

Future Use of the Brooks Building

To: Chancellor Joan K. Wadlow
From: John D. Craven, Chair
UAF Master Planning Committee
Date: May 27, 1999
Subject: MPC Recommendations Related to Future Use of the Brooks Building

Background

Funds for the Brooks Building deferred maintenance project are currently available and need to be used as soon as possible. In order to do so however, Facilities Services must develop a scope of work for the project, including use and occupancy, and then present this plan to the Board of Regents for their approval. As part of an initial planning activity, the administration has offered several ideas to the MPC for future use of the Brooks Building.

First Considerations by the MPC

The MPC believes that the Brooks Building project provides UAF with a unique opportunity to plan the future use of a historic building in a way that will both maximize the facility's potential and address some critical space needs on campus. While it is most encouraged by the administration's initial suggestions and MPC's discussion with Phyllis Fast was very thought provoking, these are only a first consideration of obvious options. Serious long term planning requires a more substantial demonstration that all the candidates on a short list of options presented to the MPC have substantial merit. The recommendation provided here is directed towards our vision of how long term planning should be carried out. The MPC believes that it has neither the resources nor administrative authority to independently gain the needed information. The MPC is not trying to avoid work, but is trying to foster at UAF a more systematic process through which we collectively make decisions of great benefit.

Recommendation

The MPC is concerned with long term planning and to that end encourages a thoughtful planning process from the outset as opposed to haste and then waste. It is recommended that the following three steps be taken by the administration in planning for future use of the Brooks Building. Understanding that time is critical, completion dates need to be specified.

Step 1. Evaluation Task Force

The administration should appoint a small task force (no more than about five individuals including at least one member of the MPC) with administrative authority to gain needed information from departments. With this information the task force should develop a short list of candidates and prepare a draft use and occupancy plan for the building, applying the following criteria:

opportunities for collaboration and synergy will increase. This will benefit students, faculty, and staff. Some possible themes that have already been identified, and others may be possible:

- Center for native and cross-cultural studies
 - The school of education
 - Student services center.
3. The revitalization of an older building presents certain challenges. The task force must consider the following when evaluating potential occupants for the Brooks Building:
- Units that require laboratory facilities should not be considered. Current funding is limited, and laboratories are extremely expensive.
 - Units considered for occupancy should not require significant changes to the existing floor plan of the building. The current configuration consists primarily of office and classroom space. The building does not lend itself to significant structural change; therefore, minimizing such changes will be beneficial. The present auditorium must be retained for academic programs.
 - In light of funding limitations, units that have the potential to attract additional students should be a priority.