

Alfred University dedicates addition to McMahon Engineering Building

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From left, William Heaney, Alastair Cormack, and Tom Hinman

Alfred University Thursday afternoon dedicated an addition to the McMahon Engineering Building that contains some of the most advanced analytical equipment in the nation.

Located within the \$9 million “infill” it was built in the courtyard of the existing building the addition contains an array of analytical equipment capable of characterizing materials while they are at elevated temperatures, rather than after they’ve cooled, giving researchers better information about how the materials function in at high temperatures. Collectively, the suites of equipment make up the Center for High-Temperature Materials Characterization.

Dedication of the new space, and the Center, marks the end of a journey that began more than 10 years ago, when representatives from Alfred University and Corning Incorporated approached State Senator Catharine Young with a request for funding, said Thomas Hinman, a trustee of Alfred University and a senior vice president at Corning prior to his retirement. The University and Corning believed the Center would have great value for industries in New York State, and for the Inamori School of Engineering, part of the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University, where the next generation of scientists and engineers is being educated.

“Senator Young went to bat for us, and we got \$4 million in 2008 to start the Center,” said Hinman. The University secured another \$2.9 million in 2012 through the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council, part of Empire State Development, and again Senator Young was an advocate for the project.

“This initiative has already had a significant benefit,” said Hinman, noting that the Center has been integral to the receipt of \$7 million in state and federal research funding since 2011, and more than 30 companies have done work through the Center.

“Beyond the economic benefit,” said Hinman, has been the benefit to the students. As an alumnus, he said he knows one of the “hallmarks of an Alfred University education is that our students come out prepared to do hands-on work, and this is adding to their capabilities.”

The Center and the School of Engineering also contribute to the economic vitality of the area,” said Hinman. “On behalf of the Board of Trustees and Alfred University, I want to extend our heartfelt thanks to Senator Young for her

help.”

Senator Young, who is chair of the Senate Finance Committee, was detained in Albany by negotiations on the state budget. She sent William Heaney, her community liaison, in her stead.

“New York State has long been a leader in the glass and ceramics industry,” said Heaney, “and Alfred University and the New York State College of Ceramics have been fundamental” in the development of the industry. “You are educating the next generation, and pioneering technology” that leads to the development of new products.

He said Senator Young asked him to convey how pleased she was to be able to help secure “the resources needed (for the College) to continue to innovate...Here, at Alfred University, the future is now.”