

## **Sheridan College receives an additional \$1.5 million from Whitney Benefits for campus center**

Whitney Benefits Finance Committee Chair, Peter Schoonmaker, announced today a commitment of \$1.5 million to Sheridan College in support of the renovation and expansion of the Thorne-Rider Campus Center and the creation of an outdoor landscaped plaza connecting the Campus Center and the Whitney Building. One-half, or \$750,000, of the gift will support the building itself and the additional \$750,000 will support the plaza. Beginning with a pledge for \$2.5 million from the Griffith Foundation last fall, and including other foundation and individual gifts and Sheridan College's contribution to the project, the total amount available for the \$11.7 million facility project has reached \$10.4 million.

The current 16,000 square foot building will be completely renovated and 12,000 square feet will be added to the campus center. Food service will be organized food court style, with six open preparation and service areas, a pizza and coffee shop, and flexible furniture in various styles. The dining area will seat up to 500 people on the upper level and will support the plan for 750 students living on campus within the next decade plus about 250 commuter students and employees daily. Other features in the space include an activities room, multi-purpose meeting rooms, a Veterans Center, and campus safety offices.

“We have known for years that learning doesn't just occur in the classroom,” said Dr. Stephen Holst, Whitney Benefits Treasurer. “In this day and age, we must look holistically at education and recognize the value in engagement of all types.”

The Thorne-Rider Campus Center is located at the hub of the campus and the new design encourages everyone on campus to spend some time there. The building layout is permeable to encourage people to go through the building instead of around it when navigating the campus. Trustees approved the project with the construction bid date in early April, and construction to begin in early May. The renovated and expanded Thorne-Rider Campus Center will be open for students and the community by fall semester 2014. Fundraising will continue for the remaining \$1.3 million needed for the Thorne-Rider Campus Center. The plaza will be completed with the gift from Whitney Benefits.

JJ McGinnis, Sheridan College Student Senate President, said, “This project will transform student life at Sheridan College. Students consider the entire experience when they make a decision about where to go to college. This center will set us apart from anywhere else in the country.”

Whitney Benefits has played an important role in establishing and helping grow the Sheridan College campus and its programs. This includes the first gift of land on which the campus is built and which now encompasses 140+ acres – all given by Whitney Benefits. In total, Whitney Benefits' generosity and gifts to Sheridan College exceed \$47 million. Whitney Benefits was created under the Last Will and Testament of Edward A. Whitney, a Sheridan County resident, who passed away in 1917. For more information about Whitney Benefits, please visit their website at [www.whitneybenefits.org](http://www.whitneybenefits.org).