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President Cary Israel, Board of Trustees Chairman, Sam Roach & student Shahina Shad in front of the new Preston Ridge Campus addition. photo by Nick Young

Building a Scholarly Community

By Heather Darrow

GOING TO COLLEGE EVOKES IMAGES of magnificent structures housing unlimited information, encircling a lush, tree-lined courtyard for conversation and contemplation – a place where students can exchange ideas and attempt to solve the world’s challenges.

Frisco residents might be surprised to find many of these idyllic features at a new facility right down the street at Collin County Community College District’s Preston Ridge Campus (PRC). Keeping pace with Frisco’s rapid growth, the college has recently added more than 100,000 square feet to its Frisco campus, including a new 50,000 square foot library, Honors Institute, graphic design, music, photography and art studios, computer-based math and English classrooms, writing and math labs, a digital media workshop, a teaching/learning center and a technology room.

In 1995, when the college opened and Frisco’s population was just beyond 12,000 people, nearly 1,500 students registered for classes. In contrast in 2004, Frisco’s population exceeds 70,000 individuals, and the college has followed suit by more than doubling its enrollment. In 2010, Frisco’s population is projected to reach 111,000. To accommodate this growth, the college has built a comprehensive campus offering premier facilities and instruction with an extensive curriculum.

When the college purchased the land for the Frisco campus in 1990, the board of trustees envisioned the metropolis that Frisco is rapidly becoming.

“Frisco is the city I call home. I remember when the trustees proposed this campus, there was nothing out there but dirt roads and farmland; it was primarily an undeveloped area. We will continue to match strides with Frisco

and offer the best education around,” said Sam Roach, chairman of CCCCD’s board of trustees.

The heart of the campus is the library. When students or community members enter the library’s foyer they will have the choice to step into a traditional 19th century grand reading room with row upon row of book stacks, cathedral ceilings and a central cupola overhead or a

21st century electronic commons lounge with 80 multimedia work stations. The new library fills the ground floor, and faculty offices and classrooms are on the upper-level overlooking the grand reading room.

In this library, however, you can’t judge a book by its cover or a room by its ambiance because even the grand reading room’s desk-top lamp lighting is up-to-date with energy-saving motion detectors. Students may read books, but they can also check out laptop computers and take full advantage of the library’s wireless system. This new library is five times larger than the previous library and can seat 700 students. It will house 80,000 books, 10,000 electronic resources and 300 magazine subscriptions

According to CCCCD President Cary Israel, every outstanding college has a grand library because great books are what college is all about.

“The new library and classrooms create a community of learning and promote the exchange of knowledge among students, professors and area residents. This building inspires a scholarly environment of intellectual

inquiry," said Israel.

The addition also offers a digital media workshop where students can create the ultimate presentation using scanners, CD burners, printers, microphones and software programs including Microsoft® PowerPoint, Adobe® Photoshop®, Macromedia Dreamweaver® and Sony's Sound Forge®, for recording or editing sound.

The college provides an assistive technology room and students can magnify the print in books or use software and a scanner to listen to books read aloud. Students can also navigate the Internet and listen to website information using special voice-command software.

The library offers 6,000 different videos, audiotapes, CDs, DVDs and multimedia offerings. Students and community members can check out books on tape, CD or DVD or enhance their grammar, mathematic or software skills with multimedia instruction. The college even offers children's DVDs, so

parents can study while their children enjoy *Shrek* or *Piglet's Big Movie*.

Just outside the library, students can be part of the future in classrooms equipped with interactive digital whiteboards that even provide graph paper on screen and with the press of

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a button transform the graph into a PowerPoint slide. Students can pursue the arts in traditional classrooms or in the new Applied Graphic Design

Technology lab. Music students can refine their skills in one-person, state-of-the-art, soundproof practice rooms that are wired to produce acoustic virtual reality. A new music and art appreciation classroom features a stage complete with a baby grand piano, a projection room and a wall-mounted control center for video and audio enhancement.

Great attention was given to detail – from the sandblasted windows high above the grand reading room that eliminate shadows for those studying below to the extensive library offerings and the latest technological equipment. In this ideal setting, students can arm themselves with architectural inspiration, gather information they need and begin the quest to create solutions to the world's issues.

This exciting new facility opens for spring classes in January.

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