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New Name, New Era

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06.28.2010 | President, Hot Topics, Campus and Community

A familiar brown metal University of Dayton sign will be erected in July at the roadway entrance of the University's newest campus building that sits a stone's throw from the Great Miami River and is surrounded by a moat populated with Canada geese.

This scenic view of the latest portion of the University's sprawling 373-acre campus will be called, appropriately, River Campus. NCR Corp.'s former world headquarters has been given the simple moniker, 1700 South Patterson Building.

"This building makes a statement about the forward-thinking nature of the University of Dayton," said Daniel J. Curran, president. "The possibilities for academics, research and alumni outreach are tremendous. We plan to move in a careful, thoughtful, yet bold, way to convert the property into a landmark for the University of Dayton and the region."

Although Ohio's largest private university won't take occupancy until July 1, a flurry of behind-the-scenes activity has been taking place to ready the transition of the 455,000-square-foot former Fortune 500 corporate headquarters into a stunning academic and research facility. For the past three months, crews have been installing nearly five miles of high-speed fiber optic cable underground from the College Park Center at the corner of Brown and Stewart streets to the 1700 South Patterson Building. This powerful technological infrastructure will allow for high-end computing and low-cost telecommunications using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology. It will be the first use of this technology on campus.

On June 1, the University's landscaping crew, bolstered by three new employees, began taking care of the newly acquired 115 acres, including Old River Park. Earlier this month, the University erected a University of Dayton Old River Park sign on River Park Drive. While Dayton History will continue to operate the 45-acre park on summer weekends, the University will invest in a long-range master plan that will guide its development and stewardship for future generations.

Starting in July, the University will begin renovating the building's 17 classrooms in preparation for graduate classes, which will be phased in over the fall. Students in the MBA and some programs in the School of Education and Allied Professions will start classes in August on the core campus, with select classes gradually moving over to the 1700 South Patterson Building.

As part of the University's master plan, the Caldwell Street Center is on track to be demolished in October. The 1700 South Patterson Building will initially house the research functions that reside in the Caldwell Street Center, including the Center for Competitive Change and four research groups from the Research Institute's sensor systems and aerospace mechanics divisions. Over the next 18 months, the University of Dayton Research Institute will gradually transfer additional operations to the building as labs are built, creating a highly visible home for the University's rapidly growing sponsored research portfolio that is nearing \$100 million annually.

This summer, the University will kick off a \$10 million fund-raising campaign to renovate a portion of the building for an Alumni Center, which will use multimedia to showcase the University's rich 160-year history and provide a venue for alumni events, lifelong learning programs and chapter meetings.

University officials are juggling implementing a vision for the property with handling day-to-day routine tasks, such as rekeying the building, periodically pumping water into the moat, transferring elevator ownership, assuming waste management and recycling services, installing emergency phones, connecting the fire alarm system to the University's central one, numbering classrooms and inventorying the parking.

"When you build an academic building, you plan every detail down to the recycling bins and paper towels over the period of at least a year," observed Beth Keyes, assistant vice president for facilities management and part of a special presidential task force that's coordinating the hundreds of details behind the acquisition and transfer. "This timeline for assuming operations has been a challenge."

The University announced the \$18 million acquisition of NCR's former world headquarters and 115 acres in December, but NCR has leased the building since then. It's the first time a university has ever purchased a Fortune 500 headquarters.

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