

Renovations create obstacles

JARED YOUNG
Staff Reporter

The fences are up, the trailers have moved in, the trees are gone and the parking lot surface is next. The renovation plans for Pershing Building are underway.

River City Construction moved equipment in to begin work during Thanksgiving Break. Students returned to find half of Ryle Hall's parking lot closed and limited access to the sidewalk in front of Pershing.

Health and exercise science will occupy the first floor of the new building, along with a training room for the athletic department. Communication disorders will be on the second floor and the nursing department will be on the third floor. Campus Planner Mark Schultz said the new building also will connect to Pershing in two different ways.

"We will be tying into the existing building at the lower level and the upper level by a tunnel underneath and a bridge on top," Schultz said.

Tuesday, the sidewalk in front of Pershing was partially closed off, rerouting traffic through the south section of the building. Schultz said it is just one of the inconveniences faculty and students will have to endure.

"The difficulty during construction is the fact that it is a major traffic area for students walking up and down [the path through Red Barn Park]," Schultz said. "We've got to dig a tunnel up to the building for that lower level tie-in."

The tunnel will be a permanent hallway connecting the first floor of Pershing with the first floor of the new building. The sidewalk detour through Pershing is one of several issues that

will be faced during construction of the tunnel. Contractors must relocate two sewer lines, a water main, fiber optic and telephone lines and a steam line.

The utilities that must be rerouted will be down for only short periods of time. The new routes for the underground systems will be built before the old systems are shut off. Schultz said another inconvenience will be the relocation of athletic coaches during construction.

All coaches' offices will be relocated into the second and third floor of the former Grim-Smith Hospital, located west of Pershing, by Midterm Break. Schultz said coaches will occupy the temporary office space for a little more than a year.

"[The contractors] put a time frame on it of 424 days," Schultz said. "We hope to be moving people back into the building by Christmas of next year."

Director of Athletics Jerry Wollmering said it is exciting to see the renovation and construction begin. He said the biggest challenge right now is relocating the coaches' offices.

"It is obviously further away from where we have our classroom, the track, field and stuff like that," Wollmering said. "I don't think it will be anything people won't be able to handle."

John Cochrane, track and cross country head coach, said he will be moving out of his office right after the new year begins.

"I've been in this end of the building for 30 years," Cochrane said. "I don't like the situation, but I would also like to see the building get built."

Cochrane said he understands the inconveniences that come with renovations and that he looks forward to using the new facilities once



Brian O'Shaugnessy/Index
Pershing renovations create obstacles for students, faculty and staff as they walk through campus.

they are finished.

He said people in health and exercise science, communication disorders and nursing programs need the space. It will give them better classrooms and better facilities to advance educational possibilities.

Above all new things, Wollmering said he is most excited about the new weight room because it is one of the aspects the athletic department has needed the most. There are fund-

raising ideas in the works, along with student athletic fee money, which will help to fill the new facilities with new equipment. Wollmering said the new facilities will benefit Truman when prospective students visit campus.

"It will be one of the major showcases for us when we bring potential recruits onto campus, instead of now, trying to avoid our weight room on campus visits," Wollmering said. "We'll be able to show them something we are proud of."

Agreement leads to more cooperation

DAN WARNER
Staff Reporter

Missouri's Department of Higher Education and Panama have a relationship that has lasted for almost a century, and the recently-formed Memorandum of Understanding extended that relationship, providing opportunities for students to experience another culture.

The memorandum, signed Nov. 19 by Robert Stein, commissioner of higher education at Panama City's International College Fair, creates a formal agreement between Missouri and Panamanian universities that encourages student exchange.

Stein said the memorandum resulted from spillover into civilian affairs encouraged by the State Partnership Program, a military program that connects states with foreign countries.

Through the SPP, Panama has

access to Missouri's National Guard troops if needed, as well as Missouri's universities and some business organizations. The program aims to promote democracy and safety in other countries, as well as improve U.S. foreign relations.

"[The memorandum] is basically a commitment to continue to explore ways in which institutions in Panama can interact with institutions in Missouri," said Truman's Associate Provost Maria Di Stefano, who attended the college fair in Panama City last month.

Di Stefano said she does not yet

know what the memorandum's effect on Truman will be because "this was the first contact that we've had with some of the institutions."

Truman is already "doing a fairly good job" when it comes to drawing international students, Di Stefano said. She said she hopes this memorandum will create opportunities for Truman students to study in Panama and

participate in programs that might develop between Panamanian partners. There is also the opportunity for students from Panama to study here, she said.

Although Truman currently is not

hosting any of the hundred Panamanian students in Missouri's universities, Truman has recently approved an interdisciplinary course that will travel to Panama this spring. Assistant biology professor Chad Montgomery and history professor Marc Becker will lead the trip. Both professors have done extensive research in and about Latin America.

"I thought it would be a good opportunity to bring students from a bunch of different disciplines together," Montgomery said.

Truman's Panama trip was already planned before the Memorandum of Understanding came about, and Montgomery said it was used in the agreement "as an example of interactions between Missouri higher education and Panama that already exist."

Montgomery chose Panama as the focus of the course because he previously lived there and knows the

area. The course will begin with four weeks of study on Truman's campus, during which students will explore the background of Panama and its geography before traveling to Panama's Omar Torrijos National Park for eight weeks of hands-on experience.

The course will include interaction with local communities, and students will receive a full semester of credit for courses in biology, environmental science and history.

Senior sociology major Angie Skosky will be one of 22 students traveling to Panama this spring and said she is looking forward to spending time with people in Panama. Skosky said that along with ecological projects and an archeological dig, Truman students will teach English in local schools, as English is a required course in Panama, though Panamanian schools often have trouble finding capable English teachers.

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