

Tuesday, October 20, 2009

Student-centered campus upgrades enhance the academic experience

By **Katie Land**, news editor

Oakland University's campus has seen some major changes in the past few months. Many buildings, classrooms, laboratories and outdoor renovations have been completed to enhance and support the student experience.

Dodge Hall and the Science and Engineering Building received a boost this summer, when an electronic storage shop was converted into a new, top-notch computer classroom offering a new student lounge and state of the art workstations designed for students to interact and follow along with their instructors' lectures in real time. Previous labs had a maxim capacity of 20 students.

Set in two phases of work, the renovations touched a total of 18 labs and classrooms in Hannah Hall, O'Dowd Hall and Wilson Hall. The updates will enhance instruction in chemistry, biology, physics, nursing, art and art history and physical therapy.

All of these academic departments have seen substantial increases in student enrollment and play a key role in the biomedical and health care programs that draw many students to Oakland.

"The major renovation of our large biology, chemistry and physics teaching labs will impact thousands of Oakland University students," said Kathy Moore, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. "The original teaching labs, dating from the 1960s and 1970s, have been replaced with state-of-the-art facilities that provide a safer, brighter and modern professional environment for the very important learning that occurs via hands-on laboratory courses."

Responding to a record 4.1 percent enrollment increase on campus this fall, OU has used creative measures to provide additional parking spaces for its students. In October, Oakland's facilities management team striped and restriped parking space boundaries in several existing lots, creating a total of 72 additional parking spots at a cost of about \$2,000.

"Our goal was to create as many additional parking spaces as possible within existing parking lots," said Terry Stollsteimer, associate vice president for Facilities Management. "We recognize how tight parking has become as we add new students, and our priority is to accommodate our students' parking needs as best we can within the current parking framework." Stollsteimer said the university hopes to add a number of new parking areas within the next few years.

As part of the construction and facilities maintenance plans over the summer, the plaza between North Foundation Hall and South Foundation Hall leading to the Oakland Center has been reconstructed with an eye toward a more inviting design, as well as the plaza located between Oakland Center and O'Dowd Hall.

Campuswide paving projects took place throughout June and July and culvert and road repairs were made to Meadow Brook Road between Hamlin Hall and University Student Apartments.

Sidewalk upgrades throughout campus, but primarily north and south of the Bear Lake bridge, were completed in June and July. During the same period, North Foundation Hall and Vandenberg Hall lawn had new irrigation systems installed. In August, manhole repairs and the removal of traffic barriers in the P-36 Parking Lot were made, located between Dodge Hall and Elliot and Varner halls.

SUMMARY

Many Oakland University buildings, classrooms, laboratories and outdoor renovations have been completed to support the student experience.

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