

## New Student Center Complex Dedicated

Posted: June 16, 2011

Delaware State University christened its new Student Center Complex with a Feb. 25 Dedication Ceremony in its new Martin Luther King Jr. Student Center, ushering in a new era of campus life for the institution.

The dedication of the Complex – which includes the Strength & Conditioning Facility, the Wellness & Recreation Center with its connected swimming pool, and the MLK Student Center – combined the event with DSU’s annual observances of Martin Luther King’s Birthday and the University’s Founders’ Day.



**The Rev. Walter Fauntroy gave the keynote address.**

The Honorable Walter Fauntroy, civil right activist and former U.S. congressman, gave the keynote address. Rev. Fauntroy worked with Dr. King in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference at the height of the civil rights movement in the 1960s.

Rev. Fauntroy said he was elated that Martin Luther King Jr. would remain the namesake title of the Student Center at DSU.

“My hope and belief is when they write the history of the Obama era, they will write that there lived at DSU great faculty and students who worked to finish the goal of Martin Luther King – to redeem the soul of America,” Dr. Fauntroy said. “We can live together if we follow Martin Luther King’s dream, which is rooted in the American Dream.”

Remarks were also given during the ceremony by DSU President Harry Lee Williams; Kathleen Charlot, current DSU Student Government Association (SGA) president; Leroy Tate, Delaware State College alumnus and the 1968 SGA president; Dr. Claibourne Smith, chairman of the DSU Board of Trustees; and Diedre Ottley, DSU Alumni Association president.

“With a student population of more than 3,600, we can proudly say that with the completion of the Student Center Complex, the University is providing an outstanding campus life infrastructure for its students,” Dr. Williams said. “These structures join the Education and Humanities Theatre, the Longwood Auditorium and other facilities at DSU to provide an unparalleled capacity for college life.”

Dr. Claibourne D. Smith, chairman of the DSU Board of Trustees, said that the Student Center Complex will make students’ experience at DSU more meaningful. “We understand that the intellectual, emotional and social growth they experience will come not only from the academic classrooms, but from the overall campus life to which they are exposed,” said Dr. Smith, who also served as acting president from September 2008 to January 2010. “We believe with the completion of the Student Center Complex, we have greatly enhanced the environment for that growth.”



**(L-r) Dr. Claibourne D. Smith and DSU President Harry L. Williams cut the ribbon for the Student Center Complex, while the University's First Lady Robin S. Williams and Dover Mayor Carlton Carey Sr. look on.**

The DSU Concert Choir provided a particularly poignant moment during the event with its moving performance of the medley “His Light Still Shines.” The 81-member choir -- directed by Dr. Curtis Powell, director of Choral Activities, positioned themselves along each aisle and the back section of the auditorium, alternating their singing with an oratory that focused on how Dr. King’s light still shines at DSU. A number of people in attendance could be seen wiping tears from their eyes by the end of the performance.

In addition to the ribbon cutting ceremony, University opened a 1968 time capsule that had been embedded in the cornerstone of the original Martin Luther King Student Center and extracted during its demolition. That time capsule contained items that were related to a May 10, 1968 Dedication Ceremony for that original student center.

Items for a new time capsule have been collected to be placed in the cornerstone of the new MLK Student Center. Those items will include letters from Dr. Williams and DSU Board of Trustees Chairman Claibourne D. Smith, photos, campus publications, a current campus map, a brick from the original MLK Student Center, an undergraduate studies *Viewbook*, a 2009 Homecoming guide, yearbooks and several other items that reflective of campus life in the current era.

The completed 54,000 square foot Wellness & Recreation Center includes dual basketball courts with seating areas and men and women’s locker rooms on the first floor. The second floor has a variety of Lifestyle weight machines and free weights as well as a running track that winds around the exercise areas and overlooks the basketball courts on the floor below. The facility also has a juice bar with tables and seating, as well as areas for aerobic and other fitness classes.

The Wellness Center & Recreation Center – finished in the summer of 2009 – was the second phase of a \$22.5 million project that began with the fall 2008 completion of the first phase’s Strength & Conditioning Facility for student-athletes. That facility features a large Division I-A weight training area and modern locker rooms for Hornet teams.

Connected to the Wellness & Recreation Center is a \$5.6 million swimming facility that connects to the Wellness Center’s locker rooms. The recreation pool features a fountain at its center, three lap lanes, an inter-pool bench with water jets, and four inter-pool basketball hoops. The swimming pool was completed in the fall of 2009.

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The Wellness & Recreation Center was recently recognized among seven indoor facilities in the country to be awarded the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association's 2010 Outstanding Sports Facility Award.



**The DSU Concert Choir provided a memorable musical moment with their rendition of "His Light Still Shines."**

The Complex project culminated with the late 2009 completion of the new Martin Luther King, Jr. Student Center. It is about three times the size of the previous one-floor MLK Student Center that existed from 1967 to 2006. The \$23.4 million facility provides students with more space than ever to spend their social time, conduct their organizational activities, while at the same time giving the community a new facility for holding events.

The first floor of the Student Center features an Austin Grill dining facility, which includes a Tex Mex menu that may be enjoyed in an abundant seating area. The first floor also has an enlarged DSU Bookstore and Post Office, vast open lounge areas and a modest stage.

The Student Center's second floor includes a large 7,656 square foot-auditorium that may be partitioned into three separated areas or it may be a large single area where dances, concerts or other types of large gatherings may be held. In addition, the second floor also includes a game room, a meeting room and open and closed lounge areas.

The Student Center's third floor provides ample office meeting spaces for the Student Government Association's Executive Council, *The Hornet* student newspaper, Mr. and Miss DSU, and the Graduate Studies Council. The third floor also includes the administrative offices of Student Leadership & Activities, Career Planning, Judicial Affairs, Auxiliary Services, as well as the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs.

The primary architects for the project were Holzman, Moss, Bottino Architecture (HMBA) of New York, N.Y., and the construction management firm was EdiS Company of Wilmington, Del.

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**Leroy Tate, 1968 SGA president, lifts up an item from the 1968 time capsule while Brenda Farmer (far right), event emcee, describes it for the audience. Joining Mr. Tate on stage are fellow 1968 classmates (l-r) Peggy Trout, Vivian King and Pat Randolph.**

HMBA and DSU worked together to develop a set of environmentally-responsible goals for the project. Sustainable features incorporated into the final design included the implementation of a waste management program for demolition of the original student center, reduced disturbance to the site, use of regional and natural materials, a natural ventilation system for lounge and dining areas, large overhangs at the south and west sides to reduce heat consumption, reduction of net to gross area ratio by providing efficient circulation, light-colored roofs to reduce solar gain, as well as the use of salvaged bricks.

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