

Article - Ozarka College to break ground on Student Services Center in early fall

Posted At : July 31, 2013 1:11 PM | Posted By : Jason Lawrence

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When current and prospective students visit Ozarka College next year, they will not have to walk from building to building to take advantage of the many student services offered at the growing technical college.

Ozarka is on track to break ground on a new one-stop Student Services Center on its Melbourne campus in early fall. The two-story 18,560 square-foot building will house all student services, various individual and group study areas, community meeting rooms, a video conferencing center, additional banquet space for college and community use, and a state of the art culinary learning lab.

The first floor will include a student commons area, food court, two community rooms, computer workstations and a kitchen, along with several offices. The second floor will have a student success center focused on tutoring and career development services, an open computer lab, two conference rooms, testing center and additional office spaces.

A beautifully landscaped exterior courtyard plaza will become the focal point of outdoor activities on the campus. A café and catering services will be available.

Currently, all student services departments are located in various buildings around campus. Student services includes admissions and records, counseling and advising services, financial aid, veteran services, career services and testing services, as well as TRiO Student Support Services and the Career Pathways Initiative.

Architects Wittenberg Delony & Davidson of Fayetteville have worked closely with college administration, faculty, staff, students and community representatives to create a modern, high-tech, student- and community- centered building. The design phase has progressed over the past few months to ensure the college has the most efficient and effective design possible. The design and blueprint phase is expected to be completed this month and out for bid from contractors in early August.

Earlier this year, the Ozarka College Board of Trustees sold approximately \$2.9 million in bonds to finance construction of the Student Services Center.

"The center will become the hub of activity on campus," said Dr. Richard Dawe, college president. "There will be many features for the community to use and enjoy, including a café and meeting space. Most significantly, it will provide a state of the art facility to serve all Ozarka student needs during their learning journey."

While recently approved tax revenues provided by the city of Melbourne will provide for most of the bond payment to fund construction of the building, Dr. Dawe said Ozarka would need additional funds for furnishings, equipment and technology in order to take the project to the next level. Dawe further commented, "We are so proud, and appreciative, that Melbourne citizens so clearly see the power of higher education and have committed to our students and their future success."

"We plan to launch a capital campaign this summer to raise the additional funds needed to enhance our student services areas in order to make a significant impact on student success at Ozarka College."

Large-scale renderings are currently available in the lobby of the John E. Miller Education Complex on the Melbourne campus, and there are plans to ask area businesses to place them in their locations so everyone will have the opportunity to see the design. The community is invited to stop by to view them.