

Whitney Benefits and Sheridan College announce \$25.3 million investment

Whitney Benefits trustees and Sheridan College trustees announced today an unprecedented plan, including the largest gift in the history of the college - a \$25.3 million commitment to Sheridan College from Whitney Benefits, to continue to build capacity for additional students, bolstering the Sheridan County economy.

“We have looked at the data for some time now and it is clear that Sheridan College plays a significant role in the stability of our local economy,” said Whitney Benefits’ Vice President Roy Garber. “The strategic plan adopted by the College trustees back in 2010 is on-course and we are focused on helping more students succeed.”

The commitment from Whitney Benefits to the College includes the necessary \$1.3 million required to complete the \$8 million Mars Agriculture Center and Science Center renovation project, \$16 million to support the renovation and expansion of the fine and performing arts wing of the original Whitney Building, \$2 million to support infrastructure and parking improvements on the main campus and \$6 million for approximately half of the Tech Center renovation and expansion project.

“Currently, we serve over 2,000 students per semester,” said SC President Dr. Paul Young. “This plan and infusion of energy and capital will significantly aid in our efforts to grow the academic areas that align with the local job sectors experiencing growth and positive change.”

The renovation and expansion of the fine and performing arts wing located at the north end of the current Whitney Building, referred to as the Whitney Center for the Arts, will include space to enrich the learning experience for all students.

“This is absolutely necessary and has been for decades,” said NWCCD Trustee Norleen Healy. “I have been involved with the College for over 30 years and enhancements in these areas have always been on the list. State-of-the-art recital halls, practice areas and performance spaces are paramount for the performing arts in order for us to compete regionally and nationally.”

In addition to improvements to learning spaces for music and other performing arts, the Whitney gift will provide flexible, creative space to support the fine arts programs including wood and metal fabrication labs, foundry space for pouring aluminum, bronze and eventually iron, and multi-use exhibition space, which will catapult Sheridan College’s Fine Arts Program to the forefront of regional programs, Young said.

“These plans and ideas go back decades,” said Whitney Benefits Trustee Stephen Holst. “It is a testament to the stakeholders of this fine institution that we will see them come to fruition.”

The Mars Agriculture Center will be a 13,000 - 15,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art facility, and will be located on the south end of Sheridan College’s main campus, adjacent and connected to the existing Science Center, which will also receive upgrades during the project. The Center will focus on providing real-world experiences for students. In addition to high-tech classrooms, a herbarium, a greenhouse, and a soils and agroecology lab, the new center will include a computerized commodities trading floor classroom to support students studying in the ag-business program.

“The real benefit to laying out a plan like this is that the dollars committed can be leveraged time and time again,” said Whitney Benefits Trustee Everett McGlothlin. “We are hopeful that others will continue to support the students of Sheridan College in order to continue the positive momentum and help change lives.”

The \$6 million earmarked for the expansion and renovation of the Technical Education Center is approximately half of the total needed to provide a healthier, safer and more secure facility for students to gain vocational

degrees and employable skills. College officials plan to request the additional funds from the State of Wyoming during the 2016 legislative session.

“Our strategic direction focuses on doing our part to help Wyoming and the nation as a whole to prosper. We are so very fortunate to have many, many people here who believe in this goal and are willing to take action on behalf of the future generations who will continue to benefit from their efforts for years to come,” said Young. “Thank you to Whitney Benefits.”

The next steps for the Mars Agriculture Center and Whitney Center for the Arts projects include selecting architects and construction managers, which College officials hope to have completed by early fall. The design phases will likely last through this fall, with a ground breaking as early in spring 2015 as weather will allow. College officials hope to have the projects completed by late summer, 2016. For updates regarding these projects, please visit www.sheridan.edu/construction.



Sheridan College art instructor Tawni Shuler (left) works with SC Dental Hygiene student, Quintin Pegar, during a Drawing I class last semester.



Sheridan College Main Campus