This semester, the Carolina Union Board of Directors has been working on plans to improve and expand the Union.

2015-2016 Carolina Union Board of Directors chair, Jaelyn Coates, is a senior political science and African, African American and Diaspora studies double major.

As the board chair, Coates serves as the face of the student body for the Union and representative of the Board.

The Board of Directors is comprised of the Director of the Carolina Union, faculty members appointed by the Chancellor, appointed graduate students and select student leaders from student organizations. The Board is organized to discuss the progress of the Union and how to improve student experience.

Coates wanted to be a part of an organization that cares about students and said she looked to the Union because it is a space where students are learning about each other and the world so they leave Carolina better than they did when they came in.
I kind of view the campus as a living body, and the Union is the heart, and it kind of pulses, and there’s all these different channels that lead to these different organizations and departments and buildings on campus, Coates said.

During the time in her new position, Coates said the Board of Directors worked hard to make a plan that better integrates the Union within the Carolina community and campus. They have reached out to departments such as Diversity of Multicultural Affairs, Carolina Dining Services and UNC General Alumni Association to figure out how they can support each other. Their goal is to have a more collaborative flow on campus.

They are also working on a plan to expand the Union in the hopes that it will encourage students, including graduate and professional students, to take advantage of the many resources provided by the Union.

Coates currently feels that the Union is not being used in the all-encompassing manner it could be.

“There are so many things that Union supplies that people just don’t even know about – so many resources and connections that the Union has because of the people who work in this building and the people that they know who are super passionate about student ideas and are looking for ways to support students,” Coates said.

Coates wants students to know that there is a group of people actively working together to better campus.

She said the Board of Directors meetings are open to all and encourages students to attend. They are eventually going to set it up where it is more interactive and engaging even if the students aren’t official members.

“I think it’ll be a great hub of communication.”

This feature is part of our Spotlight Series dedicated to telling the Carolina Union story through our many programs, services, and facilities. This story was created by Christine Bang, an editorial assistant in Communications & Creative Services.

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