



By creating a comfortable
community that is both
social and studious,
Corvias Campus Living
tapped into a new
demographic
of student
resident.

BY LAUREN BOSTON

HOUSE M.D.



Summerfield Square is designed to feel more like home, less like dorm.



Corvias Campus Living partnered with the Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine (ACOM) to design and manage a student housing community catered to medical students. Think less dorm, more home. “From the very first design meeting through the planning and construction process, the medical student experience was always central in the decision-making process,” says Kurt Ehlers, Managing Director of Corvias Campus Living.

As a result of its partnership with ACOM, Corvias was able to include infrastructure specifically compatible with the ACOM intranet. Ehlers says students living in Summerfield Square have unlimited access to school resources that may otherwise only have been available to students in the library or in an academic building.

“This may seem like a small thing, but to a medical student, this unfettered access to resources and review materials is invaluable,” Ehlers says.

But it isn’t all work and no play.

“Knowing that we had addressed the academic element as a priority, we also appreciate a medical student’s need for balance,” Ehlers says. “Supporting a balanced and healthy lifestyle was another design focus for Summerfield Square.”

Summerfield Square includes a variety of study spaces, as well as social and recreational areas that allow students to unwind after carrying the heavy academic workload of a medical degree while in the comforts of their own community. Amenities include an open, communal kitchen to encourage social interaction and a “flex room” that allows for small studying groups, fitness classes, a

meditation area or a playroom for families with children. Ehlers says residents are able to create the space that fits their particular needs.

“The rooms were built with studying in mind,” says resident Elijah Fox. “The staff understands our time commitments as students. They are willing to work around our schedules for problems, and their primary concern is ensuring that a safe and effective study environment is maintained. I feel comfortable to study and also, when time allows, to relax.”

However, Ehlers says the No. 1 feature that students comment on is the community’s convenient location—just a three-minute walk to campus for medical students whose time is at a premium.

The Right Medicine

Corvias Campus Living did some studying of its own before building Summerfield Square.



(Top of page) Amenities include an open, communal kitchen where medical students often gather when they aren’t studying. (Above) The “flex room” allows for small study groups, fitness classes, a meditation area or a playroom for families with children.



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"I FEEL COMFORTABLE TO STUDY AND TO ALSO, WHEN TIME ALLOWS, RELAX."

—Elijah Fox
Student Resident



"I DON'T HAVE MUCH FREE TIME SO HAVING A GYM AND POOL RIGHT HERE IS AMAZING! "

—David Bozeman
Student Resident

Ehlers says the company continually discussed ACOM's student population with the college as it was forming its inaugural class of medical students. Corvias began interacting directly with these students as they were accepted into the ACOM program.

Throughout the process, Ehlers says Corvias learned that the ACOM students needed a diverse community that could accommodate anyone from a single student just out of undergrad to an older student with a family to support.

"This required our design to be flexible for everyone to feel included in the community," Ehlers says.

One particular feature that was important to ACOM's medical community was the size and privacy of each apartment. While it's not uncommon for multiple students to live in one room in traditional student housing, Ehlers says older medical students needed a blend of one- and two-bedroom layouts that provided enough space and privacy for their lifestyle.

Each bedroom suite includes a private master bath. Residents also have the benefit of a washer and dryer, fully-equipped kitchen and a built-in desk with a study nook in each apartment.

Corvias Campus Living's attention to detail even extended beyond the property's design—ultimately inspiring the community's name. Ehlers says Summerfield Square was chosen as a tribute to osteopathic medicine. Summerfield Saunders Still was an American osteopathic physician who founded Dr. S.S. Still College of

Osteopathy in 1898—known today as Des Moines University.

Such careful consideration for the medical students' unique housing needs has paid off. Ehlers says residents rated their overall experience as "excellent" in Summerfield Square's year-end resident satisfaction survey. On a scale of 1 to 7, residents gave Summerfield Square an overall score of 6.54 and 6.92 for the overall interactions with the Community Manager.

"Everyone here is a student and I don't have to worry about other residents with crazy schedules," says David Bozeman, who lives at Summerfield Square with his family. "Everyone seems to get along really well because we are all here for the same reason. Also, I don't have much free time so having a gym and pool right here is amazing! Summerfield makes it possible to enjoy life in med school."

Ehlers says Corvias Campus Living is ready to take on more projects, and will never shy away from a challenge.

"Our goal is to provide our higher education clients with one partner that they can work side-by-side with to solve their unique challenges," he says. "By putting the needs of our partner first, we are able to add value in all aspects of the partnership and the communities in which we serve."

Talk about good bedside manner. **NA**

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