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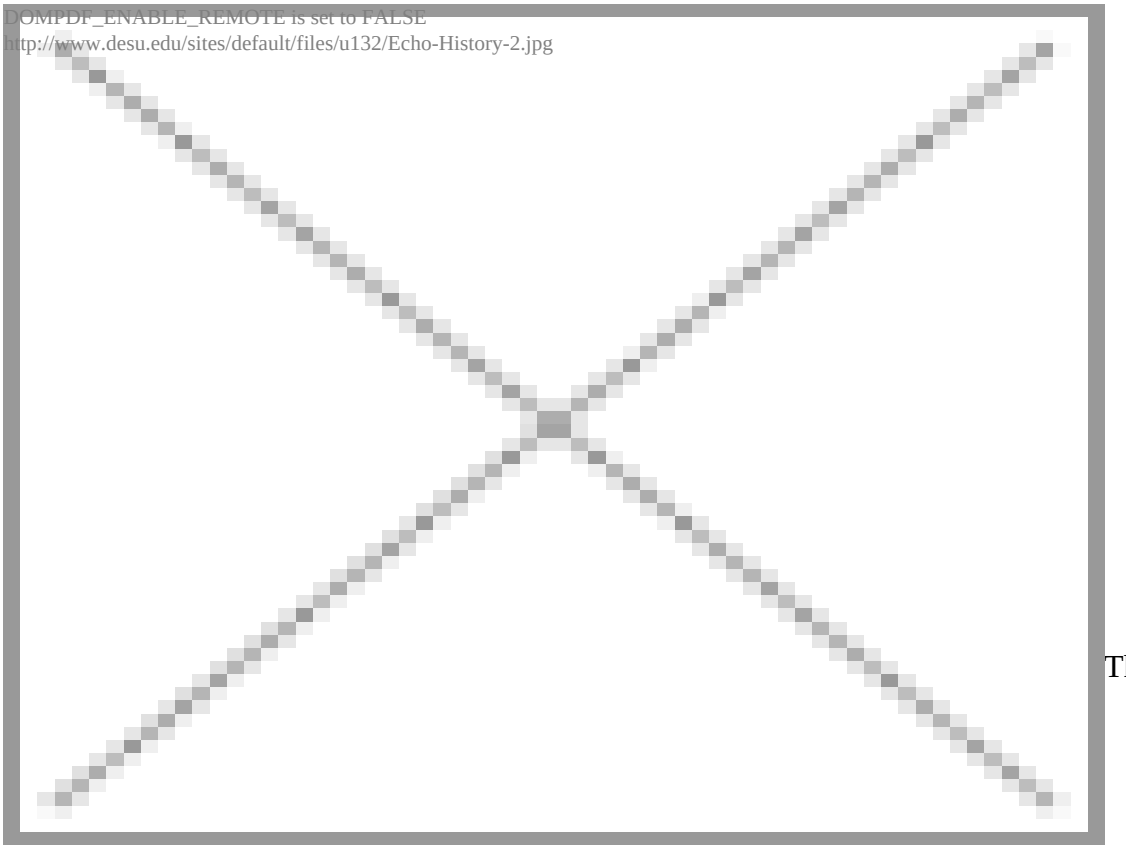
From the 1950s to now, 6 decades of significant campus growth



The State College for Colored Students began the institution?s history in 1892 with only three buildings ? one somewhat substantial mansion structure (by the 1700s standard) and a hastily built president?s cottage and carpentry building.

By 1952 ? about 60 years later ? Delaware State College?s growth in physical infrastructure can barely be called modest, as there were just over 20 buildings on campus, but only seven could be called substantial structures.

Fast-forward another 61 years, and to the amazement of residents who have watched the institution?s expansion over the last six decades and the alumni who return to their alma mater after many years, DSU has developed into an impressive physical plant.

The development of DSU throughout its 122-year history reflects the degree to which the state of Delaware financially supported the institution it created ? inconsistently low levels of state financial support during its first six decades, followed by much more consistent and unprecedented levels of major capital improvement funding.

Of the seven substantial buildings on campus in 1952, state funding paid for only four of them. Loockerman Hall, the former Main College Building, was part of the state?s original 1891 purchase of the property and was paid for out of the $8,000 allocated to establish the institution; 10 years later, the state earmarked $6,000 for the construction of Lore Hall, a women?s dorm.

It would be more than 20 years before the state would yield any capital improvement funding for the College. In the 1920s, the state allocated a then-unprecedented $275,000 for the construction of Delaware Hall, an administration/classroom building, and Conrad Hall, a cafeteria. Any hopes, however, that the

capital improvement funding might signal a new supportive attitude among legislators was disappointed by the next 20 years in which no new construction money would come from the state.

The Library was originally built with funding College President William C. Jason raised. The DuPont Building (the high school on campus) and the President?s Residence were both built with money from philanthropist Pierre du Pont.

The 1950s would be the beginning of improved state financial support for the infrastructure growth of the institution. Over the next 60 years (1953 to present), the number of buildings on campus would double.

The dramatic physical plant increase during the second half of the institution?s history began with the completion of Tubman Hall in 1953. However, the improved relationship between the state legislature and DSC under the leadership of President Jerome Holland (1953-60) is what established a more favorable environment for infrastructure growth.

That relationship with the state would continue in subsequent DSC administrations, which would also be a factor in the institution?s increase in enrollment from a few hundred students in the 1950s to the current 4,000-plus students.

The increase in physical infrastructure would keep pace with the growing enrollment, with a prolific construction agenda over the last six decades that included the Mishoe Science Center, two Martin Luther King Jr. Student Centers, a Bank of America Building for the College of Business, a Cooperative Extension/Herbarium Building and a Wellness & Recreation Center, just to name a few of the 40-plus buildings on DSU?s main campus.

Holland and his successors, Dr. Luna I. Mishoe, Dr. William B. DeLauder, Dr. Allen L. Sessoms and Dr. Harry L. Williams, can all be credited with the leadership to continue the favorable relationship with the state and the expansion of the University.

Under Williams? leadership, the growth is continuing. The University has received a $10 million allocation from the state for the construction of an Optical Science Center for Applied Research (OSCAR) Building. In addition, in 2013 DSU is completing its work in crafting a new Facilities Master Plan that will guide the University in its future construction projects.

-- *Story by Carlos Holmes*

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