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TEACHING

NEW CENTER INSPIRES DESIGN THINKING

Students studying design started spring semester in the inspired – and inspiring – new Nancy Richardson Design Center.

The center, totaling 45,000 square feet, is the most recently completed project in a modern building boom that has spanned a decade and has transformed Colorado State University with nearly $1.5 billion in new and upgraded facilities for teaching, research, student housing, and engagement.

The building’s namesake is a 1982 alumna in interior design. She and her husband, Curt, are co-founders and owners of OtterBox and Blue Ocean Enterprises and donated $8.1 million toward the $19.5-million project.

The Richardson Design Center houses part of the Department of Design and Merchandising. It also is home base for a new certificate in Design Thinking – an interdisciplinary program that teaches students to apply design principles and methods to problems in a variety of fields, resulting in better products, processes, and services.

With their lead gift, the Richardsons provided state-of-the-art classrooms and laboratories to inspire creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship by integrating design concepts across multiple disciplines. The project was completed with other generous donations and University financing.

More than 400 students will take classes each semester in the newly opened Nancy Richardson Design Center. The world-class center promotes design concepts in multiple disciplines.
ONLINE PROGRAMS RANK AMONG NATION’S BEST

Colorado State’s online programs ranked among the best in the country in an annual analysis released in January by U.S. News & World Report. The University’s online bachelor’s programs ranked No. 20 in the national assessment. In addition, CSU’s online MBA programs, graduate business programs, graduate information technology programs, and graduate engineering programs ranked highly nationwide — and garnered the No. 1 spot in each category in Colorado.

NO SMALL POTATOES: $8 MILLION FOR RESEARCH

With $8 million in new federal funding, plant pathologists at CSU are joining scientists at nine other universities in examining best practices for strong, disease-resistant potato crops. The researchers aim to better understand soil health and soil-borne potato diseases. They ultimately want to improve the environmental quality and economic viability of the nation’s potato operations — significant because potatoes are the leading vegetable crop in the United States.

For years, CSU scientists at the San Luis Valley Research Center have worked closely with growers to boost potatoes to the No. 7 spot among agricultural commodities in Colorado, with annual cash receipts approaching $200 million. Colorado is the No. 5 potato-producing state in the nation, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

PHILANTHROPY

PRIEST ENDOWS FACULTY POSITION IN THEOLOGY

A Fort Collins priest who worked for a decade at St. John XXIII Catholic Church near campus has donated nearly $1 million to endow a Colorado State University professorship in theology. The Rev. Don Willette, who led the St. John XXIII congregation from 2001 to 2011, hopes his gift will help inspire CSU students to wonder and ask critical questions. The newly created professorship is in the College of Liberal Arts; a faculty member has not yet been appointed to the position.

WATER IN THE WEST EVENT EXAMINES PRESSING ISSUES

Colorado State will hold its second Water in the West Symposium next month at Gaylord Rockies Resort and Convention Center outside Denver, with nearly three dozen speakers focusing on the availability, use, and management of one of the region’s most precious resources.

The event is open to interested stakeholders. The symposium is a forerunner to the collaborative teaching, research, and outreach that will be offered by the CSU Water Building at the National Western Center, the redevelopment project that will remake the grounds of the National Western Stock Show in north Denver.

Symposium speakers will include Gary Knell, chairman of National Geographic Partners; Claudia Ringler, of the International Food Policy Research Institute; Mark Cackler, with World Bank; and Rick Cables, of Vail Resorts. For information and to register, visit nwc.colostate.edu.