Meet the Architect: Sustainability and the New Residence Hall
Forum Summary

This summary includes ideas submitted online in addition to points discussed at the forum.

Attendance
Approximately 25 students attended the forum. All five student representatives and both co-chairs of the President's Sustainability Committee attended.

Sustainable Features
Many students expressed a desire for visible sustainability and preferred sustainable options to traditional aesthetics (e.g. no lawn desired, visible solar panels okay). Mini-fridges may be a hindrance to sustainability and LEED Gold certification, but giving them up could be obligatory to residence in the hall. Other suggested or desired sustainable features included the following:

- Greywater system
- Solar panels
- Low water green roof or rooftop garden
- Laundry lines in places other than the basement
- Dual flush toilets
- Low flow shower heads
- Plaque or other informative sign about sustainability
- Panel or visible monitoring system showing energy use and savings
- System to turn off A/C when windows open
- No lawns, low water landscaping
- Locate fountains in low-evaporation areas
- Open and light, lots of daylight
- Composting built in

Other Features
Discussion of other building features touched on disability accommodations and labor conditions as well as practicality.

- Wheelchair accessible entrance in the front, not relegated to back
- Furniture that meets ADA height
- Medical room with assistant housing
- Well ventilated laundry rooms
- Whiteboards in browsing room, living/TV room
- Nice water fountains as in Clark, Toll, and other halls
- No fireplaces
- Ethically sourced materials

Tasks for Students
The architect suggested that students research transportation access from the site and LEED Gold residence halls, especially regarding mini-fridges. Results may be communicated through Donna Ng.

Thoughts on Sustainability
Students who have been involved in campus sustainability, especially related to this building, are aware of LEED's weaknesses and are glad to know that Liz Moule is similarly critical of greenwashing, ineffectiveness, and other shortcomings of LEED. Students, faculty, and administrators have debated the merits of certification in other spaces and generally conclude that
actual sustainability is most important, though certification is also valuable for public recognition, long-term accountability, and motivating tougher sustainability measures. Some students have expressed interest in the Living Building Challenge as an alternative to LEED; Liz Moule pointed out the prohibitively higher design and construction costs. This is what students had to say about how they envision sustainability in the new residence hall:

- “I would just like to see overall the most sustainable building that we can create, whatever form that takes, whether or not it fits in with LEED.”

- “In terms of overall vision of sustainability, what I would like to see is a break from what I often see in Scripps of a value of aesthetics and comfort and things like that over practicality or sustainability. I think that both aesthetics and sustainability are important, but I would just like, moving forward, departing from Scripps' history with more emphasis on sustainability.”

- “I think that sustainability at Scripps is a really overdue topic to discuss, and I think we're very behind, and I think that this dorm is a fantastic way that we could make a good start. I don't necessarily care if we make it to gold certification, but [let's] do everything we can to be as sustainable as we can. It would be an amazing accomplishment to get solar energy. I think that would be huge.”

- “I would, as you can tell with my laundry lines, like sustainability to be visible in this dorm so that students are in all the ways possible made aware of what's going on, and are given the option to make good choices. I would love it if we didn't have as many fridges—I mean, that's something we could start working on now in the dorms we currently have. But if we could envision this as a green dorm, a green living and learning community, that would be amazing to me. Having something that provides those examples for where Scripps is going in the future—I know this is probably going to be our last dorm for quite a while, so I would like it to be as sustainable as we can make it and also as visibly so as we can make it to reinforce that we do care about this, and we are committed to sustainability in our daily lives.”

- “I would like to see a dorm that both attracts and inspires future generations of Scripps students to transform ourselves and transform the community into a community that really reflects Scripps values of confidence, courage, hope, and also conscientiousness. I am also a big fan of the just sustainability paradigm, and so I would also really appreciate if the materials were conscientiously and ethically sourced with consideration to human rights. I would like to see a dorm where sustainability moves beyond this whole “green” thing that has a sort of narrow thing, and I would love for sustainability, for the design of this dorm to support a sustainability that is intersectional with other issues in the world, and show where scripps is heading as a community by the values that we imbue in our new building.”