

## News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **New Student Community Fulfills South Georgia College Goals**

*Lord, Aeck & Sargent designs residence hall to build on campus axial organizational theme, gives historic gymnasium a new life as a student center*

DOUGLAS, Ga., Nov. 12, 2007 – With the beginning of its fall semester, South Georgia College (SGC) saw the fulfillment of two goals: increased residential enrollment through the addition of an attractive residential environment, and an enriched life for all SGC students, both residential and commuter.

The University System of Georgia's first two-year college now has a new 252-bed, state-of-the-art residence hall and, through the restoration and adaptive reuse of a historic former gymnasium, a multi-function student life center. The Atlanta office of Lord, Aeck & Sargent served as architecture firm for the new student community.

### **An Interesting Planning Opportunity**

Joe Greco, Lord, Aeck & Sargent principal in charge of the project, noted that in planning the location of the new residence hall, named Tiger Village, the design team built upon the strong

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symmetrical organization of the SGC campus plan. The campus is defined by a central north-south axis that bisects the main lawn and concentric ring roads. Primary buildings and lawns are located along the axis, with secondary buildings and green spaces organized around it. At the beginning of the project, the axis began at the historic entrance to the campus, and terminated at Clower Hall, the old gymnasium that is now the Clower Student Life Center.

“The axial campus organizational scheme presented us with an interesting planning opportunity,” Greco said. “We chose to build on the scheme by designing Tiger Village as a U-shaped residence hall, located just south of Clower, creating a courtyard as a focal point for both buildings while extending the campus axis through Tiger Village. We also replaced the obsolete service block on the former rear side of Clower with an improved, ADA-compliant entrance that reflected the original footprint. The new entry foyer is covered by a large porch designed in the southern Georgia vernacular and facing the courtyard. A breezeway connects the porch to the open-air stair towers at either end of the Tiger Village U. The porch includes outdoor furniture so that students can relax there and look out onto the courtyard. Likewise, there are opportunities for viewing the courtyard from Tiger Village’s second-floor balcony, the entry porch below, the adjacent grand entry lobby and from half of the building’s student living units.”

### **Contextualism is Clear**

Tiger Village itself is designed with a masonry façade using two tones of buff brick that tie in with virtually all buildings on the SGC campus and with two of Clower’s several buff tones. Brick masonry columns mark the entrance to the building’s courtyard side, and pre-cast columns mark the front entrance, which faces a street to the south. Brick accents break down the scale of the 77,000-square-foot, three-story building. Large masonry arched windows,

inspired by historic Clower's clerestory window openings, mark the lobby entrance and exterior stairs.

"The contextualism is clear," Greco said. "The architecture integrates with the existing campus fabric at all scales, from the level of the construction detail to the overall campus plan."

Inside Tiger Village, the grand entry lobby features a large open staircase that serves as a focal point and connects all three levels. The two-story lobby includes a second-floor mezzanine that opens onto a balcony overlooking the courtyard. Common areas, such as a community kitchen, recreation room and computer room, are located in the building's center wing to encourage students to leave their suites and interact with one another.

"A key design driver for us was to create transparency along the campus axis, and this, along with encouraging student interaction, were the primary reasons for locating common areas in the center of the U," Greco noted.

The residential living suites include two floor plans: a 978-square-foot suite with four single-occupied bedrooms, two bathrooms and a common living area; and a 406-square-foot semi-suite with two single-occupied bedrooms and one bathroom. Living rooms on the courtyard side are punched out to provide a better view of the green space, and to provide additional texture to the building.

According to Jim Cottingham, SGC vice president for student affairs, the college's goals were to increase residential enrollment and fill all of Tiger Village's 252 beds, using older campus residence halls for overflow. Between the fall semesters of 2006 and 2007, Cottingham said that SGC achieved "significant growth," with a 61 percent increase in residential students from 185 to 298. "Tiger Village," he noted, "is an extremely attractive, modern facility that will have a positive impact on student satisfaction and retention."

### **Giving Clower a Second Life**

Cottingham explained that while there is an existing Union building on the north end of campus, over time the facility's recreational space was lost because of the expansion of student services, and there was a strong need for a student activities center to enrich student life.

Clower Hall was built in 1936 and served for decades as the SGC gymnasium. Following the construction of a new gym in the 1960s the building was relegated to various other functions, including storage.

“Our design goal was two-fold: to preserve the character of the old gymnasium, a significant building because of its location on the campus axis and because of its era; and to give the building a second life by modifying the space to make it functional for a variety of student activity uses,” Greco said.

Lord, Aeck & Sargent achieved the first goal by restoring the hardwood floors, even repainting the basketball court lines, and by rehabilitating the existing steel-framed windows.

Modifications included:

- Stripping the remnants of a suspended ceiling to expose the original bowstring trusses, the original roof framing structure and some interior terra cotta masonry, and making the ceiling about 20 feet high
- Providing necessary HVAC and lighting systems while retaining the openness of the space through use of round spiral exposed ductwork and gymnasium-style lighting fixtures
- Utilizing insulation pavers on top of a non-insulated roof for energy savings
- Repairing existing plaster walls and adding new finish panels at the lower elevations, behind which new power and data cabling was run

- Using a series of 10-foot-high, 3-foot-thick acoustical wall installations with built-in shelving for artwork, televisions and other AV equipment. The walls subdivide the space, creating defined areas for casual seating; game tables; a student life office; a video lounge; a study area; a food preparation area; and the Center Court Café, located, as its name implies, near the old center court lines. In addition, these medium-height walls allow the building to retain its historic character and to capture light provided by its large clerestory windows.

“By replacing the building’s original service block, which was in poor condition, and rebuilding it to house restrooms and the building’s new mechanical spaces, we were able both to preserve the main gymnasium space and create a more inviting and functional façade on the courtyard side so that in effect, Clower now has two main entrances,” Greco said.

Greco noted that the site plan was configured to maximize preservation of the extensive indigenous tree groves on the east and west sides of Clower Hall and by the fire stair sides of Tiger Village. The trees provide much needed shading for the Southern Georgia climate.

Clower is now “a highly functional and useful facility that celebrates the college’s rich past while addressing our present needs,” SGC’s Cottingham said.

The planning and construction of the \$9.1 million Tiger Village was achieved through a public-private partnership between University System of Georgia Real Estate Ventures, South Georgia College, and the South Georgia College Foundation Inc., which formed an LLC that financed the project with bonds issued by the Atkinson County – Coffee County Joint Development Authority. The \$2.1 million Clower rehabilitation was funded through a student fee of \$55 per student each semester.

### **The Project Team**

The project team for SGC's Tiger Village and Clower Student Life Center comprised:

- Lord, Aeck & Sargent Inc. (Atlanta), architect
- Hendessi & Associates (Atlanta), program manager
- Ambling University Development Group (Valdosta, Ga.), developer
- Juneau Construction Co. (Atlanta), general contractor
- Andrews, Hammock & Powell Inc. (Macon, Ga.), MEP/FP engineer
- Ganas Landscape Designs Inc. (Remerton, Ga.), landscape architect
- KSi/Structural Engineers (Atlanta), structural engineer
- Lovell Engineering Associates PC (Valdosta, Ga.), civil engineer

### **About Lord, Aeck & Sargent**

Lord, Aeck & Sargent is an award-winning architectural firm serving clients in scientific, academic, historic preservation, arts and cultural, and multi-family housing and mixed-use markets. The firm's core values are responsive design, technological expertise and exceptional service. Lord, Aeck & Sargent has offices in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Atlanta; and Chapel Hill, North Carolina. For more information, visit the firm at [www.lordaecksargent.com](http://www.lordaecksargent.com).

### **About South Georgia College**

South Georgia College ([www.sgc.edu](http://www.sgc.edu)) was founded in 1906 and is a two-year institution in the University System of Georgia. Located in Douglas, Georgia, the college's environment gives students exceptional opportunities for interdisciplinary study and close collaboration with faculty. The South Georgia College Foundation was founded in 1971 to enhance the development of South Georgia College.

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