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University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)

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Imagination at Work

10.05.2011 | Research, Science, Students, President, Energy and Environment, Engineering, Campus and Community In this economic climate, it's unusual for companies to build new research centers. It's even more rare on a college campus.

GE Aviation recently broke ground on a \$51 million research-and-development center on the University of Dayton's campus. When a Fortune 100 company makes such a considerable investment, that speaks volumes about the University's mounting reputation as a research powerhouse.

"It's rare for a global company of GE's stature to locate a new research facility on a college campus, but this is the future for leading universities," says University of Dayton President Daniel J. Curran. "This is the bold kind of technology-based economic development initiative that this region and our state need."

It also helps to propel the stature of a university that's solidifying its image as a top-tier national research university. "This is a game-changer," says Mickey McCabe, vice president for research.

Many small companies find their start in incubation space on university campuses. But it's extraordinary for a Fortune 100 corporation to build a multi-million-dollar research facility on a college campus.

It's also unusual and ambitious for a private, Catholic university to transform an urban brownfield into a vibrant academic and mixed-use development, but that's exactly what's happening.

When the University made its first large land purchase from NCR in 2005, it worked with regional leaders to secure the federal and state funds necessary to make that land productive again. Curran envisioned attracting strong companies that could spur additional research, serve as real-world classrooms and spark economic development for the region.

That vision will come to fruition in 2013 when GE Aviation's Electrical Power Integrated Systems Center on eight acres on River Park Drive starts operations.

The center will give a strong boost to aerospace research and education and offers the possibility of internships and co-op experiences for University of Dayton students from various disciplines. Ultimately, the University could develop a concentration, minor or major in the high-tech discipline of power generation.

In the lab, University researchers will work side by side with GE Aviation scientists and engineers to create new advanced electrical power technologies. The applications, Curran says, are endless — from new power systems for aircraft to longer-range electric cars to smarter utility power grids for more efficient delivery of electricity.

That's imagination at work.

For more information, contact Teri Rizvi at 937-229-3255 or rizvi@udayton.edu.