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Hop remodeling projects continue

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As remodeling of some inner rooms finishes up and other spaces are considered for new development, the Hopkins Center has recently seen increased emphasis on providing accessibility and room for various arts programs.

Some projects, such as the new Hop Garage spaces by the Courtyard Cafe, have already taken shape and are ready for student project proposals. Hop director Jeffrey James said that plans to remodel were centered around a more limited area, such as rooms that had previously been used for the studio art department.

“There are still some things we’re doing in the basement that have to do with practice space,” James said.

Though construction continues, the main phase of adapting empty spaces is near completion.

“There’s this much bigger idea that we’ve been working on, too, now that we have a conceptual design about what the building could become,” he added.

For certain student groups, such remodeling projects have been minimally invasive or have not conflicted at all with their practice spaces.

Katie Schultz '16, a member of Sugarplum, said the dance group occasionally rehearses in Wilson Hall or the rehearsal room in the basement of the Hop, but neither has been impacted.

In conjunction with last year's projects to improve use of practice space, the Hop is also working with architects and a group that "represents the various kinds of users of the Hop," James said.

Portland-based Boora Architects has overseen the planning process for longer-term ideas, but James emphasized the importance of student input, as they will be the primary audience affected by changes. The Hop will collect input from its student advisory committee as it moves forward in its plans.

Many performance groups could benefit from the Hop's redesign, said Christie Harrison '16, a member of the Decibelles a cappella group.

"Expanding on the spaces available would help with scheduling rehearsals," she said.

The Hop has the opportunity to be more frequently used as a student social space. While the Courtyard Cafe is typically busy until late at night, many of the building's more secluded areas are not as frequented by students.

"We know there's a need for more practice and rehearsal spaces, creation space," James said.

Further ideas include opening rooms for teaching during the day.

As for the years ahead, James said he sees a lot of potential in ensuring that the Hop remains a competitive and modern arts facility.

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