New Science Building Gets Go-Ahead from CSU Trustees

Architecturally Dramatic Project to Bring Science, Math Faculty Together Under One Roof for First Time

Nearly 90,000 square foot science building set for completion in January 2009 will provide a modern new home for interdisciplinary scholarship on campus, as well as room for hundreds of new students to pursue science and math studies at Cal State Northridge.

The project received an important go-ahead on February 1, when the CSU’s Board of Trustees approved schematics for the state-of-the-art structure, whose exterior will make a “dramatic architectural statement” in the university’s southeast sector, adding to a surge of new construction and vitality in that area.

Construction on the four-story project, to include relocation of the existing stellar observatory, is set to start in January 2007. The current science buildings were erected in the late 1950s.

Funded through the Proposition 55 state capital construction measure approved by voters in 2004, the $46 million-plus building will be located on East University Drive/Lindley Avenue, south of the Botanic Garden. The building’s main entry will open up to East University Drive and Sierra Way, a major campus pedestrian promenade.

College of Science and Mathematics Dean Jerry Stinner said the building’s innovative design will promote interdisciplinary research between CSUN biology and math faculty, who for the first time will be housed under the same roof.

“We hear a lot today about the importance of interdisciplinary research and that the real advances are occurring at the margins,” said Dean Stinner. “The increased interaction between the biology and math faculty will, I predict, result in increased collaborations in both teaching and scholarship.”

The math faculty, he noted, has for many years not been physically present in the science buildings. Interdisciplinary collaboration will be fostered not only through the physical location of work areas, but by providing common gathering areas for students and faculty. “We recognize that, increasingly, science and mathematics are a communal affair,” Stinner said.

The structure’s 15 “smart” lecture rooms—seating a total of 770 science and math students at a time in 11,580 square feet of space—will help fill a critical need for more room.

“These relatively large classrooms are absolutely necessary to our growth,” said Dean Stinner. The College of Science and Mathematics’ rapid growth student population—currently 2,872 full time equivalent students—-is up more than 20 percent from the 2000-01 academic year enrollment. For the two larger lecture rooms, accommodating 150 and 120 students, tiered seating has been planned. Dubbed “smart” because of their technological advantages, all the rooms provide for Internet hookup and multimedia presentations.

New Science Building continues on page 2.

Northridge Second in State’s Teacher Candidate Enrollment

Amid Warnings about Looming Teacher Shortage, CSUN Offers Many Pathways to a Credential

At a time when media headlines, think tanks and school districts are warning that California will be short roughly 100,000 teachers within the next 10 years, Cal State Northridge has been ranked second highest in the state in its enrollment of teaching candidates.

In its December 2005 report to the state Legislature, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing identified Cal State Northridge as a national leader in contributing new lifeblood to the ranks of teachers.

Through its programs, CSUN is working to ease the growing gap caused by attrition, an expanding student population, fewer college students entering teacher preparation programs and reduced class sizes.

Among California’s 88 public and private institutions with programs preparing students for teaching careers, CSUN placed just behind National University in its 2003-04 teacher preparation enrollment.

Of the 67,595 students enrolled statewide for 2003-04, CSUN produced 4,354 who completed one or more courses in a program including supervised student teaching or internship teaching.

“I am pleased there are so many students who want to study with us,” said Philip Rusche, dean of the Michael D. Eisner College of Education. “I think teacher preparation programs continue on page 2.

Connection

By Judy Nutter, Director of Community Relations

Taxes income tax time again and I want to remind you that Cal State Northridge is offering the VITA (The Wayne and Roberta Colmer Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program again this year. Actually, the program has been alive and well on the CSUN campus for 35 years. The VITA program began in 1966 with a Congressional appropriation. Cal State Northridge was the first university to institute the program in 1971. Since then, CSUN has assisted colleges across the nation in establishing their own VITA programs.

Cal State Northridge now maintains the largest and most successful VITA program in the United States. It partners with a number of community organizations to bring this service to the public, organizations such as Broad Spectrum Community Development Corporation, Prudential Financial, Valley Economic Development Corporation, Prudential Financial, Valley Economic Development Corporation and the Internal Revenue Service.

Community Connection continues on page 2.
National Educator Award Goes to Northridge Alumnus

State Schools Chief Calls Matthew McClenahan an 'Innovative, Inspiring Teacher'

Mathematics and social studies teacher Matthew McClenahan, a product of Cal State Northridge’s Michael D. Eisner College of Education, recently was awarded the prestigious Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award. During a surprise assembly at the school where he teaches—High Tech High School, on the Birmingham High School campus in Los Angeles Unified School District—McClenahan received the award from Jack O’Connell, the state superintendent of public instruction.

“Mr. McClenahan is an innovative, inspiring teacher who brings to the classroom a variety of pathways in technology that keep his students engaged and energized,” O’Connell said. “His teaching style is one of dedication, motivation, and expectation.”

New Science Building…

continued from page 1.

When added to the existing lecture rooms available in the current Science 1 building (Live Oak Hall), which will remain operational to serve the college’s instructional and research needs, students and faculty will have the use of nearly 335,000 square feet of space devoted to science and math learning.

As Academic Affairs planning team chaired by Associate Vice President for Academic Resources Spero Bowman worked with the college and the architects—Cannon Design—to contribute recommendations, guidance, and ideas for the building.

“We are very pleased with the design of the new building,” said the associate vice president. “Its exterior look will make a dramatic architectural statement.”

Academic buildings always are a design challenge, Bowman added. “New buildings are never big enough, nor equipped well enough to meet the requirements of the program or the occupants,” he said. “Beds are limited to those with a maximum gross income of $50,000. Special services are provided for senior citizens, non-English speaking and disabled individuals. Services are provided on a first-come, first-served basis. I would encourage anyone who is eligible to take advantage of this service. For exact locations of The Wayne Fusche and Roberta Colmer Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites and for dates and times of operation, call (818) 677-4519 or visit the Web site at www.csun.edu/vita.

Teacher Candidate Enrollment…

continued from page 1.

This year, approximately 260 CSUN students have taken the intensive training program that prepares them to work with most of the basic problems confronted by taxpayers. The students’ training sessions provide a thorough background in general tax law and in tax return preparation. VITA supervisors take a more advanced course, which includes an update on new tax laws and instruction on center operations. In addition, IRS agents serve as advisors at some VITA centers and review tax forms before they are returned to the clients.

CSUN students expect to serve about 1,000 people this year at 19 sites, including the College of Business and Economics, Room 2-111, on the CSUN campus.

Eligibility for this free program is limited to those with a maximum gross income of $50,000. Special services are provided for senior citizens, non-English speaking and disabled individuals. Services are provided on a first-come, first-served basis. I would encourage anyone who is eligible to take advantage of this service.

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Until next time…

Community Connection…

continued from page 1.

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Until next time…

Community Connection…
How Does the Garden Grow? With Sun, Soil, and Students

CSUN/Compton College Project Cultivates Scholars, Hope…and Some First-Rate Cucumbers

The undated ground outside his office window at Compton College was more than August Hoffman could resist. His hands itched to get at the soil and make something grow in it.

A part-time professor of developmental psychology at Cal State Northridge, Hoffman is a tenured professor at Compton. He also is a dirt-under-the-nails, seeds-in-the-back-pocket gardener’s gardener.

When he arrived at Compton College in 2000, he looked around and realized the place could use a bit of color. Hoffman went out, purchased plants and soon had flower beds making a show for passersby.

“Who is this crazy guy with the shovel and seedlings?” the students began to ask. They watched, asked questions, got interested and got involved. Determined to make a positive impact, Hoffman helped his psychology students begin transforming a plot near the main entrance of the college into a garden.

Five years later, a two-acre miracle is under student cultivation, bearing seasonal crops of lettuce, collards, onions, Swiss chard, artichokes, egg plant, cucumbers, tomatoes, mint, strawberries, corn, pumpkins, watermelon, peppers, herbs and flowers. About 60 fruit trees cover the area.

As a psychology professor, Hoffman said, “I believe one of the best ways teachers can teach is by applying theory to action.” His hypothesis was that gardening would improve Compton students’ self-esteem. The college’s transition rate into the CSU system was a “dismal” 6 percent when Hoffman began there. Currently facing an accreditation crisis, Compton is working to maintain its autonomy as an educational institution.

“We have engaged in empirical research during this project,” Hoffman said, “and have found that Compton students who garden show increases in their grade point averages. In some cases, their academic averages improved from a C average in psychology to a B+ or an A-.”

Hoffman saw a way to provide CSUN students with an rich educational experience as well.

After the project’s first year, he established a mentoring program in which CSUN students work with the Compton gardener/scholars, earning independent credits in his psychology and research methodology courses.

It is no ivory tower exercise. At 7 a.m. on Saturdays during each semester, about 15 Northridge undergraduates make the 41-mile trek south on the 405 to pull weeds, sprinkle water, rake leaves and plant flowers, developing with about as many Compton mentees the kind of shoulder-to-shoulder relationships that are deepened by warm sun and the smell of good soil.

“It’s the process of working together that creates this positive relationship, one that helps the Compton students make the transition to the CSU,” said Hoffman. The CSUN students provide direction, supervision and inspiration for their Compton gardening partners, about five of whom so far have transitioned to CSUN. Others have gone on to CSU Dominguez Hills or Long Beach State, and some have entered the UC system.

“Being in the garden together creates an informal link and camaraderie,” said former Hoffman student Julie Wallach, now a CSUN alumna but still a devoted garden project volunteer. “It breaks down the academic intimidation that says: ‘These people go to a university and I don’t.’ It breaks down racial barriers. It’s magical. And this happens every semester.”

With Hoffman and Wallach regularly emptying their pockets to buy gardening materials, more funding was needed. Wallach applied for and won a $2,000 grant from CSUN’s Community Service-Learning unit, and the first CSUN/Compton College gardening/psychology service-learning program was set up in spring 2000.

From their garden experience, for example, the CSUN and Compton students develop research projects with social/psychological themes. That research is submitted to undergraduate research conferences, Hoffman said, and the students work together to present their research at conference venues such as UCLA, UC Irvine, UC Riverside and Stanford University.

Another offshoot of the project is a tasty product called “From the Hood Vinaigrette Dressing,” made with herbs grown in the garden. “It can be bought now on campus,” said Hoffman. “We make it in the cafeteria.” He and his students are searching for a distributor. Vegetables grown in the garden are given to his students, who earn every carrot during hours of hoeing and weeding. “It’s an honor to work in the gardening program,” said Hoffman, twice named Outstanding Teacher of the Year at Compton. “It’s something in which the students and community take pride.”

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CSUN Alums Perez and Phelps Join Villaraigosa Team

Former UTLA and VICA Execs to Handle Civil Service, Business and Job Development Issues

Cal State Northridge alumni John Perez, former president of United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), and former Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA) executive David Phelps are two recent additions to the administration of Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

A 1968 cum laude history/geography graduate of CSUN, then San Fernando Valley State College, Perez was appointed by the mayor to the Los Angeles City Board of Civil Service Commissioners and confirmed by the Los Angeles City Council in December 2005.

Perez has served on UTLA’s Board of Directors almost continuously since 1978, and completed a three-year term as UTLA president. A social studies teacher at Roosevelt High School for 21 years, he received his teaching credential from Cal State Northridge in 1969.

“I am very proud that CSUN gave our community as a teacher and union leader for 36 years,” said Perez, who said he is equally proud of his two new commission appointments.

As vice president of both the California Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO and the California Labor Federation AFL-CIO, Perez has been an active advocate for California teachers.

David Phelps, a 2000 CSUN graduate in political science, recently joined the mayor’s business team in charge of economic development issues for the West Valley, including CSUN.

Phelps previously was VICA’s director of government relations. Currently pursuing his master’s degree in public administration at CSUN’s College of Extended Learning, Phelps was active in campus affairs during his undergraduate years, serving as an Associate Student body president in the 1999–2000 academic year.

As a member of the mayor’s team, Phelps works on real estate development projects. He also focuses on the expansion of employment opportunities and on taxation policy. Mayor Villaraigosa’s West Valley economic priorities include Warner Center and the industrial sector in Chatsworth, Phelps said.

“Warner Center represents the future of new urban (mixed-use) development along transportation corridors like the Orange Line,” he said. “Supporting the industrial infrastructure and preserving land in communities like Chatsworth is also key to creating job opportunities in manufacturing.”

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February 2006 · Community @ CSUN · California State University, Northridge
Art and Exhibits

For gallery info, call (818) 677-2156. Main gallery hours: Mon. through Sat. 11 a.m.–4 p.m. Admission is free unless specified. For library exhibits, call (818) 677-2285.

Track & Field

3/4 All-comers
3/15 Northridge Relays 11 a.m.
3/16 Northridge Relays 9 a.m.
3/17 Northridge Relays 9 a.m.
3/18 Northridge Relays 9 a.m.

Women’s Volleyball

3/3 Long Beach State 7 p.m.
3/4 UC San Diego 7:30 p.m.
3/7 Quincy 7 p.m.

Cinematheque

Screenings are free and take place in the Alan and Elaine Arner Theater, on the first floor of Manzanita Hall at the southwest corner of campus. For more info, call (818) 677-3192 or see www.cinematheque.csu.edu/html/events.html.

“The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari”

Directed by Robert Wiene.
Mon., Feb. 27, 3 p.m.

“Reservoir Dogs”

Directed by Quentin Tarantino.
Tue., Feb. 28, 7 p.m.

“El Mariachi”

Directed by Robert Rodriguez.
Wed., Mar. 1, 7 p.m.

“Once Upon a Time in the West”

Directed by Sergio Leone.
Thu., Mar. 2, 7 p.m.

“Failure to Launch”

Sneak preview.
Starring Sarah Jessica Parker, Julianne Moore, and others.

“Casablanca”

Directed by Michael Curtiz.
Mon., Mar. 6, 2 p.m.

“The Driver”

Directed by Walter Hill.
Wed., Mar. 8, 7 p.m.

“The Clockmaker”

Directed by Bertrand Tavernier.
Thu., Mar. 9, 7 p.m.

“Grand Illusion”

Directed by Jean Renoir.
Mon., Mar. 13, 2 p.m.

“Young stockings”

Directed by Orson Welles.
Thu., Mar. 16, 7 p.m.

“The Shape of Things”

Directed by Jean-Francois Richet.
Fri., Mar. 17, 8 p.m.

Women’s Art of Anatolia

“Winter Sky Show”

Fri., Mar. 3, 6 p.m. and 8 p.m.

“Winter Sky Show” and “The Voyager Encounters”

Fri., Mar. 3, 7 p.m.

“Winter Sky Show” and “The Worlds of the Outer Solar System”

Fri., Mar. 10, 7 p.m.

“Spring Sky Show” and “The Latest from NASA’s Spitzer Space Telescope: From Planets to Deep Space”

Fri., Mar. 17, 7 p.m.

Men’s Basketball

3/17 Loyola Marymount 2 p.m.
3/18 Loyola Marymount 1 p.m.
3/20 Darmouth 2 p.m.

Men’s Basketball

3/2 Cal Poly 7:05 p.m.
3/4 UCSCB 4:05 p.m.

Softball

3/13 Quinnipac 1 p.m.
3/13 Quinnipac 3 p.m.
3/25 UCLA 1 p.m.

Women’s Tennis

3/12 San Francisco 11 a.m.
3/14 Gonzaga 2 p.m.
3/19 Wichita State 11 a.m.
3/20 Illinois-Chicago 2 p.m.

Etiwanda Avenue Road Closure

In response to a community request to reduce campus traffic through the residential neighborhood north of Halsted Street, Etiwanda Avenue has been closed to through traffic at Halsted. The road closure is permanent. Drivers who wish to access the campus from Reseda Boulevard may use Plummer, Victoria, Prairie or Nordhoff Streets. Questions? Call CSUN Facilities Planning at (818) 677-2561.