An extraordinary project is under way at Bates. Beginning in the fall of 2006, we will break ground for a new dining Commons that will open in January 2008. This centrally located, welcoming facility will represent the best of the Commons we now love – conversation, dining, friendship and connection – but it will no longer be hamstrung by limited space, outmoded equipment and costly inefficiencies.

The Context
Having completed a new facilities Master Plan, Bates now has a road map for future renewal and development. We know our priorities and have a vision for how all campus facilities will work together to create a vital 21st century Bates. Dining and residence life emerged in the planning process as our must-do-now projects.

Top Priority
The dining facilities in Chase Hall are outdated, inefficient and undersized to serve the Bates community today and in the future. The present Commons does not have enough seating, our staff works in cramped and badly designed space and food storage and freezer space is so small that we can order food for only one day at a time. Built in 1920, Chase has been added to numerous times, creating an untamed structure of eight different levels that is too difficult to renovate and maintain as a suitable Commons for Bates going forward.

Timeline

Location and Features
- Sited next to Alumni Gym, across from Pettengill Hall, and bordering Central Avenue;
- 60,000 square feet – about the size of the entire current Chase Hall facility. The new Commons will have the second largest footprint of any campus building after Merrill Gym;
- To blend with the rest of campus, building materials will include brick, granite, slate, copper and glass;
- A main dining area to accommodate 750 seats. Our first aim is to preserve the distinctive Bates experience of a single, central dining hall where students, faculty and staff can dine together;
- A signature Fireplace Lounge for students to meet and chat from early morning until late at night;
- A mezzanine dining area with 250 seats overlooking the main dining area that will be used at peak times by those who want a quieter spot to eat and for student groups to meet;
- A market that opens early and closes late to provide snacks and supplies for students;
- Six new meeting spaces for student groups, alumni, faculty and staff – space that is in high demand but currently at a premium on campus;
- An open serving area that will eliminate lines;
- Kitchen facilities designed for efficient preparation of the 4,800 meals Bates staff serves every day;
- Larger cold and dry storage spaces to achieve increased savings by buying food in bulk;
- Ample outdoor landscaping and a new Bates Walk that will strengthen the east-west connection on campus, linking Commons to the rest of our campus.

Fund-raising Goals
- Gifts from individuals: $20 million. The facility will cost approximately $28.6 million; the balance will be financed by borrowing through the state of Maine.
- Donors needed: Approximately 75 gifts ranging from $25,000, which will receive special recognition within the space, to $12 million, which will name the building.
The new Dining Commons will be sited next to Alumni Gym, across from Pettengill Hall and border Central Avenue.
To maintain architectural integrity, building materials for the 60,000 square foot structure will include brick, granite, slate, copper and glass.
Signature Spaces

The vaulted Fireplace Lounge will provide a much needed gathering space for students from early morning to late at night.
The main dining area will provide an open and welcoming space for students to eat meals together.
“One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.”

A Room of One’s Own | Virginia Woolf, English novelist (1882-1941)