



Construction

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Students and faculty have a lot more to look forward to than the end of the semester. The next few months are going to make a huge difference in campus life as we know it.

The construction that has been under way has caused much disruption this semester, but will bring a huge payoff. All of the plywood lining, the front, and some of the side of the Olmsted building will soon be floor-to-ceiling tinted glass. The glass will be installed around mid-October. By next semester, the new foodcourt and Town Square will open. The gourmet coffee bar, which will be located just inside the front main entrance to the right, will open some time in between. The new portion of Olmsted will very shortly be a focal point of activity.

The remodeled wing has been a cooperative effort between the offices of Student Life and Enrollment Services, Business Services, and Housing and Food Services, which is affiliated with University Park. The work that went into securing the grant money and space began in 1996 when the original request was put in by JoAnn Coleman, the director of Housing and Food Services, and Greg Schiavoni, the assistant director of Housing and Food Services. The space was appropriated within the next year. The architect was hired in 2000 and the detailed planning began. Construction began this past March.

Coleman and Schiavoni spent hours going to various college cafeterias and restaurants to build something utilitarian that doesn't look like a cafeteria. There was a lot of time and collaboration put into the actual aesthetic design. The future that Director of Business Services Ed Dankanich envisions is a visually appealing one. "It's an open design," he said of the curved walls, interior and exterior use of glass and natural light, and suspended ceilings, "We call them clouds."

The collaborating departments agree on the area's most important function, creating a place for student interaction. "This campus needs a place where people can just hang out; we don't have that," Schiavoni said. Don Holtzman, senior director of Student Life and Enrollment Services, says the location between parking lots and the new dorms should facilitate interaction between commuters and those living on campus. "This should be a user-friendly and heavily-used student space," he said. He and Janet Widoff, director of Student Affairs, helped to design the Town Square.



One of the many new offices that will be located in the new Town Square expected to open in time for next semester.

When approaching from the front main entrance and turning right at the lion, there will immediately be a coffee bar with lounge seating and laptop ports. The food court will lie along the hall with the counters on the left and seating on the right along the windows. There will be a stone pizza oven, grill, deli, and a counter for soups, salads, and features. The food court will still feature the pre-made to-go options. Schiavoni said that, "home-meal replacements" would also be available for students to cook in their dorms. The kitchen areas all allow for flexibility so different kinds of foods can be easily implemented as the need arises. The main walkway will be tile, with the wood finishes, glass and granite food counters, "It will be a nice contrast," Coleman said. "We wanted to give this an atmosphere that's different."

Housing and Food Service employees, Donna Miller, Doris Hoose, and Michelle Forney are excited about moving out of the Lion's Den. "We're

excited and anxious. These work conditions aren't very good," Miller said. "We're thrilled to have windows!" Hoose said. She added that they're very excited to get a chance to test their creative abilities. For them, it has been difficult having such little storage space in the existing cafeteria. Some food is currently being stored in the old cafeteria complex. However, the new facility will have a great deal of storage. "Everything's going to be in the same building; that's one of the biggest things," Forney said. Schiavoni reflected on the positive attitude of the Food Service employees, saying, "It's been a real bright point in all of this."

Activities and offices will move in to the Town Square, which will be located in the wing perpendicular to the main hall as will the Office of Housing and Food Services and the Office of Student Activities. The radio station will be located on the corner, with a glass front for visibility. They will be broadcast through the wing. Past it to the right, there will be a raised area with more lounge chairs and laptop ports. The new SGA office will be past the lounge area. Across the hall there will be a general club workshop for special projects next to the new Capital Times office. At the end of this wing will be the new photo lab and dark room. The club fronts will be glass, resembling storefronts in a town square. At the end of the main hall to the left, at the entrance from the new dorms, will be a large special events dining room with a large projection screen TV for movies or games.

Dankanich addressed the noise problem by saying, "It's been a tough balance to keep it quiet and keep it moving." He said night crews are a lot more expensive. Holtzman said Dankanich has been on "noise patrol"- walking around the second floor and through the work site asking workers to keep it down. Though the noise has been an inconvenience, it will all pay off very soon. And as Dankanich says, "It's been a long time coming."

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