

Greetings from IUPUI

April 2008

"Ladies and gentlemen, I believe this new Campus Center epitomizes an educational transformation in undergraduate education that your really good thinkers here in University College and Student Life are playing a major role in leading. . . . We have learned over the past three decades that the most powerful context in which students learn is in student-to-student interaction. We know that students teach other students, that students have always taught other students, just as in the English and early American campus debating societies. We are realizing that the deepest kind of learning takes place when students take the ideas, issues, constructs, problems, assignments, and opportunities we faculty provide them outside of the faculty-centered classroom and make greater meaning of these outcomes in student spaces, contexts, and interactions. . . . What you have done here will be held up as a model for other institutions committed to innovation in undergraduate education." (John Gardner, Campus Center Dedication, April 9, 2008)

John Gardner is the Executive Director of the Policy Center on the First Year of College, which is funded by a grant from Lumina Foundation for Education, and is also the Senior Fellow of the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.

John received an honorary degree at the dedication of the IUPUI Campus Center this month and gave the keynote address from which I've quoted him above. John has gotten to know IUPUI well over the last few years, even though his home base is in South Carolina, because of the concerted efforts IUPUI has made to continuously improve our first-year experience and give our students a solid foundation on which to succeed in achieving their goal of earning a degree. John articulated well the importance of intentionally building the campus center for our students as a learning space.

I think of the Campus Center in terms of one of the many colorful words and concepts that creep into everyday life from the language of computer programmers. We "Google" people. We "Mapquest" destinations. We "Facebook" friends. "Gopher" seemed like a perfect name for an early search and retrieval protocol designed for the Internet. You may have thought it was called "gopher" because you were ferreting out information through unseen channels, but it was actually named for the University of Minnesota's mascot because the network protocol was developed there at my alma mater.

The webmaster's term I like to use to describe the Campus Center is "sticky."

"Sticky" describes the combination of architecture and content that helps a web site maintain the attention of visitors and keep them coming back. Once you are there, you don't want to leave. Webmasters use a

combination of chat rooms, games, weather, and news feeds to build a community of visitors eager to return and spend long periods of time on a website.

The Campus Center makes IUPUI a "sticky" campus by being a destination for engaging learning, social networking, and collaboration. It is a place where people will congregate and interact because it is both fun and useful.

Because most of our undergraduate students are struggling to fit their studies into full lives that include work, family, community service, and attending classes, IUPUI works hard to find ways to make the campus "sticky."

We take every opportunity to help students establish an identity as members of an academic community and feel pride in IUPUI. We need to create an environment that supports their studies by connecting them socially and emotionally with the institution and, most importantly, the goal of graduation.

The Campus Center was specifically designed to be a place where students can talk and get to know each other; project teams can do their work before, during, or after class; faculty and students can meet before or after class; and commuter students can study, eat, talk, or relax in-between classes.

From the day it opened in January, the Campus Center drew our campus community. Even before all the furnishings were in, students were everywhere, making one colleague wonder where they'd all been. In some recent focus groups on master planning, there was unanimity that the Campus Center is the best place on campus to be. It's the place where you feel most like you're on a campus.

In short, I think we succeeded in making the Campus Center a "sticky" site, a place where people want to be. We hope you'll come and visit it, if you haven't already.

Charles R. Bantz
Chancellor

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