Purdue celebrates with building dedications, gift announcements

Purdue dedicated three new buildings and announced major gifts during the days leading up to the University’s Sept. 23 Homecoming celebration.

The University celebrated completion of its new computer science and biomedical engineering buildings as well as the first radiation therapy veterinary facility in Indiana. Gifts announced during the week will help fund a mechanical engineering facility and the new Discovery Learning Center in Discovery Park, while others will support students in aviation technology and liberal arts.

"With only nine months to go, our $1.5 billion Campaign for Purdue has made possible a incredible array of buildings, scholarships and professorships," said Murray Blackwelder, senior vice president for advancement. "To date, our alumni and friends have contributed more than $1.4 billion to help us achieve our strategic plan, and I look forward to June when we celebrate the successful completion of this campaign."

Events and celebrations included:

- On Sept. 15, $20 million Richard and Patricia Lawson Computer Science Building was dedicated. The new building consolidates the computer science program from five buildings to two. It provides meeting rooms and space for 45 faculty, 55 teaching assistants and 70 research assistants and houses four classrooms, five instructional labs and four research labs. The University raised $7 million in private funds from 430 donors to leverage an additional $13 million from the state of Indiana to fund the 100,000-square-foot building.
• Two major gifts to School of Mechanical Engineering were announced on Sept. 16. A $1.75 million gift from Cummins Inc., of Columbus, Ind., will support a new laboratory and fund an endowed professorship in mechanical engineering. A $1.5 million gift from mechanical engineering professor emeritus Eugene Goodson and his wife, Susie, will support an additional new endowed professorship in the school.

• A luncheon on Sept. 18 by the Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences honored its founder and his spouse—Max (Mack) and Ruth Steer of West Lafayette—for their contributions to the department, including more than $1 million in gifts.

• On Sept. 19, FedEx Corp., which is donating a recently retired airplane to the Department of Aviation Technology, turned over the keys to University leaders at the Purdue Airport. Students will use the jet to learn about the mechanics and systems of an aircraft equipped exclusively to carry cargo. The Boeing 727-100, formerly used as a cargo plane, was taken out of service by FedEx in late July. It arrived on campus from the FedEx facilities in Indianapolis on Aug. 1.

• On Sept. 20, Purdue dedicated the $2 million Linda and William Fleischhauer Radiation Therapy Facility for the School of Veterinary Medicine. The facility is the only one in Indiana.

• Purdue announced on Sept. 21 an anonymous gift of $2.5 million to help fund a new $10 million building to house the Discovery Learning Center, one of 10 interdisciplinary research centers in Discovery Park. The building is expected to be completed in 2008. Officials also announced that Jerry and Rosie Semler, co-chairs of the Indianapolis Campaign for Purdue, will make a contribution to be matched 2-for-1 by Lilly Endowment to create a directorship for Discovery Learning Center.

• Krannert School of Management's sixth annual Leadership Speakers Series was held Sept. 21 with a keynote address by NBC News journalist Andrea Mitchell.

• The Homecoming queen and king were crowned Sept. 21 at a Pep Rally at Slayter Center.

• On Sept. 22, Purdue dedicated a new $25 million biomedical engineering building—the first of its kind in Indiana. The Indiana General Assembly authorized Purdue to issue bonds to cover $13 million of the building's cost and provided $2.5 million for the 2003-04 fiscal year and $5 million the following fiscal year to develop the new undergraduate program and expand the graduate program. The remaining funds for the building came from private donations, including $5 million from the Whitaker Foundation, an independent foundation based in Arlington, Va.

• A gift from Cook Group Inc. to support an endowed chair in biomedical engineering was announced Sept. 22 at the Engineering Dean’s Lunch (see related story, this page).

• The Boilermaker Night Train Homecoming Parade was held Sept. 22 followed by fireworks at Slayter Center. President Martin Jischke was grand marshal.

• The entire community was invited to enjoy Homecoming on Sept. 23 on Purdue Mall, with activities, food and live entertainment.