

University of Chicago

Campus and Student Life Space Planning Study

Chicago, Illinois



Project Information

Completion Date
December 2011

Services Provided
Benchmarking
Housing/Student Life
Space Program

Rickes Associates was engaged by the University of Chicago to help assess and reinforce student life on campus.

The central challenge in this planning effort was to create and sustain a stronger student social and learning community at the University of Chicago. What physical resources are required to bring the students, faculty, administrators, and staff closer together? How does a world-class university build a vibrant social/academic environment in the information age where technology is continuously changing the ways in which these campus constituents communicate, interact, and learn? What are the successful models and “best practices” being implemented at peer colleges and universities?

At the time of this study, Campus and Student Life (CSL) at the University of Chicago occupied approximately 1.2 million ASF (about 580,000 ASF excluding student living space in campus housing) supporting 5,000 undergraduate and 10,000 graduate students. CSL encompassed more than two dozen functional areas, ranging broadly from the Bursar and the Registrar, to Athletics and Health Services, to Dining and Residential Life. In addition to a comprehensive array of student activities, the Student Life venues hosted a number of community functions.

The outcome of this study was a comprehensive space program and narrative for Campus Student Life addressing all functional requirements. This was accomplished through participation in focus groups and meetings with campus constituents, assessing the current level and degree of student satisfaction with services and programs, identifying models and best practices at other institutions, quantifying specific space needs, and preparing a space program listing existing and proposed spaces. The space plan recommended substantial increases in administrative, activity, and student organization space for various planning horizons. Also recommended were the right-sizing of a number of spaces and the relocation of some offices to achieve synergy of services.