

Manley Memorial Trust funds lighting lab for performing arts

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Alfred University has received a \$25,000 grant from the F.T. and Anna C. Manley Memorial Trust to create a lighting laboratory which will complement facilities in the existing Miller Performing Arts Center and the planned proscenium theater which will adjoin the Miller building. The grant will make it possible to purchase specialized equipment to establish a full suite of stage lighting fixtures at approximately one-fourth scale. The lighting laboratory will serve as a functional classroom for teaching and training theater students in lighting technology and professional practices, using both contemporary and historic lighting equipment. The lab, to be known as the "F.T. and Anna C. Manley Lighting Lab," will also provide a flexible space where staff, students, instructors, and performers can experiment with stage and costume design concepts. Students will be able to practice working with light beam angles and direction, as well as learn color-mixing techniques and how lighting interacts with different costume textures, materials, and set designs. "This is an important resource for students and faculty and a strategic addition to our new Miller Theater complex," said AU Provost Suzanne Buckley. She added she is grateful to the Manley Trust for this contribution to the Alfred University academic programs. Alfred University Technical Director Zachary Hamm explains that one of the major benefits of the new laboratory will be that lighting design classes will have their own space, separate from the theater areas. Currently, the lighting classes take place in the actual performance areas, which means when shows are in progress typically a number of weeks each semester the lighting students cannot easily experiment and maintain practice set-ups. The new laboratory will make it easier for students to "work and develop creatively," said Hamm. It will also benefit costume design, he said, allowing students to view full costumes under various lighting situations, helping to improve their color work. In addition, costume design students will be able to easily photograph their work for their portfolios, said Hamm. The Manley grant includes the purchase of one or two automated lights, said Hamm. Automated lighting is becoming more and more prevalent in theaters across the country, he explained, and Alfred University theater students and productions will benefit from the use of these automated systems. "Since I came to Alfred I focused on building and restructuring our Design-Tech program which is involved with theater as well as dance. Thanks to full support from our Lisa Lantz (chair of the Performing Arts Division) and collaboration with Hamm, some of our ideas are materializing," said Marketa Fantova, assistant professor of theater design. "A lighting design lab will help us train lighting designers not only in a state-of-the-art facility, but also with state-of-the-art equipment. I am thrilled the grant came through." The Division of Performing Arts, within Alfred University's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, is housed within the Miller Performing Arts Center and offers a major in theater and minors in theater, music, and dance. "Our enrollment in performing arts courses is growing," noted Mary McGee, dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. "Over 200 students each year are choosing from a rich selection of courses ranging from the history and interpretation of theater to more technical classes focused on acting, direction, and design. The new lab will enhance the technical aspects of all of these programs." Alfred University's performance season is enriched each year by three, faculty-directed plays; two faculty-student collaborative dance concerts; and a guest artist production. The Performing Arts Division also regularly produces a number of student-directed plays, including one-act plays and senior theses projects. Every year, students have the opportunity to learn from and work alongside visiting artists; some 15 professional artists are sponsored each year by the Performing Arts Division as part of the University's dedication to the arts. Students from any of Alfred University's four undergraduate schools are welcome to participate in performing arts productions as performers, musicians, or set costume, or lighting designers. Students and faculty from the School of Art and Design will use the new Manley Lighting Lab for training and experimentation relevant to gallery lighting and lighting as art. The lighting lab will also be available for theater equipment workshops for local theater groups who use Alfred University performance spaces for community productions. The C.D. Smith III Theatre, located in the Miller Performing Arts Center, is home to most of Alfred University's performances and seats 200. The opening of a new, 500-seat proscenium theater, currently under construction, will augment the performance space at the University. This new theater, to be completed by the fall of 2010, will provide the opportunity for more performances and a greater variety of stages on campus. Student learning will be enhanced by the opportunity to work and train in different kinds of performance spaces. The addition of the Manley Lighting Lab will benefit students, faculty, and the arts at Alfred University as this gift builds on the University's commitment to the arts and arts education. This lighting lab will have an immediate impact on the quality of experience for design and production students, performers, and audiences, and is a significant contribution to Alfred University's Performing Arts programs.

and facilities, which continue to expand. Alfred University's commitment to the arts was recently recognized in the second edition of "Creative Colleges: A Guide for Student Actors, Artists, Dancers Musicians and Writers" in which Alfred University was named as one of the top 200 programs in the nation for creative students.