THE TRANSFORMATION OF

Lower Sproul

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

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A NEW AND VIBRANT STUDENT UNION

UC Berkeley is revitalizing a historic heart of student life: Lower Sproul Plaza. In a major initiative galvanized and led by students themselves, Lower Sproul will be renovated and rebuilt to create a vibrant and modern campus gathering place for generations to come. The new Lower Sproul will become an inviting, green gateway to our world-class university.

What is now an imposing, under-utilized student union will be transformed into a transparent glass pavilion symbolizing and facilitating openness; the seismically poor building that now houses hundreds of student organizations will be razed, redesigned, and rebuilt; the plaza itself will teem with new retail shops and new energy, showcasing Berkeley’s innovation to the world.

Students have longed for a student union that is worthy of their leading public university and today, this vision for enriching student life is finally within reach.

Students signaled their support for a renovated Lower Sproul by passing a fee referendum in the midst of unprecedented fee hikes in 2010 — a $35 student fee per semester that increases
incrementally over time. More than 50 percent of the $223-million Lower Sproul renovation costs will be financed by Berkeley students themselves.

The University is committed to supporting this student vision and invites alumni, parents, and friends to join in the revival of Lower Sproul. Together we will contribute $99 million to:

- Transform the student experience by creating an inviting, vibrant gathering place for social and academic interaction as well as essential student services.
- Expand, improve, and facilitate student engagement and leadership.
- Celebrate and advance Berkeley’s commitment to public service.
- Build a green campus-community gateway befitting a world-class university.
THE HEART OF STUDENT LIFE

The campus envisioned a hub of student life and “campus living room” when planning the California Student Center — encompassing today’s César Chávez Student Center, Martin Luther King, Jr. Student Union, Eshleman Hall, Zellerbach Hall, and two adjacent plazas — in the 1950s. Architect Vernon DeMars designed a multifaceted, non-academic complex in an effort to obtain the vibrancy and social interaction of an Italian-style piazza. The design focused on what students needed outside of the classroom for relaxation, recreation, and nourishment.

The context of the student center evolved in 1964 as the Free Speech Movement (FSM) — a successful student protest to win the right to organize on campus for political and social causes — unfolded. The FSM and subsequent 1960s activism reshaped Berkeley’s identity across the country. The student union and adjacent Sproul Plaza became the go-to place for rallies and events, engaging the political and social issues of the day. Student organizations found homes in the busy floors of Eshleman.

Today, although students remain engaged in a multitude of activities, the half-century old complex has become worn, functionally outdated, and in some cases, structurally unsafe. The campus has long recognized the need to renovate Lower Sproul and to re-create vibrant, livable spaces designed for future student generations.
Berkeley students, in collaboration with faculty and staff, have dreamed up the new vision and design for Lower Sproul. Working in small groups in design charettes with the architectural firm of Moore Ruble Yudell, the campus community has developed a plan for a new student union with the following elements:

- The seismically poor eight-story Eshleman Hall will be razed and replaced with a lower, longer, and more spacious building, with 20,000 additional square feet. Student leaders will work together in new, flexible spaces designed for collaboration. The Eshleman lobby will draw students and the community with new retail and dining venues.
• The Martin Luther King, Jr. Student Union will be partially renovated and transformed into a transparent glass pavilion presenting an active and open public face on all sides. A new two-story addition to the western and southern sections of the MLK student union will feature a “campus living room,” food service, and an indoor/outdoor performance space opening to the plaza.

• The César Chávez Student Center will be partially renovated to include large lounges that open to dramatic views of redwood trees along Strawberry Creek.

• The plaza perimeter will be reinvigorated with a mix of retail and student services with many areas accessible 24/7. The plaza itself will be resurfaced and softened to enable performances of all kinds.

• The plaza and new and renovated buildings will be made universally accessible to all people with disabilities.

• Sustainable design elements — including an elegant rain garden to capture storm water — will showcase Berkeley’s green innovation.

• A “green ribbon” of trees, planters, and seating will create inviting outdoor spaces that soften the plaza.
The new Lower Sproul promises to capture a vision articulated by architect DeMars but never fully realized: the creation of a student center, such as those found at Harvard and Yale, where students congregate and thrive; where student life is esteemed and enhanced in a great tradition of higher education; where a large institution becomes intimate. As one campus leader has said, “It will make big Berkeley small.

A one-stop student services center: Today, no central, efficient, inviting, go-to location exists to welcome and serve students and launch them into the world. From their first day on campus, students will enjoy a comprehensive student services center that creates a new sense of connection and care from the campus as they can access the services they need in one location.

The Student Learning Center and Multicultural Student Center: The primary academic support service for Berkeley students serving some 8,000 undergraduates with 250 tutors and instructors, the Student Learning Center will be open 24 hours a day to anchor Lower Sproul. The Multicultural Student Center will provide a welcoming, inclusive space for everyone in our multicultural student community to catalyze social and cultural interaction, celebrate diversity, and promote civic engagement.

Meet, eat, study, and relax: Students welcome campus spaces to meet and study — 24 hours a day. The Lower Sproul renovation will enhance student life by creating a comfortable “living room,” with suitable study spaces and enticing dining venues.

“The Lower Sproul renovation promises to revive a hub of student life — literally to transform the student experience at Cal.”

— a student leader
ENHANCING STUDENT LEADERSHIP, PUBLIC SERVICE, AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

UC Berkeley students are connected to each other, to Cal, and to the world through hundreds of campus organizations. Today, student leaders work in buildings that sorely need upgrades, without proper meeting spaces, or environments that speak to the importance of their involvement, organizing, and leadership. The Lower Sproul project is designed to provide leadership development opportunities for students to strengthen their sense of self and community, apply principles of justice and social action, and foster positive social relationships. Key features of the Lower Sproul project include:

- **The Associated Students of the University of California (ASUC) and Graduate Assembly:** Lower Sproul is home to the Associated Students of the University of California (ASUC) — Berkeley’s independent student government association founded in 1887 — as well as to the Graduate Assembly for graduate students. Considered the collective voice of students, the ASUC and Graduate Assembly bring students together to advocate for student concerns locally, statewide, and nationally.

- **Center for Student Leadership:** The Center for Student Leadership empowers students to positively impact their communities through educational leadership opportunities. Through coaching, advising, and providing numerous resources, the CSL promotes the development of effective and ethical leaders within thousands of student organizations, more than 60 fraternities and sororities, and a variety of leadership programs — contributing to the vitality of campus life and the ultimate student experience.

“UC Berkeley is about excellence in all that we do, including serving the greater good. The new Lower Sproul will place public service — very literally — at the heart of campus life.”

— Jonathan Poullard, Dean of Students
• **Center for Public Service**: The expanded Center for Public Service is among the largest public service centers in the country. With a new, welcoming office spanning an entire floor in the new Eshleman Hall, the Center for Public Service will artfully showcase the University’s commitment to public service and tell the story of student, faculty, and alumni engagement around the Bay Area and across the globe. Leading the center, Cal Corps — the organization that has anchored student public service for more than a decade — will continue to manifest the vibrancy of social action and education on campus and promote the civic purposes of higher education. Through Cal Corps, 200 agencies received almost 300,000 hours of service from more than 6,000 students in 2010 alone.

• **Career Center**: The Career Center — currently located off campus — will be relocated directly across the street from Lower Sproul and will help undergraduates, graduate students, and recent alumni explore and test-drive career options, connect with potential employers, and realize their internship, job, or graduate school goals. It will work with students and recent graduates to make informed decisions about their futures by providing comprehensive resources, events, and counseling on career development, internships, externships, employment, and graduate school. The Center — to be renovated into a pleasing and welcoming space — will help students and alumni enhance their career portfolios whether they seek to build upon their liberal arts education, envision a career in medicine, or wish to join the corporate or nonprofit workforce.
Lower Sproul is an active threshold between the campus and community where real-world experience meets the energy and enthusiasm of students as well as academic expertise. As one of the main entrances to campus near the historic Sather Gate, Lower Sproul is a gateway between the campus and community. Its design creates a living example of the University's willingness to embrace sustainable development through conservation of energy and water use, energy generation from photovoltaic panels, marketing fair trade goods and locally grown organic produce, and the filtration of storm water that feeds Strawberry Creek.

Lower Sproul will also improve access to encourage biking and mass transit: Some 450 buses pull up daily on Bancroft Way, adjacent to Lower Sproul. Hundreds of students, faculty, and staff commute to Cal by bicycle each day. A bike, pedestrian, and transit friendly corridor will include a new transit lounge, bicycle sharing and repair; and other amenities for commuters.
HOW YOU CAN HELP

Throughout UC Berkeley’s history, major campus building projects have been funded by the University’s alumni and friends. From Phoebe Apperson Hearst to Li Ka Shing, the Berkeley campus landscape is largely the result of the generosity of private donors.

Students, too, have generously contributed to UC Berkeley beyond the payment of tuition and fees — from $18,000 to construct California Field in 1905 to $238,000 for student parking in 1960 to $114 million from student fees over several decades to renovate Lower Sproul. This is indeed the most significant student investment in Berkeley’s history.

The University is committed to supporting the vision of our students by contributing $99 million to the Lower Sproul project. We are inviting Berkeley’s friends and alumni, parents and community members, to join this effort to reinvigorate student life and support our student leaders as they take on the complex social and political challenges of our times.

All gifts will be appropriately and permanently recognized as lasting contributions to the revitalization of the student experience at Berkeley.

To make a gift or to learn more about giving and naming opportunities, please contact:

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