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Within recent years, the Cardinal Newman community has been extremely resilient; we have persevered through many diverse and challenging tribulations, such as the 2017 Tubbs fire and the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic, to name a few. Yet, out of scorched earth new growth has sprung in the form of many new and advanced buildings on Newman's campus, such as the spacious new classrooms, the Student Learning Center (SLC), and the almost-finished chapel. These spaces represent more than just brick and mortar; they are a representation of the strength of the Cardinal Newman community. Therefore, these spaces present endless possibilities to serve the Newman community in all aspects of our lives.

One of the most exciting developments of the 2023-2024 school year has been the completion of the Student Learning Center. It is undeniable that even within this school year, the SLC has enriched student life within Newman, and with proper management may continue to do so. Currently, the SLC is open mainly during school hours, and while this is understandable, I believe it could further aid students academically and socially with expanded hours. For example, there is currently a tutoring program that takes place in the SLC before school on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and while I think this a great start, expanded after-school hours would allow many more students to participate where they currently cannot, mainly due to sports practice before and after school. Additionally, I think the SLC presents many opportunities for learning to evolve past the classroom and deepen students' understanding of the importance of

their education and the larger world. I believe this can be done by reaching out to professionals within certain fields and inviting them to present at our school. This will allow many students to understand how traditional education may aid them professionally while also seeing via example a path to a career that they may have previously been unaware of. Moreover, such visits may also create professional ties between a student and a potential future employer or internship. Overall, both extended hours and a professional speaker program may allow students to understand the meaning and merit behind their education and enlighten them about potential career possibilities.

Another avenue new spaces may encourage the Newman community to explore is the growth and support of the arts program. This can be done through the use of the SLC as a designated place for the rehearsal and provisional stage needed for a growing theater program. However, while the SLC could be a fantastic jumping-off point, it is important to note that for the performing arts to truly thrive, there must also be a space with ample room designated for such programs, like a theater. Additionally, another option for the expansion of the arts is a mural program. This could be used to encourage alumni and benefactor support by having students propose three different mural ideas and having the alumni and benefactors vote on their favorite via donations/raffle tickets. At the end of the voting period, the mural with the most donations would be painted by students. This system would allow for alumni and benefactors to feel connected to the school in addition to students sharing this feeling of community as their voice and artistic talents would be heard and utilized. Indeed, the raising of funds in such programs would no doubt contribute greatly to the growth of the theater and dance programs, as well.

While it is truly exciting to theorize the potential use of such amazing spaces, I would be remiss in not stressing the importance of the general student's voice. While we as Oxford Scholars have shown dedication and excelled in our courses at Cardinal Newman, we are only a

very select group of students; we cannot represent the interests of the student body as a whole. Thus, before any new programs or important decisions regarding the use of these spaces or any aspect of student life are made, it is the school's duty to consult the student body and seriously consider any and all feedback. I understand, however, that such a task may be difficult; thus I propose the creation of a student committee outside of ASB and other pre-existing clubs, created with a diverse group of students known to have the school's best interests in mind. I feel that this committee could act as the voice of students in tandem with school-wide performance reviews, released quarterly, which would be made publicly known. Consequently, I feel such steps may aid not only in the appropriate use of such spaces but in the improvement of student life at Newman as a whole.

The many new spaces such as the beautiful new classrooms, Student Learning Center, and Chapel represent new beginnings for the Cardinal Newman Community. As such, how we use these spaces can also define who we are; we must remember to create spaces for all members of our community and listen to the many voices that comprise Cardinal Newman. Overall, it is important to remember Cardinal Newman's mission: to educate students in the wholeness of mind, body, and soul.