

Members of Ashley Hall's Department of Student Life recently shared how their work has adapted in response to the many challenges of the pandemic and how they are helping students thrive in a time of stress and anxiety.

Carrie Singh

Director of Student Affairs

“Looking back at an old appointment calendar, it was three years ago, almost to the day, that Mrs. Muti and I met with an architect to share a vision for a new student center on campus. With the opening of the Lane Student Life Center (SLC), we are thrilled and grateful to so many to see this vision become a reality for our community. Ashley Hall has long been committed to health and wellness as a core component of the student experience; our wellness programming is founded on the belief that a student’s social-emotional learning is crucial to her ability to advance in her academics, athletics, arts, and career aspirations and to lead a fulfilling life, developing into the person she is meant to be. The design of the SLC was to provide a central place for information, community building, support, and sustenance. This repurposed ‘addition’ to campus includes communal areas, study rooms, multipurpose classrooms, a wellness studio, a dedicated student leadership work space, a small café, and the offices of devoted student support personnel (Dean of Students, Director of College Counseling, Director of Student Affairs, the Upper School Administrative and College Counseling Assistant, and the Upper School Counselor), all intentionally designed to support and positively impact the growth and development of adolescents.

By creating a space that emulates a college campus student union, the SLC will offer opportunities for student independence, self-regulation, and agency, providing instances whereby our girls develop and hone decision-making

and time management skills. Our café will utilize a point of sale system linked to the student ID cards of ninth through twelfth graders, helping prepare them for the ‘one card’ system used in many colleges. We visualize time for reflection, relaxation, and mindfulness with yoga, meditation, or exercise in a multipurpose wellness studio and chances to commune with friends and classmates in the banquette style seating or the standing desk computer charging stations in the SLC’s commons area. Ultimately, our hope is that this space fosters a sense of belonging for our students, allows them to feel both cared for and independent, and gives them the tools they need to flourish and become the best version of themselves. We believe every student



can discover ways to find the professional or peer support she needs for self-knowledge and self-care. Through this kind of agency, she also learns how to be accountable for her decisions and how

to practice the critical skills she needs to cultivate inner strength and resilience. The vision for this renovated space was conceived before the arrival of a global pandemic. Despite our thoughtful design process, we did not anticipate what protocols a pandemic would require. We are making necessary adjustments to ensure the building can be used both purposefully and safely, while still honoring its intended users: our students! Perhaps now, even more than ever before, the health and wellness of our students are of utmost importance, and the literal and figurative space to allow them to practice the skills needed in today’s world in the safe and supportive environment of the SLC will be a most welcome and compelling addition to our campus.”

3 WAYS THE LANE STUDENT LIFE CENTER WILL HELP STUDENTS *Thrive*

- I think the café is going to be a big hit with the students. I love the open design of the commons area, which will encourage collaboration and fellowship, and I am excited that our student leadership will have their own space for the first time.
- Having the Upper School Counselor, College Counselor, Dean of Students, and Director of Student Affairs all in one building together will give the students the most support possible. The reason we all get into education is to spend time with students, to support their growth and development, and to learn from them along the way. This building is just an avenue toward making that possible.
- As the only independent girls’ school in South Carolina, we know that a single-gender school provides more leadership opportunities and an environment of female mentoring that cultivates confidence. This space will certainly enhance that.