Proposed Project

The Memorial Union (MU) Renewal project will renovate several areas in the MU complex, including the North and South Plazas, the Bookstore, Griffin Lounge/North Hallway, and the East Wing. Project improvements will maintain the character and function of the MU as the main student union on campus while renovating the site furnishings and landscape, improving circulation and accessibility, and updating fixtures, finishes, and building systems.

This renovation is designed to enliven the MU to create modern, student-centric spaces for studying, social interaction, and retail opportunities. The project will reorient the main bookstore entrance to allow direct access from the North Plaza and complete accessibility improvements.

The project will complete improvements to the bookstore mechanical systems as well as complete upgrades necessary for code compliance and to improve access and circulation. Exterior upgrades and modifications include roof replacement and installation of new skylights in the mezzanine roof, signage, and relocation of the bookstore entries to establish the main entrance of the north plaza. Interior improvements will be comprised of modifications to the building finishes, includes flooring, paint, and reconfiguration of the second floor including removal of existing partitions.

In addition, the project will include alterations to the exterior courtyard areas as well as the basement, the main MU complex, and the east wing of the MU. Building system and code upgrade improvements will be completed throughout the MU. Both the north and south entrances will be modified to increase the building’s function and transparency. The existing south entry will be removed and replaced with a new single story entry. The existing single story north entry will also be removed. This will be replaced by a new 2,400 square foot two story entry atrium and result in a net gain of 1,300 square feet of building footprint.

CEQA Exemption

The proposed project consists of repair, maintenance, and minor alterations to an existing structure and is considered categorically exempt from further CEQA review (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301). In addition, as describe below, none of the exceptions to a categorical exemption apply to this project.

The proposed project would renovate existing facilities within the highly developed portion of the UC Davis core campus. The proposed project would not affect environmental resources such as agricultural resources, biological
resources, or waterways because the project is within a highly developed portion of the UC Davis core campus. The proposed project would not increase the population of the campus or the region because the building remodel will not provide increased space that would accommodate additional staff or students. With no increase in population, the proposed project would result in no increase to water consumption or utility consumption. Through energy conservation measures that would be implemented with the proposed project, the actual energy consumption of the building is expected to decrease. Given the lack of sensitive features and no expansion to population, the University has identified that the project would have no significant environmental impacts and would be categorically exempt consistent with CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301 (Existing Facilities).

Exceptions to CEQA Exemptions

In reviewing whether the proposed project is appropriately considered categorically exempt in accordance with CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300, the University considered the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2 exceptions to the exemption. Categorical exemptions cannot be used if the project triggers any of the following exceptions:

- **Location.** The proposed project is not located in an environmentally sensitive location. The Memorial Union building is within the highly developed portion of the UC Davis core campus and does not contain and is not adjacent to sensitive habitat, sensitive species, waterways, wetlands, or other areas of environmental sensitivity. The UC Davis 2003 LRDP EIR identifies locations of sensitive habitat, sensitive species, waterways, wetlands, and archaeologically sensitive areas on the UC Davis campus. The Memorial Union building is not near those areas.

- **Cumulative impact.** The UC Davis 2003 LRDP EIR considered the cumulative environmental impacts related to campus development projects and provided the feasible mitigation measures which were adopted by the University and are being implemented as part of campus operations. No other projects are expected to occur nearby during the MU Renewal project. No new mitigations have been identified to reduce cumulative impacts.

- **Unusual circumstances.** The proposed would remodel an existing building and would not create unusual circumstances and does not involve unusual circumstances. The location of the project, the timing of the project in relation to other campus projects, and the continued operation of the campus in relation to the proposed project present no unusual circumstances.

- **Scenic Highway.** The proposed project is not near a scenic highway and would have no effect on a scenic highway. The UC Davis 2003 LRDP EIR documented that no scenic highways are near the UC Davis campus.

- **Hazardous Waste Site.** The proposed project is not within a hazardous waste site and would not affect a hazardous waste site.

- **Historic Resources.** The proposed project would not affect a historic resource. The Memorial Union building was constructed in 1955 and has been significantly modified through a series of renovations, expansions, and modifications. Major phases of modifications to the building took place in 1992 (seismic safety exterior changes, elevator tower construction, demolition of student pub, relocation of Coffee House from east to west wing), 1994 (north courtyard and façade remodel, east entry remodel), and 2009 (renovation of east wing, addition to west wing, and renovation of west wing). The building would not qualify as a historic resource.