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### The Possibilities of Newman's Latest Structures

Over the last 4 years in Newman, from September 2021 to May 2024, three new structures have been created for various purposes. These three include the new building, the Student Life Center (SLC), and the chapel, which is being completed. All had a stated purpose, but there was no limit to what it could be used for. For example, The SLC, a place for studying, was used for the Oxford Scholars' Dinner. The stage, located near the new building, was used for mass in 2021 and a dance on a separate occasion, back when we had to social distance ourselves. The possibilities of what these new structures could be utilized for are up to your imagination.

The chapel, intended for grade-level masses at school, can be implemented for different opportunities, like alumni masses. For example, the faculty and staff have an in-service day, so they use the chapel as a place of retreat and to refocus themselves in this quiet, holy space. Even on school days, the chapel should remain open so students may enter when they need a minute to rejuvenate themselves/get themselves together. We could also have a designated day and time for reconciliation, like one advisory per month. Overall the chapel can be utilized for tranquil activities to bring our community closer together and to God.

The new building area was designed for new classrooms, where the students would learn, because the older classrooms burned in the 2017 Tubbs Fire, which brings up the idea that if there was ever another fire or equivalent situation, the school should help some families take refuge in the new building. It can be used as a makeshift motel room. The school could bring in

sanitized mats from the gym or weight room, to use as soft padding where the families would sleep, because their homes are not safe at the moment, and there is nowhere else they could go. I have been on both ends of the spectrum, where my family and I had to take shelter somewhere and where other people came to take refuge in our house. It brought us closer together. This would give the families some sense of security and community, where people can come together and support each other, which is what Newman stands for.

Another idea for the new building's area is one day or week, where we separate classrooms and divide them by diversities. For example, the school has a culture club, which celebrates the distinction of every person and what culture they came from. What if each classroom represents a different ethnicity or something people, both students and staff, believe in? As Churchill once said, "Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common...Celebrate it every day." It is through our differences, that we stick together and learn from each other. This diversity could make people more open-minded to different cultures, which is vital because it influences their views, values, fears, and hopes. In the end, it can lead us to becoming more trusting and building stronger relationships with each other.

The new building area also had a stage built in, with no intended purpose, which gives a couple of ideas of what this structure could be used for. The stage could be used as a platform for the Junior Ring Ceremony, since there would be enough room for the juniors and their families, unlike in the chapel. The special event signifies how far the students have reached and that they will soon graduate. On the stage, the staff could also be given awards to portray how they are determined people who want the best for everybody. They should be praised for their hard work, which goes unnoticed, with a lack of gratitude. Generally, the new building was planned to

become the classrooms where students come to learn, but it could also take place for other significant activities.

The SLC is where the students spend the bulk of their time. It is where the cafeteria/lunch area, library, engineering room, and college counseling occur. It has so much potential to distinctly utilize different aspects of the building. For example, the upstairs carpeted space of the SLC could be used as a napping area during advisory. Numerous students, and some adults do not get much sleep at home, maybe 4-6 hours per night, which is not enough. The human brain requires 8 hours of sleep per night, so it will fully function and reach its capacity. If you are exhausted during the day, go upstairs, bring a blanket and a small pillow, if needed, and take a nap. A 30-minute nap has proven to improve your stress, mood, and memory, and you do not enter the REM cycle. This means that the napper will awaken, replenished and have a refreshed mind, which will help them academically and in their athletic performance.

The SLC should also give a certain time to the baking club, so that they may be able to use the kitchen. I am currently in the baking club, and we do not have access to the kitchen, which is quite irritating. The point of the club is to get your hands dirty and experiment with the goods you are making. For example, on Valentine's Day, our club wanted to make sugar cookies and decorate, but we couldn't do this because we weren't allowed to go in the kitchen. I believe a baking class is an important class to incorporate into the student curriculum for electives. It teaches us life skills for the future, and we could be lending a helping hand to the chefs, which would decrease their heavy load.

The SLC could also be a place to hold school reunions. For instance, a decade into the future, everyone who graduated in the class of 2024 is invited to attend a reunion. It allows the former students opportunities to get together and see how they have changed and grown after

being taught in a strong community. Teacher alumni who have taught those students would also be welcome. Newman is known for its close-knit community and how it kept rising from the ashes; it aims to foster a sense of belonging among all its graduates.

Overall Newman has greatly evolved in the last 4 years that I have attended. The new structures were a major development for our class and future classes. I know that these give us many opportunities to strive to become better. These three new buildings are a treasure to be discovered and utilized in all kinds of ways. It emphasizes the importance of different activities to the students and staff. The chapel could be used as a way to center yourself or be on a retreat. The new building area could be used as a refuge, to show our diversity, or simply for small ceremonies. Finally, the SLC could be used for taking a nap, which helps your health, instating a baking class, as well as holding class reunions. To sum up, all of these new structures had an intended purpose when they were created, but beauty is in the eye of the beholder, meaning if you are imaginative, you can use these structures in various ways for the better of our community.