Ground Broken for New Building at WSU Davis

Students should be filing into the second building at Weber State University’s Davis campus a little less than two years from now. Groundbreaking ceremonies for the 120,146-square-foot building took place Nov. 8. The Professional Programs Classrooms Building, as it will be known, will be just east of the campus’ first building.

The expansion is the result of support from the community, the Davis Chamber of Commerce and local state legislators. Utah Gov. Gary Herbert in March signed legislation authorizing funding from the state.

Costing an estimated $39.9 million, the building will contain classrooms and laboratories to accommodate current high-demand programs and their future expansions. They include nursing, electronics engineering, construction management and interior design.

Bruce Davis, WSU vice provost, said the new building should enhance already strong bonds with the community and allow WSU to continue to meet the growing needs of Hill Air Force Base and aerospace and defense contractors in the area. WSU Davis is in a prime location to serve the Falcon Hill National Aerospace Park under development along the western edge of the base.

The new building will also provide the Northern Utah Academy for Math, Engineering & Science (NUAMES) with a permanent home. With 450 students and plans to expand to 500, the early-college high school currently uses five portable classrooms and 13 portable classrooms at WSU Davis. Funding for the project will include $50 million in state funds, $4 million from NUAMES and an additional $4.4 million bond financed by student fees. The new facility will feature a student union, large food court, fitness area and event space.

WSU Davis’ first building opened in autumn 2003. It serves about 3,700 WSU students and more than 150 faculty.

Solar Panels Save Money, Prompt ‘Behavior Savings’

Weber State University’s colors are purple and white, but steps are being taken to make the school more green.

Solar panels installed this summer at WSU Davis.

This summer’s solar-panel installations are part of the university’s efforts to become more energy efficient. The university has attained a bronze rating for efforts to measure sustainability performance, and, what’s more, has been recognized for leadership in committing funds for new energy-efficiency financing initiatives.

Solar-Panel Installation

Solar panels installed this summer at Weber State University Davis represent the first of several projects the Energy and Sustainability Office expects to be placed at the Ogden and Davis campuses. Eighty-four panels installed at WSU Davis are expected to result annually in 5,000 energy-cost savings. An interactive kiosk inside the building tracks the panels’ energy production.

Panels added atop the Shepherd Union Building — 132 when the project is completed — should save $7,500 annually, and a solar-powered water feature near the building allows people to see how blocking sunlight affects power output. Forty-eight solar panels added to the Swenson Building to heat the pool could save $7,000 to $10,000 yearly.

Wildcat Village’s first residence hall, opened this fall, features 15 solar plates that heat domestic water for the building.

Jacob Cain, Energy and Sustainability manager, said the projects communicate WSU’s dedication to sustainability. “The panels help us encourage environmentally conscious behavior,” he said. “Students, faculty and staff who might have previously left lights or computers on, now will turn them off because they do not want to waste the power from the solar panels.”

Donations Offset Carbon Use

When English professor Hal Crimmel visits his extended family, he has to fly thousands of miles. To help offset his travel both in the air and in the car, he has donated to the recently created Carbon Offset Gift Account.

“I wanted to feel like we were doing our part to help offset the carbon emissions that cause global warming but wanted to donate to WSU versus sending money to a for-profit carbon-offset company,” Crimmel wrote from Germany, where he is a visiting professor this semester at the Ludwig Maximilians University in Munich. “It’s a first step toward thinking about what other ways we could get involved with renewable energy sources.”

Weber State’s carbon-offset plan has two components. First, the university has decided to offset most of the carbon emissions resulting from university-sponsored travel by paying money from this initiative into an account dedicated to funding renewable and energy-saving projects on campus. This program is a major step toward the university’s pledge to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, as outlined in WSU’s “Climate Action Plan.”

The second component of the plan makes it possible for anyone who wants to offset the carbon emissions they create in personal or professional activities to make a tax-deductible donation to the WSU account. Donations will be used in a similar fashion to support renewable and energy-saving projects on campus.

The new account lets people support WSU while doing something positive for the environment. Crimmel said the plan will generate many positive returns. “These projects will help improve local and regional air quality, but they will also save the university money for years to come by reducing its electricity and natural gas consumption.”
The additional “behavior savings” from solar panels is what makes them a viable project.

**Bronze Rating**

In part because of the solar-panel projects, WSU attained a bronze rating from the Sustainability Tracking Assessment & Rating System (STARS) program. STARS, a program of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), is a framework for institutions to measure their sustainability performance. More than 260 institutions across the U.S. and Canada participate in the program. During the past year, 22 received a gold rating, 55 attained silver and 21 earned bronze.

**Billion Dollar Green Challenge**

WSU’s recognition for its leadership in committing funds for new energy-efficiency financing initiatives came from the Sustainable Endowments Institute and 15 partner organizations. They launched the “Billion Dollar Green Challenge” to encourage colleges, universities and other nonprofits to invest $1 billion during the next two years in self-managed green revolving funds to finance energy-efficiency upgrades.

The challenge was inspired by exceptional performance of 32 institutions’ existing revolving funds totaling $65 million. Weber State’s $5 million fund was established in 2010 after securing seed money through a loan from the university’s endowment and other capital sources. According to May 2010 projections, WSU is expecting $1 million in annual energy savings by 2015 and to fully repay the endowment loan, with interest, in nine years. Among institutions joining WSU in the Founding Circle are Harvard, Stanford, Arizona State and Dartmouth.

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**WSU SOLAR ENERGY PROJECTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Panels</th>
<th>Annual Savings</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<td><strong>WSU Davis</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Shepherd Union Building</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Swenson Gym</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Wildcat Village</strong></td>
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<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Get into weber**

**Nov. 15:** WSU men’s basketball vs. Utah State University, 7 p.m., Dee Events Center. Prices from $8-$25 and free to students with a Wildcard ID. Tickets: 1-800-WSU-TIKS or weberstatetickets.com.

**Nov. 17:** The Department of Performing Arts presents “Xanadu,” the roller-skiing, musical adventure about following your dreams, directed by Jim Christian, Val A. Browning Center Eccles Theater. Prices are $11/$8. Tickets/info: 1-800-WSU-TIKS or weberstatetickets.com.

**Nov. 19:** WSU women’s basketball vs. Brigham Young University, 7 p.m., Dee Events Center. Prices from $3-$7 and free to students with a Wildcard ID. Tickets/info: 1-800-WSU-TIKS or weberstatetickets.com.

**Dec. 4:** The Department of Performing Arts presents the Combined Choirs and Symphony Orchestra as they perform 500 years of popular Christmas music in two evening performances; 5:30 p.m. and 8 p.m., St. Joseph’s Catholic Church (349 24th Street, Ogden). Prices are $25 family/$7-$16. Tickets/info: 1-800-WSU-TIKS or weberstatetickets.com.