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HIGHER EDUCATION: GROSSMONT COLLEGE LAUNCHES \$49.3M PROJECT

Replacing Classrooms and Expanding Services

By Ray Huard

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Rendering Courtesy of Gafcon, Inc. A new Science, Math and Career Complex at Grossmont College is scheduled for completion in April 2023.

A \$49.3 million construction project under way at [Grossmont College](#) in El Cajon will greatly expand services the college offers veterans and replaces several aging classroom buildings.



Lynn Neault Chancellor
Grossmont-Cuyamaca
College District

A key part of the 61,390-square-foot Science, Math and Career Complex is the 4,000-square-foot Veterans Resource Center that will take up much of the first floor of the building and serve the more than 700 veterans enrolled in the college, said Lynn Neault, chancellor of the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District.

Construction of the complex is expected to be finished in April 2023.

Consolidating

“This is more than a building. It will be a state-of-the-art facility for years to come,” Neault said. “With it, we will be ready to serve the constantly changing needs of our

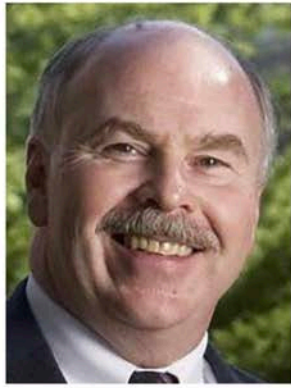
students.”

Neault said that the veterans’ center is “a significant piece” of the complex that provides a place “where veterans can go, engage with each other, create a sense of community, get services, and in many cases, just hang out.”

The veterans’ center in the new building will quadruple the amount of space that was set aside for veterans in an older building that was razed. Three other outdated buildings also were torn down.

In addition to the veterans’ center, the first floor of the two-story new building also will include a math computer lab, conference rooms and several classrooms.

The second floor will include a tutoring center, math offices and classrooms, an anthropology classroom, several offices and an observation deck.



Bill McGreevy Vice
President for
Administrative Services
Grossmont College

“It’s bringing a lot of resources together in one space and really, it’s much better than where everyone was before,” said Bill McGreevy, vice president for administrative services at the college. “We’re excited. This is really going to provide some great resources for the students but also for our faculty and staff.”

‘Building the Future’

Gafcon, Inc., based in Sorrento Valley, is managing construction of the Science, Math and Career Complex along with other projects at Grossmont College and Cuyamaca College paid for with Proposition V bond money.

“We’re basically building the future at our campuses, replacing outdated facilities,” Neault said.

The general contractor on the project is Soltek Pacific Construction, based in Old Town, and the architect is LPA, Inc., which is based in Irvine and has San Diego offices in Barrio Logan.

Going up on the northwest side of campus next to the Health Services Building, the Science, Math and Career Complex is almost two separate buildings divided by an open breezeway. Windows go about halfway up each floor of the building to allow natural light to enter the interior while roof overhangs prevent the sun from shining too brightly inside.



Jim Bray Project Manager
Gafcon, Inc.

In appearance, the new center was designed to blend in with existing buildings on campus, with a brick façade and metal roof, said Jim Bray, a project manager at Gafcon overseeing the Grossmont College project.

The new center will have “great views from just about all of the classrooms,” Bray said. “To the west, they’re going to be looking into the canyon.”

The building is being wired with conduit to allow for easy connection to a variety of visual and audio equipment. The new center “is very high tech, it’s a very technologically advanced building,” Parker said.



Fred Parker Vice President
and Business Line Leader
Gafcon Management.

The set-up is flexible so it can be easily altered as technology changes, Bray said. “It’s prewired so that as technology evolves, you’ve got plenty of space.”

Razing the older buildings was particularly challenging because they were riddled with asbestos, said Fred Parker, vice president and business line leader of Gafcon Management. The building that was on the site of the new structure “took about three months to demolish because it had so much asbestos,” Parker said.

Returning to the Classroom

Grossmont College has about 16,000 enrolled students, down about 15% over the past two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Neault said.

“We’ve definitely seen a decline in enrollment,” Neault said. “The nature of the students we serve, many of them are single parents and they’re helping support their families and they had to make a choice between school or work.”

The school plans to resume in-person classes in the spring with about 50% of students returning physically to the classroom.

“We’re starting to build back and we’re hoping as the economy improves, as we come out of this COVID, students will start to return. Omicron hasn’t helped,” Neault said. “We have a lot of outreach to students right now but it’s anyone’s guess with omicron.”

Grossmont College

Founded: 1961

Campus: El Cajon

President: Denise Whisenhunt

Business: Community college

Enrollment: 16,000

Notable: The first college classes convened September 11, 1961 on the Monte Vista High School campus in Spring Valley with an opening enrollment of 1,538.

Website: www.grossmont.edu

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