

Kathleen W. Rollins Hall (Mills Building Renovation)

Project overview:

Kathleen W. Rollins Hall will become a "mission-driven-center" of student engagement and activity with intentionally designed high-impact spaces for students, staff, and faculty to meet, work together, and develop innovative ideas and projects that showcase an experiential 21st-century liberal arts education. This resourceful and sustainable redesign will help create a focused epi-center of engaged learning and strengthen Rollins' experiential educational programs that provide strong transferable intellectual and practical skills. The co-locations of the following 10 curricular and co-curricular offices, centers, and programs will deepen students' application of the College's mission by building upon the synergies of the programs and purposeful opportunities of student learning and engagement:

- Center for Career & Life Planning
- Center for Leadership & Community Engagement
- Social Impact Hub
- Department of Social Entrepreneurship (Academic Major & Minor)
- Sustainability Program Student Workspace
- Office of External & Competitive Scholarship Advisement
- Business Advising
- Student Media

Center for Global Initiatives

- Office of International Programs
- Office of International Student & Scholar Services

Location: Kathleen W. Rollins Hall former site of Mills Memorial Hall

Building Renovation Budget: \$17 Million

Donor/Renaming: Rollins College Trustee Kathleen W. Rollins '75 committed \$10 million to the major renovation of Mills Memorial Hall. Renamed Mills Memorial Hall to Kathleen W. Rollins Hall on May 1, 2019.

Completed: January 2020

Purpose: Reimagining the Mills building to strengthen the co-curricular programs and experiences at the core of our mission.

Architect: EYP Architecture & Engineering

Project Core Team members:

Scott Bitikofer, Assistant VP of Facilities Management

Kirk Hemphill, Director of Facilities Management

Whitney Horton, Director of Accessibility Services

John Knopick, Director of IT Projects & Planning

John Overberger, Director of Business Services

Ken Miller, Assistant VP of Public Safety

Troy Thomason, Assistant VP of IT/CIO

Micki Meyer, Lord Family Assistant VP for Student Affairs – Community

Anne Meehan, Rollins Hall & Community Project Support

Websites:

<https://www.rollins.edu/kathleen-w-rollins-hall/>

<https://www.rollins.edu/why-rollins/>

<https://www.rollins.edu/kathleen-w-rollins-hall/news-updates.html>

Articles:

<https://360.rollins.edu/college-news/21-reasons-we-cant-wait-for-the-new-mills>

<https://360.rollins.edu/college-news/first-look-kathleen-w.-rollins-hall>

<https://360.rollins.edu/college-news/kathleen-rollins-hall>

<https://360.rollins.edu/academics-and-research/center-of-it-all>

<https://360.rollins.edu/academics-and-research/room-to-grow>

<https://360.rollins.edu/people/pathway-to-progress>

Photos:

Scott Cook's Photos:

<https://rollinscollege.smugmug.com/Events/SRC0846-Raise-the-Roof-for-Rollins-Hall-Tile-Signing/>

<https://rollinscollege.smugmug.com/Rollins-College-Campus/SRC0897-Kathleen-W-Rollins-Hall>

Kathleen W. Rollins Hall Picture Gallery in Sharepoint (Anne Meehan's renovation photos):

<https://liverollins.sharepoint.com/sites/KathleenWRollinsHall/Kathleen%20W%20Rollins%20Hall%20Picture%20Gallery/Forms/Thumbnails.aspx>

Videos:

<https://www.rollins.edu/kathleen-w-rollins-hall/news-updates.html>

[Episode 3 | Hard Hat Tour of Rollins Hall](#)

Canvas Full Report:

[Canvas KWR Hall Strategic Planning Report 2020.docx](#)

Project Highlights:

Pathway to Progress 360 article highlights from project steward Micki Meyer, Lord Family Assistant VP for Student Affairs - Community

Creating New Connections

Since 2014, Meyer has served as the Lord Family Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs-Community. In this role she has worked to build capacity around engaged scholarship, high-impact learning, and student engagement—work that has been brought to life and brought together through the building of Kathleen W. Rollins Hall.

The new state-of-the-art facility on the site of the former Mills Memorial Hall serves as the headquarters of Rollins Gateway, co-locating 10 of Rollins' most powerful programs—from the [Center for Career & Life Planning](#) to the [Center for Leadership & Community Engagement](#)—at the center of campus in an environment that encourages interdisciplinary collaboration.

“Since I first came to Rollins, that building has always been top of mind for me, and I spent many days dreaming and thinking if we were to orient the campus around a center building like that, what would be in that building?” she says.

As project steward, Meyer worked with myriad faculty and staff across the College to plan and strategize over the past four years. She created 13 cross-functional committees designed to perfect every aspect of the student experience—from how they navigated to the building and moved through the open spaces to which programs and administrators they encountered along the way. Meyer says the attention to detail was critical. After all, she knows how the right chance encounter might change a student's life—and might help them change the world.

Kathleen W. Rollins Hall is about more than just an easy-to-find building at the center of a college campus. It's about the connections and learning it's making possible. It's about creating opportunities for the relational and experiential learning that defines a Rollins education and prepares our students for success.

“We know what the world needs right now,” she says. “We need students not just to be educated, but to be liberally educated so they can create positive change. Education is not just about receiving knowledge but applying knowledge. That's what this building is all about, helping students leverage what they're learning to create change in our world, and it's never been more important.”

X Factor of Kathleen W. Rollins Hall:

Center of It All, Rollins 360 article highlights by Rob Humphrey's '16 MBA

<https://360.rollins.edu/academics-and-research/center-of-it-all>

Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts

COVID-19 forced the College to go virtual in mid-March, but in the short time Rollins Hall was open, the co-location of like-minded programs had already produced a compounding effect.

As new neighbors in Rollins Hall, changemaking efforts such as the Center for Leadership & Community Engagement, Social Impact Hub, Department of Social Entrepreneurship, and Sustainability Program were producing increased collaboration and campus-wide exposure around social innovation.

More than 80 students a week attended the Design Lab for courses, workshops, and programs in design thinking around social issues that spanned everything from political science to anthropology. Pilot projects also began to take shape, including the Community Impact Lab, which allows faculty and students to work together with nonprofits on solutions to challenges facing the local community.

Rollins' radio station, WPRK 91.5 FM, has already witnessed an increase in participation and student interest, and its new podcast studio attracted students and staff interested in curating original content for broadcast.

International students adopted Kathleen W. Rollins Hall as their home base, with convenient access to staff from the Office of International Student & Scholar Services.

“It has really inspired and redefined the way that departments across campus work together and reimagine their physical environments to foster integrative learning,” says Micki Meyer, Lord Family Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs-Community.

Perhaps the biggest change, notes Meyer, is how the Center for Career & Life Planning—previously located on the periphery of campus—is now a place for vibrant activity, increased engagement, and engineered collisions.

“We placed it at the entrance facing the Cornell Campus Center,” explains Meyer, “so that every single student who walks into the building sees career and life in action.”

It’s no wonder then that participation in the Career Studio—a dynamic, drop-in space where students can receive collaborative career advice and guidance on everything from resumes to job searches without an appointment—increased by 65 percent during Kathleen W. Rollins Hall’s first 40 days of operation.

Early Returns

Additional data from the first 40 days of Rollins Hall further illustrates the project’s tremendous impact.

Three dozen faculty in nearly 15 academic disciplines were teaching in SCALE-UP classrooms (Student-Centered Active Learning Environment with Upside-down Pedagogies), reimagining ways that 700-plus students engage in innovative learning across the liberal arts curriculum.

On top of the jump in Career Studio drop-ins, scheduled appointments in the Center for Career & Life Planning were up by 31 percent. In the Center for Leadership & Community Engagement, faculty appointments have increased by half, while student appointments in the Office of International Programs rose 18 percent. The new Office of Business Advising received more than 100 new appointments in just over a month.

What’s Next

Renovating Rollins Hall to bring together the programs at the heart of [Rollins Gateway](#) is just the beginning. A student leadership team has been hired to further support operations and programs, and alumni are being sought as donors, mentors, speakers, and career collaborators.

The beauty of this space is its flexibility, and when the campus opens again, new programs like “Your Journey Begins Here”—a series of micro courses designed to introduce students to Rollins Gateway experiences—will be launched to accelerate and elevate Rollins’ impact on our ever-evolving world.

In the meantime, staff and student leaders have been working hard to continue the momentum of Rollins Hall by using social media for program-based updates. In addition, the “Tars Together” and “Life is for Service” campaigns were developed to unite and connect the campus through a series of virtual community-building activities.

Of course, until students, faculty, and staff can meet again, face to face, the full potential of this transformative building lies just over the horizon.

At home on quarantine in early April, Meyer couldn't help but reflect with a much-needed trip down memory lane.

"The most exciting thing about Rollins Hall was the student reaction," she says. "They loved the space. Their eyes lit up when they entered the building. They felt the energy and excitement."

Gerks is holding onto that energy. "The two months we did get to spend in Rollins Hall were awesome," she says. "I'm so excited to go back."