PENN STATE

Wilkes-Barre

academic commons
As we approach Penn State Wilkes-Barre’s ninetieth anniversary in 2006, we are excited to announce our Capital Campaign for the Academic Commons. This new building will provide a sophisticated center for research, learning, and academic support for area students. While most of our students start their academic programs at our campus and then move to University Park or other Penn State locations to complete degrees, many local students are now able to complete seven baccalaureate degree programs and seven associate degree programs at Penn State Wilkes-Barre. All students receive an outstanding education at our campus. However, the facilities in which that education takes place have significant space and technological limitations. The enhancements and expanded spaces proposed for the new Academic Commons will provide greatly improved facilities for our library, classrooms, and academic support services.

To accomplish our goal of opening the Academic Commons on our ninetieth anniversary of service to the people of this area, we ask for your philanthropic support. We turn to our campus community, local businesses, friends, foundations, and alumni to raise the $8 million for this project. Together, we have a great opportunity to positively influence the education of students from our communities by improving the facilities in which they pursue a Penn State degree. We thank you for your generosity in supporting Penn State students by contributing to the Academic Commons at Penn State Wilkes-Barre.

Kicking off the Campaign for the Academic Commons (l to r): Jane Kanyock, director of institutional advancement; William Davidowitz, chair; Robert Fortinsky, honorary chair; and Mary Hines, campus executive officer.
Meeting the Educational Needs of a Growing Community

Penn State Wilkes-Barre has provided a high-quality education for commuter students from the greater Wilkes-Barre area since 1916. Today, we offer the first two years of most Penn State majors, seven associate degree programs, and seven baccalaureate degrees in these majors: Business; Administration of Justice; Electrical Engineering Technology; English; Information Sciences and Technology; Letters, Arts, and Sciences; and Surveying. A dual degree in Surveying and Civil Engineering can also be started at Penn State Wilkes-Barre.

Our Challenge

Our mission requires us to maintain superior educational standards while meeting the diverse educational needs of current and future students. As Penn State Wilkes-Barre continually addresses the academic needs of our students, we must continually upgrade and expand our academic programs and services and improve our facilities.

As a commuter campus of the University’s Commonwealth College, we primarily enroll full-time students who spend long days on campus. Currently, there is no adequate space on campus for students to study individually or in groups, or to meet for projects or discussion sessions. In fact, students often resort to studying in their cars between classes or trying to conduct group sessions in the cafeteria. We look forward to meeting these challenges and to our upcoming anniversary in 2006 as we continue our tradition of education for the future: ninety years and growing.
Lifelong Learning

In addition to providing traditional degree programs, Penn State Wilkes-Barre conducts on-site classes for local businesses and designs customized programs to meet their needs. Our continuing education programs serve more than 5,000 community members annually, including area youth who benefit a great deal from engaging in educational programs in a university campus setting.
The new Academic Commons will become a critical center for learning and academic support for Penn State Wilkes-Barre students and community members by:

- making essential academic support services more accessible to students;
- providing inviting areas where students can learn and study;
- creating spaces for cultural and intellectual events for the campus and community;
- adding 33,000 square feet of academic space to the Wilkes-Barre campus;
- enhancing our technological capabilities;
- fostering a more collegial environment among students, faculty, and staff;
- providing high-technology classrooms for meetings and continuing education courses for area businesses.
An Exciting New Learning Environment

As Penn State Wilkes-Barre moves into the next century, we hope to create an impressive new facility that will serve as an invigorating academic and social setting for our students. We envision a structure that fosters a collegial environment among students, faculty, and staff.

Through strategic planning efforts, we have outlined a vision for the campus’ future, which features the construction of a 33,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art “Academic Commons.” This Academic Commons will add space to our campus for student support services; facilities for teaching and learning; public spaces; and an enhanced Nesbitt Library.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Advising/Counseling Center—Increased enrollment, degrees, and services foster the need to create an inviting space for students to speak with advisers about their academic and career goals and design the academic plans to meet them.

Registrar—Relocating the registrar to the Academic Commons will give students easy access to information and guidance on course schedules, academic records, and more.

Career Center—From career exploration to internship and job placement, a Career Center will provide students and alumni with the resources needed to chart their professional paths. In addition, corporate and business partners will be able to use these facilities for on-campus recruiting. Through teleconferencing capabilities, students will have the ability to interview with recruiters from regions across the state at one convenient location.

Center for Academic Success—Offering individual and group tutoring in math, writing, and reading, as well as academic coaching, the center will provide the resources and support students need to succeed in their academic programs. The new configuration will consolidate all tutorial functions into one convenient suite adjacent to quiet study areas and student services.

FACILITIES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

High-Technology Classrooms—With new associate and baccalaureate degrees as well as an increased focus on technology across all disciplines, Penn State Wilkes-Barre has a need to create a variety of classrooms adequately wired and configured to accommodate new modalities in teaching and learning.

Traditional Classrooms—Built to replace the temporary classroom structures students now occupy, these well-designed classrooms will provide acutely needed instructional space to a continually growing campus.

Quiet Study Areas—Bright spaces with comfortable seating and carpeted floors will provide commuter students with a place for quiet study and reflection, as well as an area to work on group projects.

Public Spaces

Auditorium/Lecture Hall—Centrally located and highly visible, the auditorium will be an excellent venue for cultural and intellectual activities including concerts, films, plays, and speakers. Many of the performances will be open to both the campus and community. The auditorium will comfortably seat 100 students and guests.

Student Lounge—Positioned between the auditorium and student support services, with access to a landscaped outdoor courtyard, the lounge will give students and visitors an attractive place to enjoy a cup of coffee or light refreshments while they relax, study, or socialize.

Lobby and Exhibition Space—As the main entrance to the academic commons, the lobby provides a rich tapestry of visual resources that can supplement and enhance the collegial atmosphere. The exhibition area, which will be in the library, will accommodate photographs, paintings, sculptures, cultural artifacts, design projects, and other displays. This area will be a highly visible and frequently visited location within the Academic Commons.
Outdoor Courtyard—Warm-weather gatherings, receptions, performances, and meals can be enjoyed in an attractively landscaped outdoor courtyard and patio.

Library Facilities
Situated as a major portion of the proposed Academic Commons, the enhanced Nesbitt Library will feature:

- Open spaces that are double the size of those in the existing facilities
- New and enhanced collections
- An efficiently designed circulation center and information center
- Improved access to all the resources of the Penn State collections and the World Wide Web
- Specially designed seating to accommodate persons with disabilities
- Seminar rooms for class instruction and student project work
- Study rooms
- Reading areas and lounges to accommodate students, faculty, and visitors
Tradition, Tradition, Tradition

Penn State has played a unique role in three generations of the Dickson family. The tradition of a Penn State education began with the late William Dickson Jr., who attended Penn State Wilkes-Barre when the campus was located in the city of Wilkes-Barre. Jeffrey S. Dickson graduated from Penn State Wilkes-Barre in 1977 with a degree in engineering. He is a member of the Campus Advisory Board and Campaign Executive Committee for the Campaign for the Academic Commons. Jeffrey S. Dickson Jr. is a sophomore at the campus and is pursuing a degree in the Business Administration program.
We Request Your Support

The Office of University Development would be pleased to talk with you further about the exciting philanthropic opportunities to support this innovative building at Penn State Wilkes-Barre. Our goal is to raise $8 million in private support for this project.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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