership offices for the Ole Miss Student Union into the floorplan is also helpful for students, he said.

“The new Student Union has opened up incredible new possibilities for the student body,” Mayfield said. “The opportunities for collaboration are endless and have already proved to be invaluable as we prepare for the year. It has opened up lines of communication that previously did not exist, allowing for more comprehensive planning of student programs and events.



Students returning for the fall semester will be greeted by a newly renovated and expanded Ole Miss Student Union. Photo by Kevin Bain/Ole Miss Digital Imaging Services

“It will bring student leaders closer together and enable us to serve organizations and the student body more efficiently, effectively and equitably. I cannot wait for students to come back and experience all of the opportunities provided by the new Union.”

Carl Tart, executive director of the Student Activities Association and a senior, said he is excited to get the Student Union back, providing many new options for holding events.

“New upgrades like projector screens in the food court, a ballroom and the huge Union plaza have allowed us to get creative again with planning,” Tart said. “With this being my senior year, I could not be happier to bring more fun and more entertainment to campus. Students are really going to enjoy what we have planned for the year.”

Tart said it’s invaluable to have the Union as a central hub of campus activity again. The Union makes it easier for organizations to get together and schedule events over the coming year.

Tart wants to foster a sense of inclusivity throughout the new space and “build a culture of love” for all students there.

“With Student Activities Association sharing a space with RebelTHON and Big Event, I foresee a creation of a small community for students involved in our organizations and service programs,” Tart said. “I am extremely excited about the student org workspace on the first floor, which will allow us to work with other organizations not prominent, but completely vital to the success of students on our campus.”

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