

Higher education construction progress

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WEST MICHIGAN – Despite a tough market for the construction industry, higher education remains a significant market as more and more projects move forward.

This summer season has been a time of renovations, updates and major construction projects for some institutions. Many building projects are being built in a sustainable way for LEED certification or standards and constructed with current and future technology in mind.

Photo Gallery

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“On-demand lighting, heating, hot water and LEED certification are all becoming aspects that higher education institutions are reviewing and trying to incorporate into their construction projects,” said Mark O’Connell, VP for administration and finance at Kellogg Community College in Battle Creek.

In other cases, the increasing concern over energy is driving decisions.

“We have focused a lot on being a good steward of our resources by saving energy whenever we can. From floor coverings to paints to electrical to HVAC, we look at ways to use products that are green,” said Jim Brown, project manager for Hope College’s physical plant.

O’Connell said construction projects need to be flexible because of the increase in technology usage and dramatic changes expected in the future. Classrooms must allow the use of a variety of technologies even if those technologies are not included in the building’s initial plan.

“If classroom spaces and general purpose/meeting spaces are to last for several decades, flexibility must be included in the design stages of planning new construction/remodeling projects,” O’Connell told Knowledge.

“Flexibility of spaces must address multi-purpose use and therefore flexible layouts and furniture that moves easily.”

KCC is currently programming a Phase I renovation of its Lane-Thomas Building on the main campus on North Avenue in Battle Creek. The goal is to move the KCC bookstore in by May 2011. Advanced programming of KCC’s student center is the next renovation project planned, O’Connell said.



Higher education has been one bright spot in the current construction market. Active projects include, from the top, a new student services addition at Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Calvin College Covenant Fine Arts Center, Davenport Snodden Center and student housing at Western Michigan University.

approximately 600 students. Integrated Architecture was the architect, Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber served as the civil engineer and Pioneer Construction handled construction manager duties, while Rockford Construction Co. was the construction manager for the Learning/Dining Commons part of the project.

Western Michigan University is starting construction in May for a new student apartment complex between Knollwood Avenue and Kehrman Hall, according to Pete Strazdas, associate VP of facilities management at WMU. The project will add living space and parking for more than 300 students in four new buildings and is expected to be completed by August 2011. The construction of the new Sangren Hall is also underway located in front of the existing Sangren Hall.

Many traveling the East Beltline in Grand Rapids have probably noticed the major renovation and refurbishment of Calvin College's Fine Arts Center. The east side of the center is being expanded by about 30,000 square feet

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Numerous renovation projects are taking place this summer on the Hope College campus including rewiring of houses, bathroom remodels, roof replacements and the remodeling of Durfee, Gilmore and Phelps residence halls, according to Brown.

The renovation of Hope's Health Clinic at the Dow Center will add 2,400 square feet and provide more room for storage, treatment and waiting rooms, nursing offices and biohazard waste storage. GMB Architecture + Engineering is the architect for the project and Elzinga & Volkers serves as the construction manager for the Dow project, which also includes renovation of Dow's athletic training room. Computer and engineering labs have also been renovated.

The largest, most visible construction project for Grand Valley State University is the Marietta Pew Library, being built to replace the existing library and move university administration offices and other functions into the current library, according to Jim Bachmeier, VP of finance and administration at GVSU.

The \$65-\$70 million library project is the university's largest in recent years, although several projects in the \$50 million range have been completed, Bachmeier said. Groundbreaking for the 140,000-square-foot library will take place this fall. Berkley, Mich.-based SHW Group is the architect and engineer; Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber Inc. has served as the civil engineer; and Pioneer Construction is the construction manager.

GVSU will also build a new Seidman College of Business on its downtown Grand Rapids campus with an expected completion date of 2013. Bachmeier said the \$35 million project is currently in the early design phase. Integrated Architecture is the architect with New York City-based Robert M. Stern and Associates serving as the designer.

A new \$50,000 residence complex will open this fall at GVSU, including a student apartment and dining complex on the south end of the Allendale campus. The project includes three brick buildings and will house

with new academic facilities, classrooms, studios, a student lounge and music instrument storage, according to Henry DeVries, VP with Calvin College.

"The music and English departments – the two academic tenants of the facility – have grown over the years," DeVries said, noting a larger piano garage and music library were needed. Calvin's art gallery will also be moved from the basement of the Spoelhoff Center to a more visible and accessible location in the new space. Holland-based GMB Architecture + Engineers is the architect for the project and Rockford Construction is the general contractor for the \$15 million project.

Kalamazoo Valley Community College broke ground a year ago for a 30,000-square-foot addition to its Texas Township campus that is expected to be completed by December 2010. Michael Collins, VP for college and student relations at KVCC, said the project includes an expansion of faculty offices, a new multi-purpose science laboratory and the renovations of physics and geology labs.

"This will consolidate all student services functions, administration and student success center," Collins said. Kalamazoo-based Eckert Wordell Architecture was the architect and Miller-Davis Co. serves as the construction manager for the \$12 million project.

Across town, Kalamazoo College recently announced the construction of a new building at the corner of Monroe and Academy to house its new Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership. The current building at that location, known as the Stryker Center, will make way for the new building, said Jeffrey Palmer, media relations director at K College. Construction will begin sometime in summer 2011. The college doesn't have a cost estimate for the center since architectural plans are still being created.

Calcedonia-based Davenport University will finish construction on the new Robert W. Sneden Center this fall, according to Jim Bescy, VP of facilities management at Davenport. The 41,000-square-foot project includes seven high-tech classrooms, a 230-seat auditorium, boardroom, conference rooms, faculty and staff offices and student services.

The project was possible because of a \$2.5 million donation from the M.E. Davenport Foundation, the largest charitable gift in the university's history, Bescy said. Rockford Construction was the construction manager for the \$8 million project, which was designed by Integrated Architecture.

Grand Rapids Community College is finalizing the renovation of the Ford Fieldhouse Arena, including lighting, acoustics and painting in a \$1 million project, according to Jim Van Dokkumburg, director of facilities planning and projects for GRCC. In a \$2 million project, GRCC is also renovating Sneden Hall on its east campus, the former Davenport University campus in Grand Rapids. That project includes the renovation of 25 classrooms for existing GRCC programs such as social sciences, psychology and criminal justice.

Van Dokkumburg said GRCC also finished the schematic design phase for Warren Hall, a former lumber baron's home near Sneden Hall. That house will be renovated into faculty offices in this \$2 million project.

Aquinas College is in the middle of a 56,000-square-foot Phase I project at the Peter and Carolyn Sturus Sports and Fitness Center, to replace its former fieldhouse along Fulton Avenue. The first phase includes a new fitness center, hall of fame, new main competition arena with telescopic bleacher seating and mezzanine, an athletic training facility, three new classrooms, locker rooms, two elevators and a Saints room for events and conferencing with views of the arena and future multipurpose center, according to Greg Meyer, associate VP of

Advancement at Aquinas. Rockford Construction is the general contractor on the project, which was designed by Integrated Architecture.

A groundbreaking date for Phase II of the project, encompassing 69,690 square feet, has yet to be released. It will feature a multipurpose center with a 200-meter NCAA certified track; practice areas for baseball, softball, soccer and lacrosse; courts for intramural sports and spectator seating for 300. Once fully completed, the project is expected to cost about \$12 million.

Aquinas is also eyeing a future renovation of its Albertus Magnus Science Hall, but a timeline for that project has not yet been set.

Ferris State University is working on final details before beginning a \$30 million renovation project involving the former Federal Building in downtown Grand Rapids, a facility it plans to use for Kendall College of Art and Design programs. The college is working with The Christman Co. and architects Tower Pinkster on the project.

Further north, FSU planned a grand opening of the East Campus Apartments on its Big Rapids campus, which will provide accommodations for nearly 300 students. The \$22 million project involved Granger Construction Co. and Tower Pinkster.

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