Taking a walk down Memory Lane?
First stop: pick up a map

Ah, memories.
Can’t wait to get back to visit those favorite campus haunts during Homecoming the last weekend in October? Well, don’t forget to pick up your directional device of choice—map, GPS—because you may need it.

If it’s been two, five, 10 or more years since you’ve been back, brace yourself: Florida State’s campus has changed—and continues to do so. In fact, for the past five years, the university has been in a rolling $500 million construction and renovation campaign.

Aimed at meeting the needs and demands of the burgeoning student population, to preserve and update landmark buildings and to support the cutting-edge research and development activities of the Pathways of Excellence initiative, new facilities and renovations are a must. In fact, there’s not one area of university operations—that will go untouched by the building boom. “You pick an area, and chances are we have improved it,” says Mark Bertolami, director of facilities planning.

In step with yesterday and tomorrow

Through it all, FSU is looking back to the future. Honoring the past while keeping culture, the changes on campus weave together the best of the old and the new. Though it’s growing for future greatness, the campus is returning to its quaint, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly roots at the same time. New structures are erected with strict design guidelines that help them mirror the Jacobean Revival style of the original campus structures, retaining the distinguished look of the university’s 19th-century roots.

With campus planners having rejected the idea of tearing them down, each of the historic residence halls—Jennie Murphree, Reynolds, Bryan, Broward, Gilchrist, Cawthon and Landis—has been renovated during the past decade, transforming some of the least attractive dorms at FSU into some of the most desirable addresses in the city of Tallahassee, Bertolami boasts.

And while they maintain that signature look on the outside, their classic collegiate architecture, porticos and gargoyle-adorned facades intact, they’re quite different inside. For instance, “We got rid of ‘gang showers’ and replaced them with suite-style living arrangements,” Bertolami notes.

“The privacy expectations for students are different today than they were 25 years ago. Not many current high school students share showers with 30 other people.” The Suzanne Dining Room, for many years used as office space and for a time vacant, once again shines. Originally built in 1913, its Gothic Revival structure was restored, and the hall reopened in 2006 in its original role as a dining facility. Students who are fans of the “Harry Potter” novels feel like they’re taking their meals in the dining hall at Harry’s school, Hogwarts.

Old faces, new places

As a result of the changes, today’s FSU campus is punctuated with ongoing and just-completed construction. There’s much that has appeared—and disappeared—in the process. Looking for the Stultz outdoor pool? It’s gone. But athletics is getting a new aquatic center on the Southwest Campus. Florida High? Gone south—to Tallahassee’s SouthWood community, that is. Want to swing by on-campus fraternity and sorority residences? Many of them are gone, too, having moved to Tallahassee. Heritage Grove, the university’s new Greek fraternity and sorority residences, is a must-see. And while they maintain that signature feel like they’re taking their meals in the dining hall at Harry’s school, Hogwarts.

The Suwannee Dining Room, for many years used as office space and for a time

starting point for a portion of the Legacy Walk, the innovative project providing pedestrian pathways through campus, featuring historical highlights, FSU architecture, sculpture and green spaces.

Legacy Walk tells tales of FSU

In October 2004, Phase I was inaugurated as the initial of four Legacy Walk segments. Dubbed the Eppes Phase, the walk begins on Westcott Plaza at the statue of Tallahassee leader and early FSU advocate Francis Eppes. Studded with symbols and bordered by bricks and banners, the walkway meanders past many of the oldest and most historic buildings on the eastern side of campus before terminating at Dodd Hall. Maps and important information about notable people and events are situated on brick pedestals along the way.

The second phase of the Legacy Walk—the Student Walk—is anchored at Landis Hall. Adjoining the hall, and unveiled during Heritage Day 2005, is the Landis Green Legacy Fountain, peopled by bronze sculptures of students from the Florida State College for Women and FSU eras. Beginning here, the Student Walk meanders through the heart of student activities, from Landis Green north toward the Bellamy Building, by newly renovated green space behind the Crenshaw Building and Moore Auditorium, until it circles the Integration Statue, winds around the Student Services Building and heads back to Landis. Along this route, which is lined with banners depicting campus life, student leaders of the past are heralded.
On the Student Walk is Montgomery Hall—formerly Montgomery Gym—FSU’s first gym, built in 1929 for FSU’s predecessor, FSCW. Completely updated, now it’s one of the nation’s leading centers for dance, and a strong element of the Pathways of Excellence program. The building’s refurbishments include the new Nancy Smith Fichter Dance Theatre, which boasts fixed seating for nearly 400; a 1,000-plus-square-foot performance area with state-of-the-art lighting, sound and video projection capabilities; dressing rooms; a student lounge; and studios for conditioning and rehearsing.

Bounding the Student Walk are the Student Life Building and, rising at the corner of Woodward Avenue and Park Avenue, the new Student Success Center. The 48,000-square-foot building will bring under one roof the Center for Leadership and Civic Education (formerly the LEAD Center and the Center for Civic Education and Service) and the Career Center, and will feature classrooms, resource centers, meeting rooms, offices and technology accommodations.

New President’s House

There’s a whole lot more that’s brand new on campus, too. For instance, a privately funded President’s House opened its doors in August. Located on West Tennessee Street, the new home is near the remodeled, repurposed original president’s residence, which now serves as the Alumni Welcome Center. Surrounded by beautiful Florida flora and landscaping, the new three-story house features a private dwelling for the president on the top floor, while the two lower rooms house university hospitality and special-events spaces.

There’s new student housing as well. On West Jefferson Street, Sherrill Williams Ragans Hall, which offers apartment-style living for more than 500 students, opened in 2004. Also on West Jefferson, the air-conditioned, double-room Wildwood Hall complex welcomed its first 700 residents in 2004. And on West Tennessee, the rebuilt DeGraff Hall was completed this past summer. The new construction doubles on-campus housing from just a few years ago.

Novel approaches maximize space

Much of the new construction has brought not only new buildings but also novel approaches to campus facilities. There’s no better example than the latest changes to the University Center. Finished in 2004 as part of an upgrade and expansion of Doak Campbell Stadium, the more than 700,000-square-foot structure is a model of multi-use, “blended” educational and administrative space, FSU’s “largest, most complicated (construction) project ever,” according to Bertolami.

For a campus bustling at the seams, transforming Doak Campbell Stadium in the early 1990s with the creation of the University Center was nothing less than geographic alchemy. “There was no new land available, and this land was used only about five times per year for home games,” Bertolami recalls. “We saw this as an opportunity to better use the acreage we have. Today, the University Center is a mélange of different types of uses.” For example, a classroom may be used three times a week for football team meetings and then house classes other times during the week, he says.

Indeed, the entire stadium area has been transformed. “Back in the day, there was one skinny little road to Doak Campbell, Stadium Drive,” remembers Lawrence Rubin, director of design and construction for academic use. “Even while we continue to enhance our main campus with new buildings and renovations, as part of our $500 million construction program, we’re aggressively expanding our southwest campus,” says FSU President T.K. Wetherell.

Located about a mile southwest of the main campus, FSU’s southwest campus is a sprawling plot of real estate that used to be the site of a dairy. The university already has made good use of a portion of the land, which encircles the more than 200-acre Innovation Park, Tallasahatchee’s research and development park, where researchers from FSU, along with scientists from the government, private and academic sectors, collaborate. The area also is home to the FAMU–FSU College of Engineering, Alumni Village, the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory and the Seminole Golf Course and Club, as well as other research and administrative entities.

Currently under construction, the Marine Science Research and Training Center—a swimming pool complex—is the newest southwestern addition. Scheduled for a 2008 completion, this state-of-the-art aquatic facility will feature a swim tank, dive tank and tower, locker rooms and other amenities.

Adjacent to the pool project, a new structure, a combined tennis and teaching facility, is proposed. Nearby, an underutilized nursery in the golf course area along Orange Avenue is the future site of a new tennis court complex that is intended to one day replace the main campus courts, opening space for academic use.

With ground broken earlier this year, the new Materials Research Building, a facility central to FSU’s Pathways of Excellence program, also will be located on the southwest campus. And located on 115 acres west of the golf course and replacing the main campus’ four fields is the new Intramural Sports Complex, which offers nearly two dozen fields for softball, soccer, cricket and other intramurals.

With all of this activity—from high-tech laboratories to advanced athletic facilities—southwest campus is the newest address of FSU progress.
at FSU. “There were six skyboxes and one caboose for entertainment on game days.” Now, Pensacola Street has been rerouted and upgraded, and the new stadium boasts more than 80,000 seats, skyboxes, new concession areas and plenty more parking.

Pathways of Excellences spurs building

Much of what’s here now that wasn’t here before is thanks to the Pathways of Excellence initiative. More than $700 million in construction related to the medical, psychology, chemistry and life sciences programs falls under the Pathways banner.

The College of Medicine research building opened in March 2006, completing FSU’s 300,000-square-foot medical school complex. The medical school is situated where the FSU Developmental Research School—better known as Florida High—used to be. That institution, now called the Florida State University School, left campus in 2000, moving to SouthWood.

The new medical research building is adorned with three vibrant terrazzo outdoor murals depicting medical legends Hippocrates, the father of medicine; Elizabeth Blackwell, the first female medical graduate in modern times; and John Gorrie, the yellow-fever-battling physician who invented the precursor to the contemporary air conditioner. A solo sycamore is planted in the school’s front lawn, an herbal homage to Hippocrates, who according to legend, taught while seated under such a tree.

The College of Medicine research building complex to the north quadrant of campus. Phase 3 of the Legacy Walk, the Call Street Corridor, is a gorgeously manicured pathway stretching from venerable science buildings to the new medical school. “It’s a major new entrance to campus through which you can see ‘the new FSU’ versus the historic Westcott entrance,” Bertolami explains.

Also part of the Pathways initiative, the department of psychology occupied Phase 1 of its new building in August 2006. Totalling nearly 47,000 square feet, the new building is home to a 220-seat auditorium, 28 research labs for members of the clinical, social, cognitive and developmental research programs, “smart” classrooms, and administrative and student advising offices. The second phase of construction is under way and will bring another 56,000 square feet of space that will be used by the Florida Center for Reading Research, 12 neuroscience laboratories and research support facilities, and an updated campus map is available at fsu.edu/campus/newmap. At FSU President T.K. Wetherell tells the story, a nervous but hopeful FSU student steadies himself just enough to kneel on one of his shaking knees. On a warm spring evening, amid the fragrance of dogwoods in bloom on Dogwood Lane outside Lands Hall, he proposes to his sweetheart. She says, “Yes,” and an everlasting memory is made.

So let the nostalgically faint of heart take note: Dogwood isn’t the only shared name that has disappeared from campus. Magnolia Way is gone, to prevent it from being mistaken for the off-campus Magnolia Drive.

Ivy Way, the landmark road that connects Call Street to University Way and the university’s first roadway through the center of campus, was also renamed, lest it be confused with Ivy Lane, some two miles away. University officials paved the former walking path in 1930 for use by the more than 2,463 students and mushrooming automobile traffic. Now, it has a new name: Convocation Way.

The new street names premiered in August. A map of the new street names can be found at fsu.edu/campus/newmap.

As FSU President T.K. Wetherell tells the story, a nervous but hopeful FSU student steadies himself just enough to kneel on one of his shaking knees. On a warm spring evening, amid the fragrance of dogwoods in bloom on Dogwood Lane outside Lands Hall, he proposes to his sweetheart. She says, “Yes,” and an everlasting memory is made.

The location, like the memory and the dogwoods, to this day withstands the march of time—thank goodness. Still, when the couple’s grandchildren arrive as freshmen to visit the cherished site, they’ll find the name “Dogwood Way” is gone. It’s “Hanor Way” now. That’s because the signs, they are a changin’.

Along with all that, the latest Master Plan promises “additional facilities—academic, research, housing, intramural fields, recreation, open space, parking, roadways, and infrastructure”—all organized in an efficient and aesthetically pleasing campus plan.

So get those navigation aids ready for FSU’s future coordinates: bigger, better and even more beautiful.

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