

**Meriwether Lewis Institute for Citizen Leadership
Summer 2017
Project Document**

*"If you can't do it right,
you ought not to do it...."*

--University Union Spokesman,
Steven Zimmerman, 1983



*"It's a very tight budget. The
architects think we can get
[cinder] block construction.
We've got to get it done for
the price we've got."*

--Project Manager,
Trev Crider, 1983

What should the University do with the Student Activities Building and location?

Currently, the University's Division of Student Affairs operates space in a loose network of buildings around the University Grounds. From a recently renovated Newcomb Hall to the newly opened 1515 (previously the Lloyd Building) to the evolving Open Grounds-- student accessible space at UVA—and how we think of that space—is changing.

"The opening of Newcomb Hall (1958) marked the dedication of University space to provide both a community gathering place and a center for student activities. Around the turn of the Twenty-first Century, the portfolio of programs and services managed by Newcomb professional staff and student leaders began to expand in significant ways...Several additional facilities were developed as centers of student activity... including the Forum at Observatory Hill, Runk Green Room, Lambeth Commons, *Student Activities Building*, and others."

--[HTTP://NEWCOMB.VIRGINIA.EDU/HISTORY/](http://newcomb.virginia.edu/history/)

In March of 2015, a "Project Initiation Form" was created to request a feasibility study for replacing the Student Activities Building (SAB); however, the acquisition of the 1515 Lloyd Building was designated a priority, and the SAB study was put aside. A "needs based assessment" proposal now under review argues that "replacing the Student Activities Building (SAB) will address a variety of core needs," and in support of that argument, emphasizes the "shortage of gross square feet and increasing demand for space and services to support student activities and programs." In addition, several student cultural and performing arts organizations have recently planned a petition calling on the University to renovate the SAB. The petition has been placed on hold with knowledge that a needs assessment is underway.

The 2017 MLI project asks you to create a group proposal that answers the question of what you believe the University should do with the current SAB. You'll need to bring all of your design-thinking skills into play as you work to identify creative potential solutions that meet the needs of the diverse stakeholders in the building and its surrounding environs. Our launch of the project, in the SAB space, allows you to view the space with a newly professional perspective. In ***Exhibit 1*** you'll find the basic building specifications as explained on UVA's website for potential users of the

space. The Student Activities Building is 33 years old and received a new roof within the past ten years, but has had no significant improvements since at least 2000.

In order to understand the context of your proposal, and the number of key stakeholders who will take great interest in any proposed change, you'll want to investigate the purpose of the SAB, the stakeholders in the building itself as well as in its surrounding neighborhood, and its prior, current, and potential future uses. In **Exhibit 2** you'll find a *Cavalier Daily* article from 1983 that outlines a debate about the building even before the first cinder block was laid. Similar debates about construction, governance, oversight, and design continue three decades later, and you'll want to start your project with a wide perspective and view the SAB location as one within a larger strategic set of current and future student activity focused spaces on grounds.

Your proposals will need to be anchored in hard data about the building's use by its core constituencies. To that end, **Exhibits 3 & 4** provide 2016-2017 data illustrating, in general, who uses the building and for what types of purpose. UPC, Paul Robeson Players, FYP are obvious users; however, other users are less obvious and *potential* stakeholders may be as yet unknown; we provide a preliminary list of possible users/stakeholders in **Exhibit 5** with which you may start planning your investigation; there are, of course, many others. However, understanding who uses the SAB alone is not sufficient to inform your project proposals. It is important to remember that many different groups require, and are consumers of, University spaces. The SAB currently has administrative offices and academic departments that use its space for various activities (e.g., Key note speakers, engineering conferences, career fairs, etc.). Additionally, there are groups or individuals from outside the University who request access to University spaces (Film Festival, Festival of the Book, weddings, receptions, workshops, and so forth). You are asked to investigate how the SAB location can better work in support of current space needs and in regard to The University's long range plans and community building goals.

You might consider the following, among many possible, questions as you start the project.

- Why should UVA reconsider the use of the SAB at this time?
- Why does a significant investment into developing the SAB location make sense for key stakeholders at this time?
- Why should UVA choose to develop this site before, or instead of, others?
- Who uses the SAB space and for what reasons?
- Who governs the use of the SAB space? Who owns the property? Who pays the bills?
- How does a revision of the SAB role on Grounds make sense within other larger plans for the western-most part of Grounds or continuing UVA/Community relations?
- How much will your ideas cost? Where will you get the funds?

As you grapple with these and other questions sure to arise, employ design thinking. Consider larger questions of which the SAB may be only a smaller part, decide what is feasible *within a proposed budget*, and propose viable ideas within the overarching political structure of The University.

As with any project, you'll want to keep in mind the key decision makers—and the audience you ideally will persuade—for the project. Your audience of key decision makers includes, but is not exclusive to:

- **Allen Groves**, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs & University Dean of Students
- **Marsh Pattie**, Assistant VP for Student Affairs & Associate Dean of Students
- **Michael Kozuch**, Director of Business Services & Operations
- **Connie Warnock**, Associate University Architect
- **Dirron Allen**, Assistant Dean of Students & Director of Student Activities
- **Anna Towns**, Director of Space Planning & Management (CLAS)
- **Kendra Paisley**, Associate Director for Events & Operations
- **Anna Towns**, Director of Space Planning & Management (CLAS)
- **Jill Krantz**, Associate Director of Athletics for Intramural Recreational Sports
- **Jocelyn Huang** (Cavalier Symphony Orchestra CIO)
- **Amy Zhang** (Asian Leaders Council Chair)
- **Nolan Reilly** (UPC Chair; First Year Players)
- **Ali Cheraghpour** (Shakespeare on the Lawn)
- **Catherine Gamboa** (Spectrum Theater)

Keep the audience of key decision makers, in addition to daily users and stakeholders, in mind as you frame your research, your re-design, and the creation of all your deliverables for the MLI Project.

As you've learned, most real-world projects require you to work in groups to create your proposals. Working in groups of five for the entire six weeks of the MLI project, you will use design thinking approaches and methods to define the problem, to understand the user experience and to develop creative proposals for the SAB location. You'll want to communicate your arguments clearly and in a compellingly persuasive fashion. Consider how best to frame your argument, the story, and your data in support for your final proposal.

The MLI Project has multiple deliverables throughout the six weeks of the Institute:

Due Mon. 9:30am, June 12: 1 pg. write-up & 3 min. pitch of your initial insights & *working* ideas

Due Tues. 5:00pm, June 20: Project 1—Preliminary proposal

You will share a succinct explanation of your current preliminary proposal for the SAB location. You may choose the format you think best reflects your analysis of the problems and opportunities as you have framed them and your working solution(s) at this point. You are required to include as *part* of your preliminary proposal 8-10 slides that should:

- Include a mockup of a potential title slide for your final presentation
- Provide a brief executive summary of your proposed idea
- Capture visually your thinking about actual or proposed user experience
- Give initial results from any polling or quantitative feedback from stakeholders
- Have a developing list of secondary sources informing your project
- Have a list of current and pending interviewees

Create audience-centered, client ready materials that make your ideas easy to follow or visualize, and design the materials with an audience of students, faculty, alumni, and UVA administrators firmly in mind. Use data, story and argument to convey your ideas with clarity.

Please submit your materials to the MLI Faculty Team (Ballinger, Grundy, Gould, Lampkin, and Pentz) **before 5:00pm, Tuesday, June 20**. The MLI faculty will review the materials you provide, offer feedback, and meet with your group to discuss the next step in your process. We will also provide what help we can to connect you with the officials and organizations at The University who have information you deem necessary for your project.

Due Wed. 5:00pm June 28: Working Budget for your proposed SAB project

Using excel, the tools you learned from Prof. White, and your research into current and likely costs for your proposal, create a working, rational and defensibly viable budget for your project.

Due Thursday, 3:00pm July 6: Final Client Deck

Among your final deliverables will be a Client Deck of approximately 20 slides in which you share your final proposal for the SAB. The client deck is just one, tangible, portable document administrators can access during future discussion of the SAB. Please submit the client deck portion of your project both electronically and in print format to the MLI faculty by **3:00p.m. Thursday, July 6** so that we can make it available to audience members. The order, scope, design style, and emphasis with which you present your comprehensive plan for the SAB will, naturally, vary across groups. You will want to make sure that your deck: clearly states the reasons for any proposed changes for the SAB, explores in sufficient depth which problem(s) you're solving for The University through your proposed changes, and provides a detailed, well-researched, logically argued, elegantly articulated and persuasive argument in support of your proposed ideas.

Due Friday 10:00am, July 7—Public Group Presentation of Project Ideas

The final part of the MLI Project allows you to share your work with your peers and the public in a professional and persuasive manner that aligns with the way in which traditional organizations (including The University) vet new ideas. Each group will have a 30 min. time slot within which to present their ideas from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. on **Friday, July 7**. Group presenting order will be announced Wednesday, July 5.

Your public presentations will use a group presentation format. While you should plan for 12-15 minutes of presented content and 15-18 minutes of discussion and Q&A, you are free to bring in prototypes, mock ups, videos, interactive components, or any other materials you believe will help the audience visualize your ideas and give them the information they need on which to make a decision about the viability of your ideas. Everyone in your group should have an opportunity to present and speak before the gathered audience.

The audience will consist of your peers, your MLI faculty and invited key stakeholders and decision maker guests already involved with the SAB and with planning UVA's on Grounds development of space. The goal is—quite literally—to persuade the stakeholder audience to see the value of, and adopt, your ideas.

Exhibit 1: Photographs and map illustrate the Student Activities Building, its amenities, and a typical set up for its frequent theatrical use

<http://www.virginia.edu/deanofstudents/eventplanning/student-activities-building-sab/> (Map H, Building 21[D5])

The Student Activities Building offers space for new student orientation and other student gatherings.



Setups & Audio Visual Technology

Theater: 420 max
 Standing Reception: 500 max
 Microphones: corded handheld mic

Other Amenities:

8 foot tables Handicap Accessible
 Chairs Power Panel
 Podium Restroom
 Stage Water Fountain
 Dividers

Theater setup with stage at the SAB:

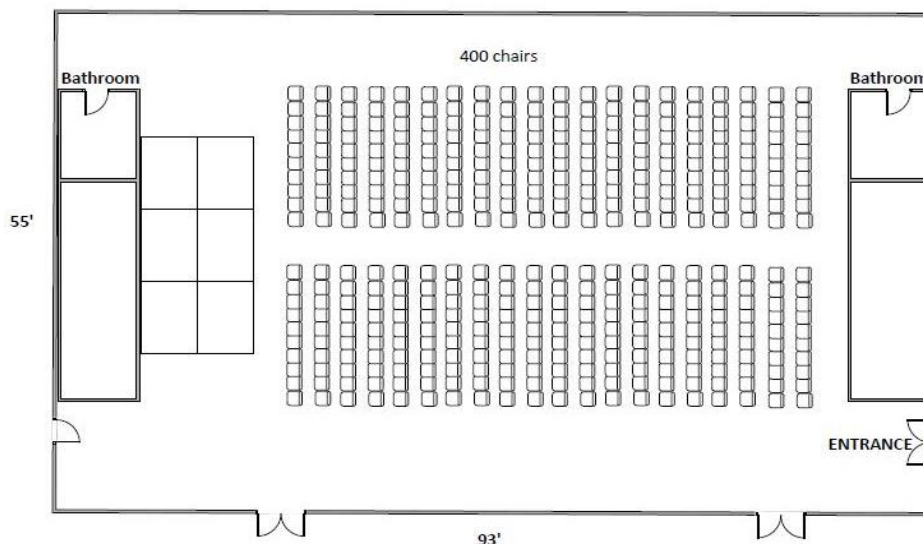


Exhibit 2: *Cavalier Daily* article (2-1-83) provides historical context for SAB's original intended use and controversies in its construction

The map shows site of the new student activities building

Building site shifted to save parking slots

By WAYNE RUTMAN

The construction of a new \$500,000 student activities center near Scott Stadium is being delayed by additional building costs incurred because the athletic department wants to minimize the loss of stadium parking spaces.

Because athletic Director Richard Schultz objected to the center being located on land currently used for stadium parking, it will be built on a steep slope between the stadium and Alderman Road.

According to University Union Spokesman Steve Zimmermann, the sloped site will save about 12 parking spaces.

Although the project's architects have not determined yet the additional cost of building on the slope, the need for a retaining wall will boost the center's price tag, project manager Trev Crider said.

"The site costs will be exorbitant now," Zimmermann said.

While Schultz acknowledged his desire to retain stadium parking spaces, he said other factors figured into his opinion on the location.

"It doesn't make sense to put this building right smack in the middle of a good-sized piece of land," Schultz said.

Crider also said he expects locating the center on the sloped site, clearly visible from Alderman Road, would raise costs by forcing builders to take steps to enhance the building's appearance.

"Because visitors traveling on Alderman Road will see this building first, it has to look somewhat like a classical University building," Zimmerman explained.

But because the project is tightly budgeted at \$500,000, money spent for the retaining wall and exterior will have to come from other features of the center.

The additional cost, Crider said, "would have to come out of the total project."

One cost reduction Crider is considering is reducing the size of the building, now planned at 8,000 square feet.

"We're hoping not," he said, "but that's certainly one way we

See BUILDING, page 8

8 The Cavalier Daily Tuesday

Building

Continued from page 1
could make up the difference."

Any suggestion of reducing the size of the building disturbs Zimmermann, who already considers the building's proposed size inadequate for student needs.

"The building they're planning will hold only 1,200 to 1,500 students," he said. "That's only 8 percent of the student body."

Zimmermann said Union needs a building with a capacity of 3,000.

"You can't even hold an average University dance in there," he said. "And if they raise the drinking age we're going to need a larger facility to attract middle-level entertainment."

He said increasing difficulty in obtaining permission to use University Hall and Memorial Gymnasium for Union events makes a larger activities center necessary.

Zimmermann finds other faults with the proposed building as well.

"While it's close to the new dorms, this building is far away from central Grounds and the students who live in the Rugby Road area," he said.

He said he is concerned the location will encourage students to drive to the center, noting, "I can't believe the University would encourage anyone to drive from a function where there would be alcohol."

"The building isn't even going to be air conditioned," Zimmermann continued, adding that feature might make the building unsuitable for daytime events in the hotter months. He said he is also concerned that fiscal restraints will make it impossible to install an acoustical ceiling in the center.

"If you can't do it right, you ought not to do it," Zimmerman said.

But Crider said he believes a decent building can be built with the limited funds, although he admits: "It's a very tight budget. The architects think we can get [cinder] block construction. We've got to get it done for the price we've got."

Exhibit 3: Group size and preferred usage dates (S2017) appear well distributed at first glance

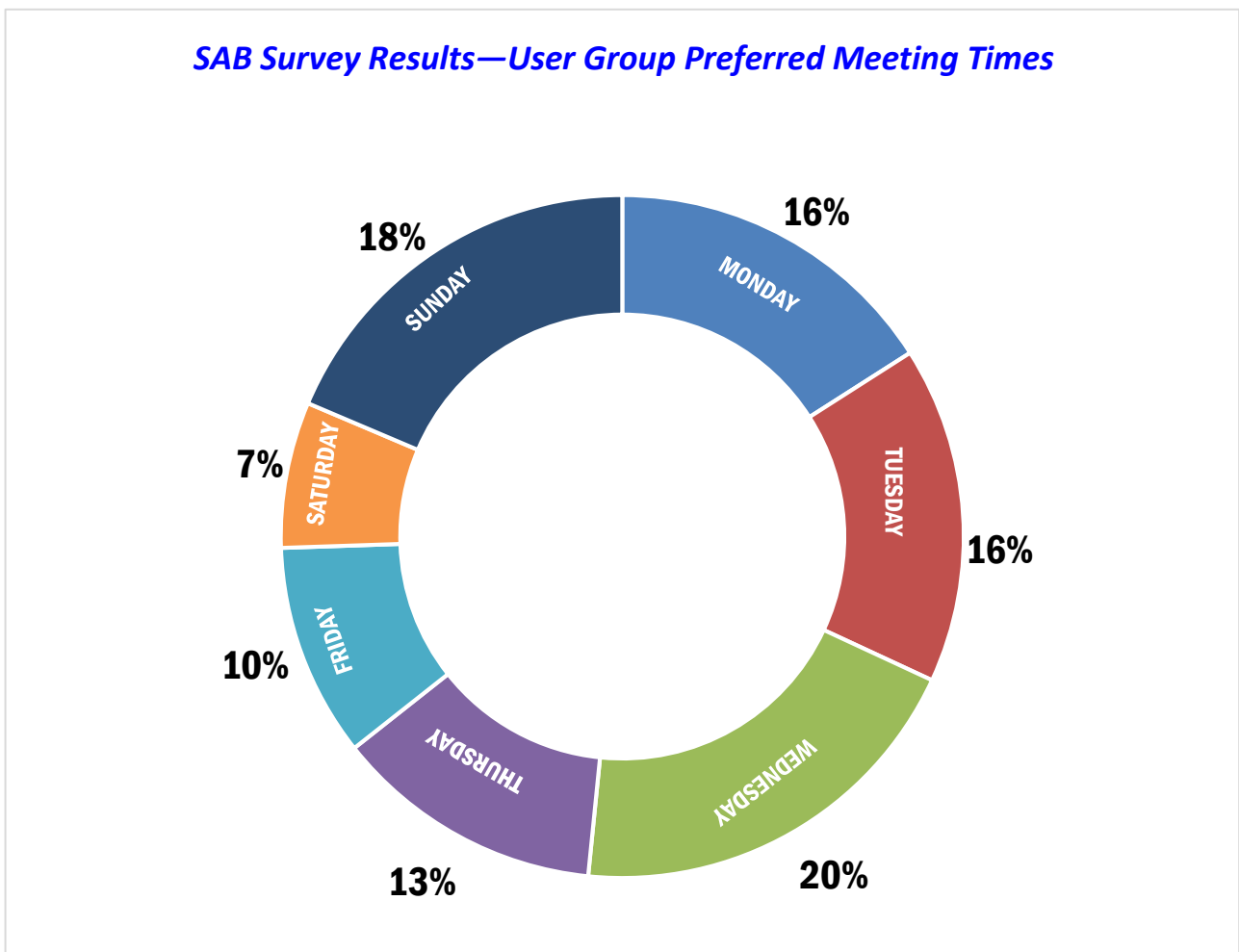
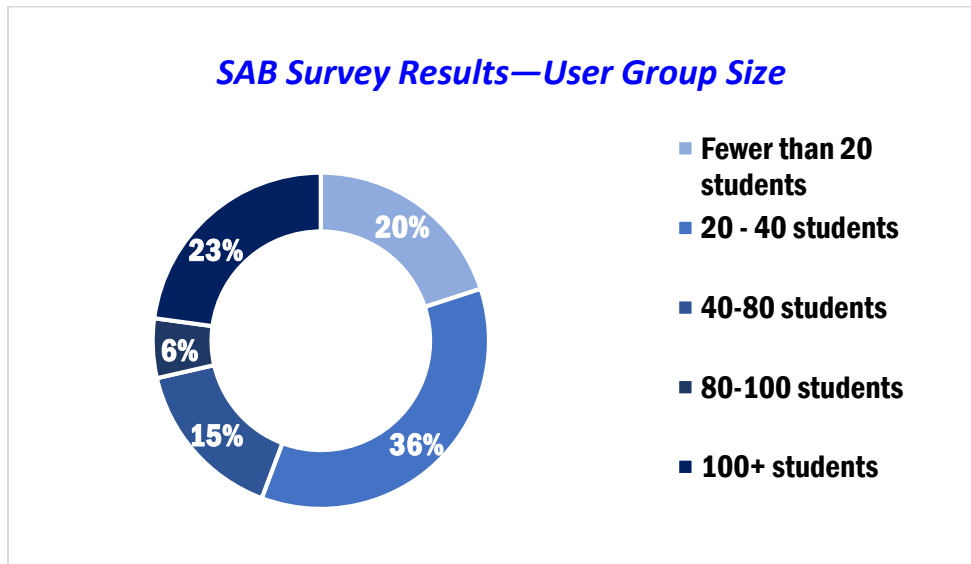
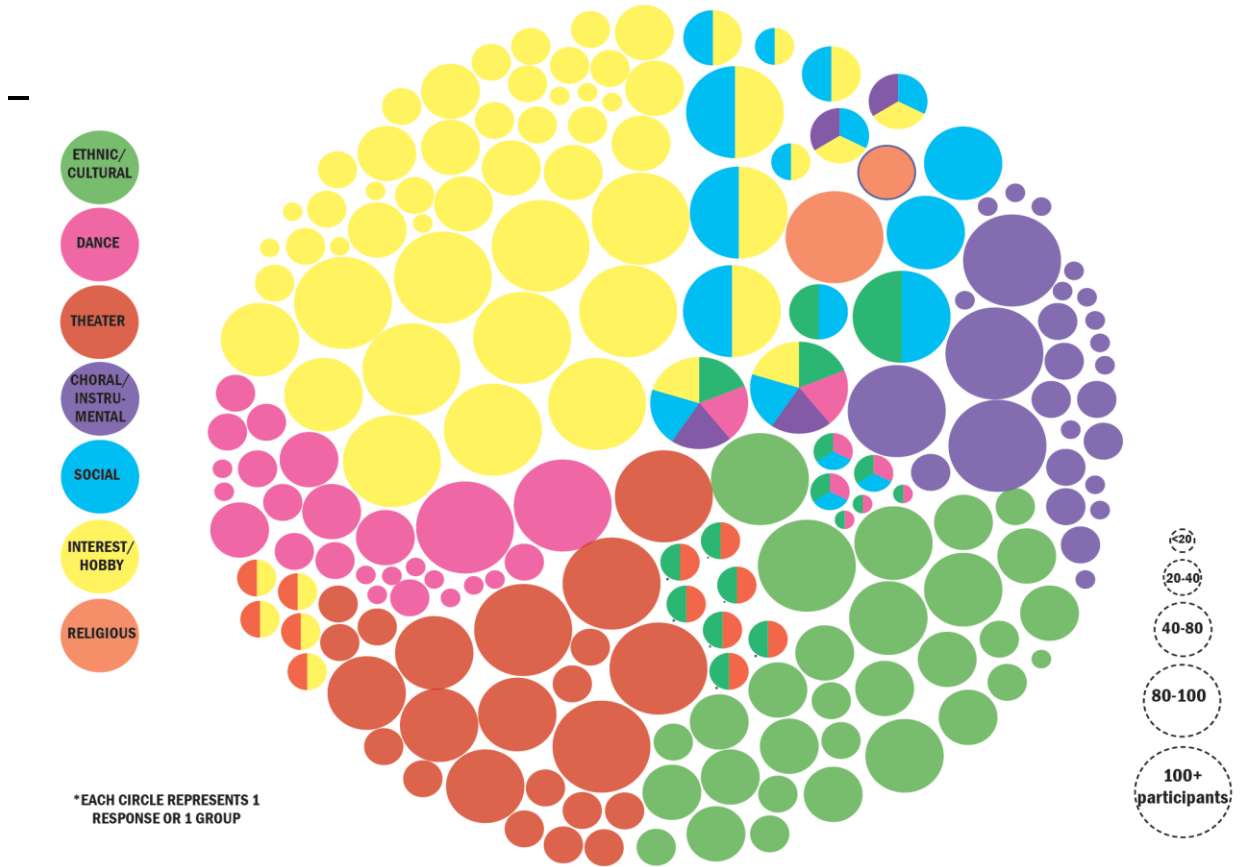


Exhibit 4: Data about SAB users, events and times from 2017 bear out the SAB’s multiplicity of stakeholders

SAB Survey Results—2016-2017: Group Types



SAB Survey Results—2016-2017: Meeting Days by Group Type and Size

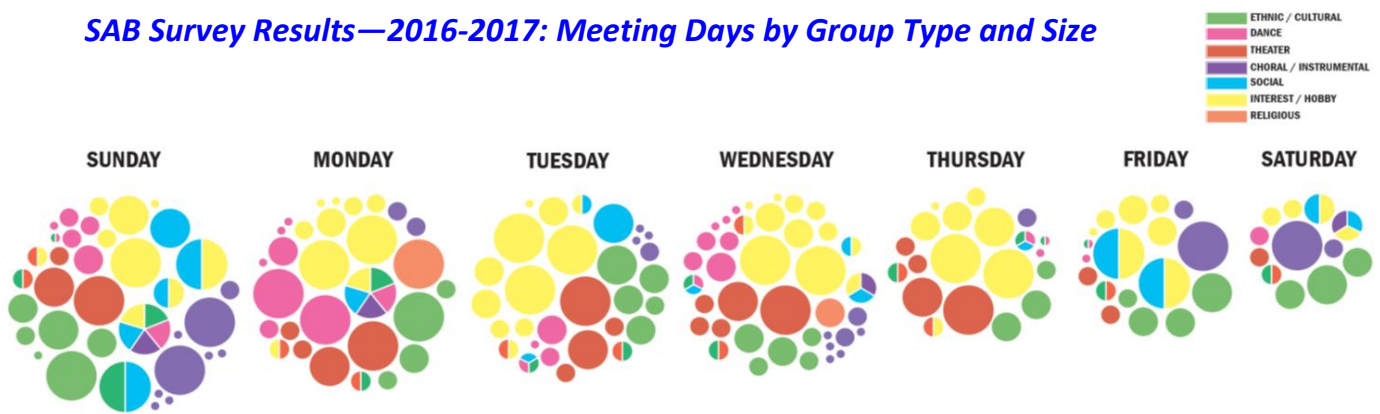


Exhibit 5: SAB stakeholders span a wide spectrum; and interest is always high at the University for available spaces to renovate or repurpose

Student Activities Building <i>Organizational Stakeholders</i>
UPC
Paul Robeson Players
First Year Players
Shakespeare on the Lawn
Virginia Players
StudCo
NPHC
MGC
Residence Life
IM-Rec Sports
Orientation
Academic Departments
Professional Schools
Graduate Student Organizations
Community Organizations
Alumni
Facilities Management