Building becomes reality after funds, 40 years

Structure features storage space, 82 studios

BY BIANCA VANRELL
CONTRIBUTING NEWS WRITER

Dust fills the air around the Frost School of Music. What looks like an empty lot covered in soil, rocks and piping outside of the school on Miller Drive will soon turn into one of the most modern and ecological friendly buildings in South Florida.

The expansion of the school means that more than 700 cramped students and faculty will now have room to teach, rehearse and perform in a more comfortable environment. Thanks to the generosity of longtime UM philanthropists Patricia and Phillip Frost and the design work of internationally recognized architect Yann R. Weymouth, the groundbreaking took place on Feb. 8 for the new Patricia Louise Frost Music Studios.

“It was very monumental and had a lot of student participation ... our marching band, a concert, a luncheon – it was a really well attended and dynamic event,” said Raul Murciano Jr., associate dean for administration at Frost.

Murciano started at the University of Miami in 1975 as a music and civil engineering student. He said the renovations have been needed for a long time.

“From back then, there was already a need for this,” he said. “The big catalyst is money. It’s been ongoing and finally everything is now aligned after 35 to 40 years and four serious attempts since the 1970s.”

Constructing a building specifically for musicians is a bit different than any other regular classroom building.

“It’s not just a box with air conditioning and lights,” Murciano said.

The structure will hold 82 studios that are large enough to house all instruments and allow for better rehearsals and teaching space. The studios for the first time ever on UM campus will have the capability of soundproofing. Each studio is “isolated and tombed” for each specific instrument, and no interruptions from outside of the studio will interfere with the musicians.

Environmentally friendly

The new building will earn platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification, the highest standard for environmental design.

“From my point of view, this project is really going to help attract and retain the best faculty and students in the country,” said Holly Freyre, executive director for development at the Frost School. “It appeals to donors to see that we are ecologically friendly and that it will save a lot of money.”

Electro-chronic windows used around the entire building will have the ability to dim themselves automatically. The new rooftop solar powered building will reduce the city’s electricity use by 16 percent, and it will also capture 100 percent of the rainwater that will be used for inside the building.

The design is expected to save UM about $100,000 annually in electricity costs, which is more than a 50 percent energy reduction compared to other buildings on campus. Construction is expected to begin sometime in May. The building should be completed by fall 2014.

“It will take about 15 to 18 months to build,” Freyre said.

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Raul Murciano Jr.
Associate dean for administration at Frost

Future of Frost

The music-studios project is only the first step of a multi-phase construction plan for the Frost Music School. Next on the list is funding for a 200-seat recital hall overlooking the lake, which will be perfect for chamber music.

“It’s going to look like it’s floating on air,” Freyre said. “It will have a glass lobby and floating staircase up to the auditorium on the second story, with huge windows in the back overlooking the lake.”

The third building in the making will be used as a large classroom building with a white box and a black box. The white box will house a theater for 50 people for student recitals with perfect sounds, and the black box seems to be the most exciting of them all, according to Freyre.

“Faculty and students will be able to teach, record and perform with other people simultaneously,” Freyre said. “The space allows for anyone to construct the sound and look of any concert hall in the world.”

The last phase that is being reviewed is the re-purposing of the Volpe building, which was originally designed to be the administrative building.

“We are one of the top schools in the countries, but we want to be the best school and we need to continue providing the facilities that our faculty and students deserve,” Freyre said.

Civic Scholars recognizes leadership, academics

Accomplishments noted on transcript

BY ELIZABETH DE ARMAS
OPINION EDITOR

The Office of Civic and Community Engagement (CCE) has partnered with the William R. Butler Center for Volunteer Service and Leadership to create the University of Miami Civic Scholars Program, which will recognize students for their academic success and leadership roles in the community.

This program is designed to allow students to continue the requirements for their undergraduate degree, while intertwining the necessary components needed to graduate as a UM Civic Scholar.

Robin Bachin, assistant provost for civic and community engagement, said this program is unique because it gives students the opportunity to combine their academic and community work.

“One of the most important things about your college education is knowing how to apply your knowledge in real world settings and recognizing the role you play in the civic community,” she said.

There is no application or interview process to be admitted into the UM Civic Scholars Program. It is open to any undergraduate student, including transfer students, but all of the requirements must be completed in order to receive proper recognition.

“It is important for students to know about this program because there are a lot of students who are actively involved in community based work,” Bachin said.

A civic scholar must complete four civic service-learning courses, maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA, complete a capstone project, participate in a five-week reflection seminar during their last semester at UM, and participate in three co-curricular service and leadership development experiences.

CCE monitors the academic component of the program, and the Butler Center monitors the co-curricular component.

When students begin the UM Civic Scholar Program, a tracking form is used to check off requirements as they are completed to make sure students stay on track.

Capstone projects can be completed as an internship with an appropriate community agency through the Toppel Internship Program, a community-based senior thesis or a community-based research project that takes place over one semester, and must be approved by CCE beforehand.

Service, and leadership development experiences are completed through the Butler Center.

Students have various options, such as Alternative Break, LeaderShape, STRIVE Community, IMPACT Leadership Retreat and studying abroad, so long as it has a focus on service.

“This program is meant to recognize those students who have done quite a bit of work in volunteerism leadership development and linked their classroom learning with their community outreach,” Bachin said.

Upon successfully completing these requirements, students will officially be recognized as UM Civic Scholars with a notation by the Registrar’s Office on their final transcripts, a certificate of achievement, recognition at the annual Celebration of Involvement and recognition at the Honors Convocation.

Andrew Wiemer, director of the Butler Center, said he is excited about the opportunity the UM Civic Scholars Program provides to students.

“We want our students to be citizens of the greater community,” he said. “I hope our students will take an active role in signing up for the courses and experiences the program offers.”

WHAT: Informational session for the UM Civic Scholars Program WHERE: Lounge WHEN: 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday Ice cream will be provided by Miami Scoops.