

News

Fine Arts Phase One complete

Alex Jacobi

Executive Editor

After four years of waiting, two departments in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts finally got what they have been waiting for: a new 112,000-square-foot, \$14 million building that can better house music, art and theater.

"We're [now] all together in one place," said Doug Cook, chair of the Department of Visual and Theatre Arts.

"One-stop shopping for the arts is our goal. I remember the excitement of the 1970 opening of the Fine Arts Building. What a thrill it is to witness the renovation and expansion," said Dr. Elaine Harriss, chair of the Department of Music.

Dr. Joe DiPietro, UT president, Dr. Tom Rakes, UTM chancellor, and Dr. Jerald Ogg, UTM provost and vice chancellor for Academic Affairs, led the ribbon-cutting on Friday, Aug. 16, each speaking of the benefits of the new building for the campus and community.

"Today is an exciting day for us. We haven't had a new building on this campus for over 40 years," Rakes said.

The building includes 35 offices, 23 practice rooms, three rehearsal halls, two lecture halls, 12 large specialized studios, five classrooms, additional computer labs and specialized spaces for band, music and the visual arts. Within these spaces are state-of-the-art lighting, technology and acoustics. However, Rakes said the renovations won't stop there.

"Plans are under way for Phase Two, which will be a renovation of the Harriet Fulton Theater," he said.

As for the long wait on the building, Rakes praised those who supported and worked toward the completion of the renovation.

"It's tough when you've been relocated. Students have to reorient with what's there. You really have to cooperate across lines, and that happened. ... I think it was well worth the wait.



Phase One of the Fine Arts Building renovation includes 35 office spaces, 23 practice rooms, three rehearsal halls, two lecture halls, 12 large specialized studios, five classrooms, additional computer labs and specialized spaces for band, music and the visual arts. | **Pacer**

Photo/Alex Jacobi

A vision is essential, but execution is what's required to complete the task," Rakes said.

DiPietro also expressed gratitude for the new addition to UTM, talking about how Fine Arts and education are important for this area of Tennessee.

"I know that this kind of activity around Fine Arts is good for the region for a lot of reasons. It solidifies the fact that you're a cultural hub for the region, and it affects the quality of life here in West Tennessee very positively. It affects the economic development of the region from the standpoint of potential industry partners who move into the area are going to look for this kind of an opportunity to [invest in]. ... It provides community service, without a doubt, and connects with the people," DiPietro said.

"It's great to be around on days like this. ... This is a day to cheer on UT Martin and to come take a look at this building," he said.

As for students in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, this will be the first time for many to attend classes and practice their arts in the Fine Arts Building.

"It is very exciting for the dance program, because we now have

stages to perform on. We have been performing in the studio and in the Student Life Center ever since I have been here, so we are all so excited about having the performance space, as well as the lighting to experiment with and incorporate into the pieces," said Leah Jean Graham, a senior Performing and Fine Arts major.

Not only are students excited about the quality of the building, but many are excited about the departments being together again.

"The unveiling of the new Fine Arts Building will, no doubt, increase the morale, recruitment and family atmosphere we so deeply treasure in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts," said Timothy Johnson, a senior Music Education major.

Faculty, staff and students also hope to use the new facility to improve education and service.

"I think the important thing to know is that we're going to be doing much greater and better things here at this university, and we'll be able to support and improve our teaching and service to the community," Cook said.

To read the complete story on the reopening of the Fine Arts building, go to www.thepacer.net.

Check out redesigned campus site: UTM.edu

Aimee Bilger

Staff Writer

Of the several changes that happened at UTM over the summer, many students and faculty noticed the bold change that the look of UTM.edu took on July 31.

"We wanted to strip out the old while maintaining the new," said Craig Ingram, Director of Web Services and Information Technology Services.

Ingram has been with the Web Services since May 2001 and has held his current position as director of ITS for one year.

During this time, Ingram wanted to know what changes the UTM website was lacking. He and his staff began to gather feedback from the campus faculty members and students. Their main goal was to make sure that the site would be more user-friendly and that any device would be able to access all the pages and content with ease.

"Our objective is to make sure that everyone on campus is aware that we are listening to the ideas and concerns of our users," Ingram said.

Ingram and the staff had a desire to stream UTM.edu live, but the old site didn't meet the needs of all the users. The idea for the updated design began in the fall of 2012 and went into full force in May of this year.

The problems that users were facing when logging onto the

site was the ability to view all necessary content according to the type of device that was being used. The new design and setup will optimize the experience, making it easy for anyone to access, whether it's through a smartphone, laptop or desktop.

ITS updates the content of the site on a daily basis, along with paying close attention to the way students use the site.

New enrollees have access to their own personal link that will help them with basic questions they may have about what UTM has to offer including tuition, enrollment applications, important campus dates and scheduling a tour date of the campus.

Current students have access also to their own personal link that will guide them through academic programs, technology services, resources and student services.

The updated site offers Google and Apple apps so there will be easy access to all UTM website needs.

If students have any suggestions regarding anything concerning UTM, they can click on the Suggestion Box link located in the footer of the homepage. The suggestion will be submitted anonymously to the area on campus that deals with the subject of the suggestion.

For more information on the UTM web site, contact ITS at 731-881-7900.

**Want to write or take photos
for *The Pacer* or *The Spirit*?**

**Come to our first meeting:
5:15 p.m.
Tuesday, Aug. 27
313 Gooch**