

Alfred University campus to undergo major changes

8/29/05

Alfred University will start work within a month on a project that will see the landmark South Hall, built in 1908, converted to a 90-bed residence hall. And that's just the start of the construction projects planned for the current academic year, all made possible by the University's \$150 million "Building on Excellence" capital campaign. To date, the University has raised about \$115 million toward that goal. Michael Neiderbach, director of Capital Projects and Legal Affairs for Alfred University, said two projects - the Cohen Studios and the Daggett Equestrian Center - will be wrapped up in the coming weeks, but a total of four construction projects are scheduled to start during this school year. "This is a really exciting project," said Neiderbach of the South Hall renovation. "The architect, Mark Pandolf of Plan Architectural Studio, P.C. in Rochester, came up with a really nice solution that will allow us to convert the original portion of the building to suites. The addition that includes the gymnasium will be converted to paired bedrooms with a bath between, all surrounding a two-story atrium, but the historic exterior of the building will be preserved." Life Trustee Arthur Powell, a 1943 alumnus and former chairman of the Board of Trustees, and Lea R. Powell, also a former trustee who with her husband received an honorary degree from AU in 1995, made the leadership gift for the South Hall project. Appropriately enough, South Hall was used as a temporary student activities center while Powell Campus Center, made possible by an earlier gift from the Powells, was built. Also scheduled to start this fall is renovation of another venerable academic building, Allen Hall. Built in 1922, Allen Hall was home to the School of Nursing until it closed in the early 1990s. It now houses the Division of Modern Languages. Renovation plans call for two classrooms, a language laboratory that may also be used as a computer lab, and Study Abroad offices to be located on the first floor; faculty offices and two additional classrooms on the second floor, and a conference room on the third floor. Handicapped access to the building will be improved with a new interior elevator and outside ramps, said Neiderbach, and new heating, plumbing and electrical systems will be installed. While the interior of the building will be entirely new, the exterior will retain its early 20th century character. Architect for the Allen Hall project is Trevor Harrison of Harrison, Bridges & Associates of Pittsford. Trustee Robert Perlman, a 1964 alumnus of AU, and his wife, Lynn, are donating \$1 million to the project, and have challenged the University to match that with other gifts. Next spring, Neiderbach anticipates breaking ground on a Herrick Library renovation that will see the 50-year-old building updated and refitted for use well into the 21st century. Libraries have traditionally been gathering places for students, but their expectations of what they will find inside and how they will use it have changed over the past several years as libraries become centers for access to digital resources as well as the more traditional printed materials. Steve Crandall, director of Herrick Library, said that among the new features will be a caf on the first floor, and a "learning commons," an area that allows for interactive learning experiences for groups of students. Both the space and the furnishings will be flexible to accommodate groups of various sizes. A lounge area on the first floor will give students another place to gather informally. The circulation/help desk will be relocated, and administrative office spaces will be moved as well. Neiderbach said the front entrance of the library will be redone with improved handicapped access. To make room for the new gathering spaces, compact shelving for the printed collection will be added on the ground floor and first floor. A study room, with 24-hour access, will be created on the ground floor. On the second floor, additional space for the University's special collections will be created. Throughout the building, the appearance will be refreshed with new lights, ceiling tiles and flooring, said Neiderbach. The project also includes replacement of heating and plumbing systems, and repairs to the masonry exterior. Nicholas Lindabury, a partner with QPK Design of Syracuse, is the architect for the Herrick Library project. A bequest from the estate of John Herrick, for whose family the library is named, will provide much of the funding necessary for the project, with the Emerson Foundation of Auburn, NY, also contributing \$500,000 through a challenge grant that the University matched with donations from other sources. Nearing completion is the Daggett Equestrian Center on Lake Road, about five minutes' drive from campus. The new home for AU's 20-year-old equestrian program provides stalls for 50 horses, including those owned by the University and those owned by students. It has an indoor arena and two outdoor arenas, as well as classrooms for the Equestrian Studies minor program. Neiderbach said horses are already being stabled there, and the rest of the building will be ready for full use in September. Trustee Robert Daggett, a 1981 alumnus of AU, and Catherine Daggett, a 1958 alumna, made the leadership gift for the project. Also nearing completion is the Cohen Studios on Main Street in the Village of Alfred that will provide a new home for the School of Art & Design's unique Freshman Foundation program for students who are seeking a BFA degree from AU. The 8,000-square-foot building that is going up behind the

former Zeta Beta Tau fraternity house will be ready for use by October, Neiderbach said. The exterior of the former ZBT house, which dates back to the 1830s or 1840s, is being restored, with the space being made available for possible commercial use. Both the new studios and the restoration of the ZBT house were made possible by gift from Trustee Michele Cohen and Marty Cohen, whose son, Adam, received his BFA degree from AU in 2003. Another former fraternity also being restored to original condition is the Delta Sigma Phi house on the corner of Main and Pine streets in the Village. The University acquired the house from the fraternity, and former trustee Jon Tabor led a effort among the Delta Sigma Phi brothers to raise the funds to convert it into the Fasano Welcome Center for the University. The building honors Joseph Fasano, a 1954 graduate of AU, Delta Sigma Phi brother and former member of its alumni board; his wife, Ann Saunders Fasano, a 1953 alumna of AU; and their son, the late Patrick Fasano, who was a member of the Class of 1980, as well as a Delta Sigma Phi brother. Elizabeth Corbin, an architect who specializes in historic restorations and whose father Robert Corbin is a 1956 alumnus of AU, is working with the University on the project, which is scheduled for completion in May 2006. Exterior work, including painting, will be done this fall, with interior work occurring over the winter months. Still on the drawing board is a \$10 million addition to the Miller Performing Arts Center that will add a 450-seat proscenium theater to the award-winning facility. The new theater is a gift from Trustee Marlin Miller, a 1954 graduate of AU who is a former chairman of the Board of Trustees, and his wife Ginger. Neiderbach anticipates work on the theater will begin in November 2006 and completed by the summer of 2008. Also scheduled to begin within the year is the new building for the Museum of Ceramic Art at Alfred. A combination of state and private funds will be used to cover construction costs for the Museum, which will be built on the site where Davis Gym now stands, creating a cluster of arts facilities at the north end of campus. Architect for both new theater and the Museum is Bruce Wood, a partner in the Boston architectural firm of Kalman, McKinnell and Wood. He designed the original Miller Performing Arts Center, which won two national awards. The Millers also gave a \$25 million endowment to the School of Art & Design, and that, in turn, led to a \$10 million commitment of state funds for a new building for the School, which is part of the statutory (state supported) unit at Alfred University. The New York State Senate allocated the funds through its higher education capital projects program, even though State Senator Patricia McGee, who had been advocating for the funds to be allocated, became gravely ill and died before the state budget was finalized last spring. As a tribute to the late Senator McGee, Majority Leader Joseph A. Bruno and her colleagues in the Senate included the funds for the new building. Alfred University President Charles M. Edmondson said the University intends to name the new building in McGee's honor.