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### A Student's Perspective of the Tucker Student Center

Office of University Communications

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# A Student's Perspective of the Tucker Student Center

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Office of University Communications

September 17, 2012

## ***Tucker Student Center Brings Positive Change***

*By GWU Senior Liz Van Halsema, Intern for the Office of University Communications*

Throughout the years, students have come to Gardner-Webb for a number of reasons, including the beautiful campus, Division I sports, great faculty members, and an openness rarely seen among other universities. As a senior who is well versed in the culture of Gardner-Webb, I can say with confidence that all of these aspects have stayed true throughout my college career. But for a campus that stresses the importance of its students and community, there always seemed to be one thing missing: a single location that catered to just that: community among students.

In comes the Tucker Student Center.

Since the building's announcement in Spring 2010, anticipation and rumors among students have run high. Comments like "Did you hear there's going to be a climbing wall?" or "I've heard they're including a brand new pool!" could often be heard during class exchanges.

Some of us even tried to catch a glimpse of the rooms and facilities before the building was even completed, sneaking in late at night to imagine which room the theatre would be in, or how the climbing wall would look once completed. Although the construction of the building did offer opportunities for late night adventures, it's nice to know that I'm actually allowed in the building this time around. Equally as nice is the realization that in some cases the Tucker Student Center is more than I had imagined.

No, it doesn't have a pool. But its new facilities include a movie theatre, three new dining options, outstanding study rooms, an on-campus coffee shop, a climbing wall, and endless amounts of places to hang out. Returning students like myself are able to appreciate these commodities while current and future freshmen are lucky enough to enjoy them for their entire undergraduate careers.

"It's huge!" said sophomore, Kelli Sol, who attended the grand opening of the building on Aug. 28. "The campus is so different from last year. I can see myself coming here a lot to hang out with my friends, eat, and use the study rooms. The climbing wall is one of my favorite things about the whole place."

Chase Howard, a senior who is working at Tucker this year with the climbing wall, thinks that its inclusion will make a big difference this year. In the past, students would often have to go outside of campus to climb or have fun. "This building allows for students to enjoy

themselves on campus. It creates a central gathering place for us.”

A recreation area equipped with air hockey and pool tables gives students even more to do. I've actually found myself wanting to take part in air hockey games, something that I had never considered when the game was located in Suttle Wellness Center. The openness of the building is enticing, luring me in to try new activities and meet new people.

Justin Loy, who is a member of the Student Government Association, said that the Student Center goes as far as to “boost the morale of the students. It even boosts our campus to a new level, putting it on the same page as bigger universities with state of the art facilities and services, many of which have become more centralized.” In years past, it was a hassle to take care of things like housing payments, having to go to multiple buildings to pay dues or talk to a student representative. Now students can easily find all they need in one place.

“You may not know where something is,” said Loy, but you generally know where to find it.”

Loy is excited about a few other things too, including the improvement of Simply-To-Go (Convenience store and snack bar), which has “bigger and better things. It even has a refrigerated section where you can buy boxes of bacon!” They even sell other groceries, including half-pints of ice cream, an area in which I'm going to have to practice a little bit of self control. Just look at all the things the Student Center is teaching me already!

It's going to be easy for me to get carried away with such an amazing building this year, especially since this will be the only year I have with it. I have seen a lot of things change on this campus throughout my undergraduate career: the addition of a Chick-fil-a and Simply-To-Go in place of The Kennel, the building of a brand new baseball stadium, and the oh-so-helpful addition of traffic circles and speed bumps on Stadium Drive.

The biggest transformation of all, though, is that of the empty field that used to lie next to Lake Hollifield into one of the most pleasing sites on campus. It ties campus together in a way that nothing had before, bringing academics, athletics and student activities together with its central location. The campus-wide walk itself feels shorter and I think this is because there is something to look forward to in the middle of each walk.

With all of these changes, whether they are positive or negative (the speed bumps can be a pain sometimes, especially when you're late to class or swim practice), I find it comforting to know that my campus has changed almost as much as I have since the Fall of 2009. It seems very fitting that the culmination of hard work and construction over the past years have resulted in the creation of such a great building while I have undergone a similar process of growth.

Even though Tucker Student Center is complete, I will continue to face changes this year. I won't have to think about a suitable place to meet with my classmates or hang out with my friends because that answer is now obvious. I won't have to walk from the apartments to the

library to study, or wait until Friday in the Caf to eat sushi. I won't even have to sneak into an unfinished construction project to see an amazing building because it is finally here, completely finished; and while it may belong to all of the students at Gardner-Webb, I like to pretend that it's all mine.–

\*For more on the Tucker Student Center –check out this link: <http://gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/?p=3231>