

2025 IMPACT REPORT

Mary Schmidt Campbell **CENTER FOR INNOVATION & THE ARTS**



IGNITING INNOVATION, ELEVATING THE ARTS

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As we open the doors to this remarkable facility, I look forward to witnessing the groundbreaking work that will take place within these walls and the lasting impact it will have on our community for generations to come.

Mary Schmidt Campbell, Ph.D. | President Emerita, Spelman College

The VISION BEGINS



Leading Spelman College was one of the high points of my career, and among its most significant milestones was the launch of Spelman Ascends, the strategic vision designed to continue Spelman's excellence into the future. A key part of this strategic vision was a capital campaign that made the Center for Innovation & the Arts possible.

I am humbled by the Spelman College Board of Trustees' decision to name the building in my honor. From the beginning, we knew this would be an ambitious undertaking—one that required perseverance, and the collective strength of our community. Now a reality, this extraordinary space stands as a testament to the power of bold ideas, imagination, philanthropy, and an unwavering belief in Spelman's future.

This center was designed to be more than just a building—it is a place where creativity and discovery converge, where artists, scientists, and entrepreneurs can push boundaries and redefine what is possible. It represents the heart of Spelman's commitment to innovation, interdisciplinary excellence, and community engagement.

We, the Spelman community, built this building with faith, hope, and determination. I offer my sincerest thanks to every individual who made this achievement possible. Your generosity has built a space where the next generation of innovators will thrive.

As we open the doors to this remarkable facility, I look forward to witnessing the groundbreaking work that will take place within these walls and the lasting impact it will have on our community for generations to come.

With appreciation,
Mary Schmidt Campbell, Ph.D.
President Emerita, Spelman College

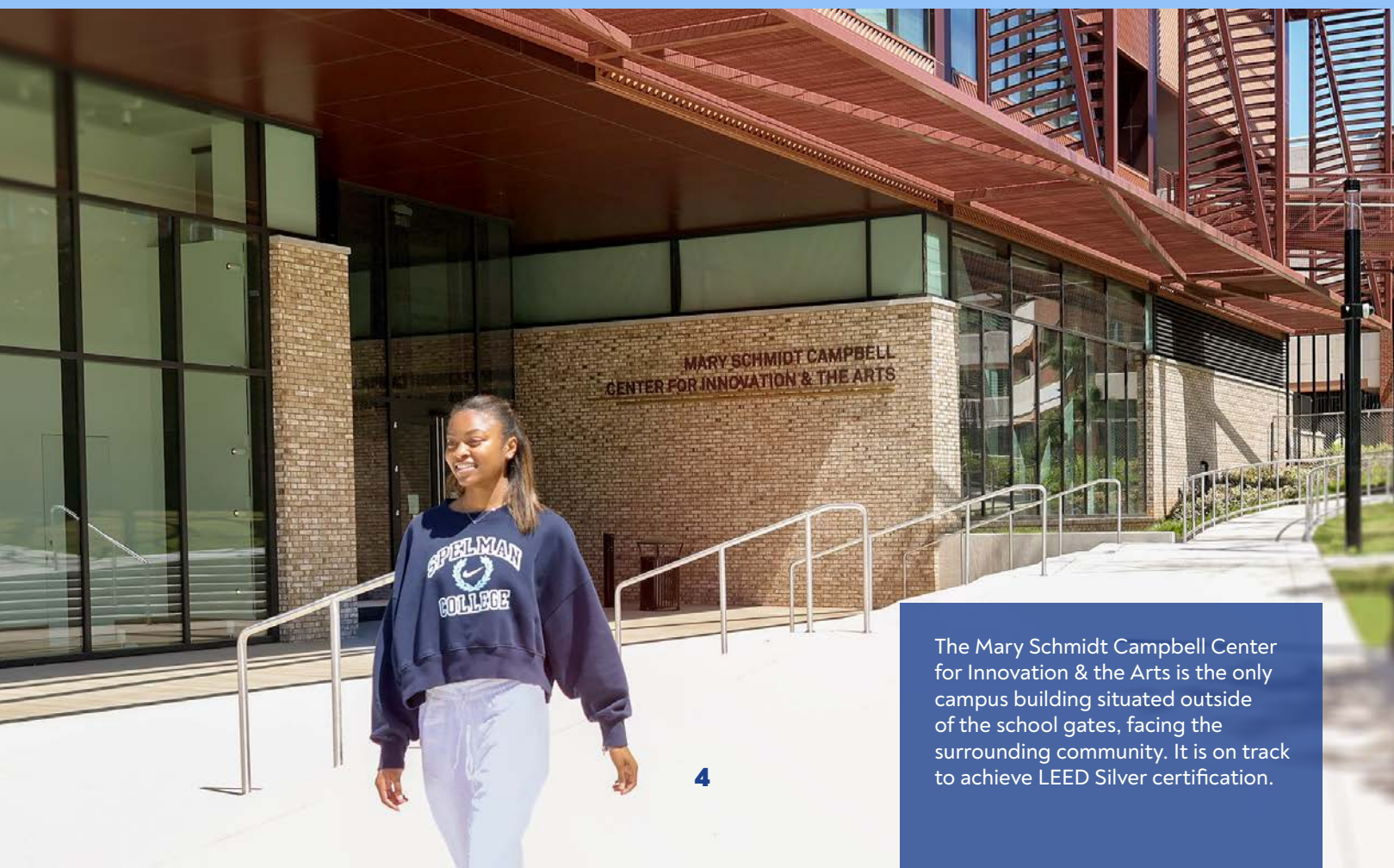
With a visual lightness that mirrors its minimal carbon footprint, the architecture honors Spelman's historic campus while boldly signaling its forward-looking trajectory.

A HOME

for Innovation and the Arts

Spelman College proudly celebrates the completion of its \$96 million expansion project, the Mary Schmidt Campbell Center for Innovation & the Arts (CI&A). Purposefully designed to unite artistic expression and cutting-edge technology, this vibrant new home is already enriching the student experience and advancing Spelman's legacy of excellence and innovation.

Named in honor of Spelman's 10th president, who led the College for seven years, this state-of-the-art building embodies the vision of creating a dynamic space where Spelman's students in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) can engage, collaborate, and innovate.



The Mary Schmidt Campbell Center for Innovation & the Arts is the only campus building situated outside of the school gates, facing the surrounding community. It is on track to achieve LEED Silver certification.



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A space like this allows me to find commonalities and ways to connect with other media and communities. We need the arts...so it makes sense for people to see the art in innovation and innovation in the arts.

Geanna Gwinn | C'2025

The CI&A is designed to foster interactive relationships among students, providing them with the tools to explore new ideas and push boundaries in a collaborative learning environment.

Spanning 82,500 square feet and rising 69 feet, 6 inches across five stories—including a mezzanine—the CI&A is uniquely designed to inspire creativity and forward-thinking. It features the Arthur M. Blank Innovation Lab, an interdisciplinary makerspace where students from across the College come together to produce collaborative work using shared, state-of-the-art tools, digital media and gaming labs, and flexible classroom/event spaces. A double-height atrium, known as The Hive, houses offices, a conference and event center, and a rooftop terrace.

What makes this space truly unique is its location—it is the only campus building situated outside of the school

gates, facing the surrounding community. This intentional design positions the CI&A as the “front porch” of Spelman College, a place where the community can gather and engage.

Rooted in the historical significance of porches as spaces for connection, Spelman's porch will bridge the College with the West End and greater Atlanta communities through curated events, collaborations, and partnerships. This space also features a second gallery for the College's Museum of Fine Art, a dance performance studio, a high-tech digital black box theatre and a small café, providing access to arts and culture for both students and the broader public.

Spelman also affirms its commitment to sustainability through the CI&A. It is on track to surpass the College's standard for all buildings to achieve at least LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver

certification. The building accomplishes this through performance-based strategies like passive cooling, reduced energy use, and responsibly sourced materials.

What began in 2014 as a conversation between then Spelman College president Beverly Daniel Tatum, Ph.D., Dr. Campbell, and the college's Arts faculty has materialized into a transformative facility that embodies Spelman's commitment to promoting academic innovation. By integrating art, technology, entrepreneurship, community engagement, and leadership opportunities, the CI&A highlights Spelman's ongoing dedication to provide students the tools necessary to make “A Choice to Change the World.”

Designed to enhance wellness and comfort, the building floods classrooms and offices with natural light—except in specialized labs where controlled conditions are required.





The GROUND BREAKERS

Recognizing our donors who made this milestone possible

The Mary Schmidt Campbell Center for Innovation & the Arts became a reality thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our donors. Their visionary support reflects a deep belief in Spelman's mission and fuels creativity, collaboration, and transformative learning. With gratitude, we proudly recognize those whose contributions helped bring this bold vision to life.

Ronda Stryker | Director, Stryker Corporation; Vice Chair, Spelman College Board of Trustees; **Rosalind "Roz" Brewer**, C'84 | Interim President of Spelman College; Chair Emerita, Spelman College Board of Trustees; **Mary Schmidt Campbell**, Ph.D. | 10th President of Spelman College

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In our 1,600-square-foot music rehearsal hall and recording studio, students find the space to explore their creativity, refine their sounds, and amplify their voices.

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The Innovation Lab has been an incredible opportunity for me to explore the arts on campus, get to know creatives in the AUC and see how I can be creative. And although I am graduating this semester, the Center for Innovation & the Arts is a highlight of my Spelman experience!

Corinne Adams | C'2025

Innovation STARTS HERE

Empowering Creativity and Entrepreneurship

Like a window to the world, a front porch can evoke the nostalgia of earlier times when families, neighbors and friends gathered for fellowship and support. Spelman's new “front porch,” the Mary Schmidt Campbell Center for Innovation & the Arts (CI&A), is the College's first academic building in 25 years and the first outside the campus gates—a true welcome mat to the community.

At the heart of the center is the Arthur M. Blank Innovation Lab, a cutting-edge lab open to all liberal arts disciplines. Dr. Jerry Volcy, co-director of the lab and a faculty member of 10 years, describes it as “the most interdisciplinary and collaborative space on campus.” He teaches courses in game design and development.

“Our charge is to bring new and emerging technology to students, STEAM faculty and staff in the context of the liberal arts,” he explains. “When disciplines are in one space, exciting collaborations are inevitable.”

The lab encourages exploration, from applying AI in music to developing games that blend storytelling with computer science. And as students start to create and build things they want to productize, Spelman is equipped to support that, too. The lab gives rise to entrepreneurship through ‘Spelpreneur’—a co-curricular education initiative that fosters entrepreneurship and innovation at Spelman College.

“Spelpreneur cultivates an entrepreneurial mindset in students from a wide range of disciplines—encouraging them to apply their creativity and skills to solve real-world challenges and bring bold ideas to life,” says Sonya Rush, Spelpreneur director. “The CI&A helps bring this vision to life by offering an inspiring, collaborative space that fuels innovation and supports the next generation of changemakers.”

Already, the center is energizing faculty and students alike. Volcy looks forward to hosting student competitions and events that strengthen Spelman's role as a hub for learning, creativity, and connection.

“It's a joy to work in this building and see its promise for our students' future,” he says. “The CI&A is a powerful space—pertinent to continue Spelman's community outreach and quest to be a good neighbor in the historic West End.”



The Arthur M. Blank Innovation Lab's range of tools, from the latest 3D printers and scanners to conventional power tools, support hands-on experimentation and prototyping.

Artistry TAKES ROOT

Building Community Through the Arts

As the Spelman community marvels at the stunning architecture of the new Mary Schmidt Campbell Center for Innovation & the Arts (CI&A)—from its homey front porch that beckons neighbors near and far, to the open two-story Forum where imagination can soar—Barbara Chirinos is drafting plans from an architectural plan that doesn't deal with brick and mortar, but with the building blocks of community.

Known as the “architect of connection,” Chirinos, the inaugural artistic director of the CI&A, is drawing a network that uses interdisciplinary programming and engagement strategies to connect the school's once scattered art departments. Just as importantly, she is paving inroads that will tie Spelman to art organizations from across the globe to across the street, including with fellow Atlanta University Center Consortium (AUCC) institutions and West End community neighbors. “It takes a village to create a community of artists,” she explained.

That vision is already taking shape. Myra Greene, chair of the Department of Art & Visual Culture and a key partner in bringing the CI&A to life, describes the energy now pulsing through the space and the promise it holds.

“Filled with light and infused with the energy of possibility, the center empowers faculty, staff, and students to create boldly, explore deeply, and amplify their unique voices across diverse artistic mediums,” Greene says. “The center is a catalyst for creative storytelling.”

The center puts Spelman in the position to become what Chirinos calls the “nexus of excellence” for Black leaders in the arts, with Spelman students at the forefront.

“I’m among brilliance here—just excellence,” she said.

“The women who attend school here, who teach here, who lead the administration here—they all have so many great ideas.”

As artistic director for the CI&A, as well as for the LaTanya Richardson Jackson and Samuel L. Jackson Center for the Performing Arts, Chirinos believes the art of storytelling is the foundation of our history and the framework on which we build our identity.

“We have been telling stories since the beginning of time,” she said. “There have always been forces trying to quieten our voice, particularly of women. But our stories help keep us connected. They remind us of who we are and who we can become.”



“

The sense of community has deeply enriched my artistic journey. The building is more than a physical space, but a hub for innovation and mentorship that has elevated the quality of my training and interdisciplinary collaboration. It has empowered me to see myself not just as a dancer, but as a leader who can shape the future of the arts through community, innovation and intentional storytelling.

Savona Johnson | C'2026



This 3,200-square-foot **digital black box theater** features flexible seating for up to 171 guests, offering an immersive, artistically-equipped environment for performances, screenings, and creative expression.



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The Center for Innovation & the Arts is designed to create new connections between disciplines, and to help find synergies between Spelman and the broader neighborhood. Flexible spaces for learning and gathering throughout the building make it a place where collaboration can thrive.

Jeanne Gang | Lead Designer and Founding Partner, Studio Gang

The VISION AHEAD



When Spelman broke ground on the Mary Schmidt Campbell Center for Innovation & the Arts, I was honored to stand with a shovel in hand and experience a historic moment in our College's journey. As an alumna, a former chair, and a proud chemistry graduate, this center holds special meaning for me. It embodies not just the scientific and artistic innovation that transformed my own Spelman experience but the limitless potential it offers to future generations of Spelman women.

The center, designed by the visionary Jeanne Gang of Studio Gang, will be a true hub for creativity, bringing together the best of arts, science, technology, and entrepreneurship. As we celebrate its completion and look ahead, I am deeply moved by the dedication of our faculty, staff, students, and our generous donors who made this dream a reality. I am especially grateful to Dr. Campbell for her pioneering leadership, which laid the foundation for this transformative space that will empower future generations of innovators.

Together, we have created a space that nurtures interdisciplinary collaboration, fosters innovation, and encourages real-world problem-solving for Spelman students. This center will also foster meaningful engagement with the greater Atlanta community through curated events, collaborations, and partnerships. We look forward to welcoming artists, scientists, and entrepreneurs alike to engage in creative inquiry and push boundaries with us.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to making this vision come alive. The future is bright, and this is only the beginning.

Rosalind "Roe" Brewer, C'84
Interim President and Chair Emerita, Spelman College

2024-2025

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