

M@dlison

Keep current and connected



[Renovating Wayland]

Transformed by the arts

Renovated Wayland Hall will be a unique learning community

By PAULA POLGLASE ('92, '96M) AND LISL MAGBOO ('12)

Imagine entering your residence hall and being greeted by a gallery of art-studded walls. Visualize yourself watching a practice dance rehearsal or catching the faint murmur of a saxophone streaming through the air. Beginning in fall 2011, the Forbes Center for the Performing Arts will not be the only place to witness and hear such talent. Next year, students can expect this and more in Wayland Hall.

The residence hall will house JMU's newest learning community, which features a unique collaboration between the Office of Residence Life and the College of Visual and Performing Arts. The redesign is focused on creating a living and learning center for students interested in the arts.

The project also exemplifies JMU's commitment to strive for sustainability. Wayland Hall is undergoing a redesign with an environmentally conscious approach. Construction is focused on achieving Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design platinum certification, the highest LEED certification status. The renovation is the first building on campus to attempt LEED platinum status.

According to Maggie Evans, director of the Office of Residence Life, the renovation includes plans for new performance, exhibition, practice and classroom spaces. The multipurpose space on the ground floor will offer impeccable acoustics, retractable stadium seating and traces of bluestone interior walls. "Instead of parking, there will be a series of gardens, seating and bike paths that will provide a relaxing

outdoor space for students to sit and read or talk," adds Evans.

Wayland Hall will offer a very arts-active community, allowing students to gather for group rehearsals, meet for class, or view and critique hallmates' performances all in the comforts of "home."

"It is comforting for students to begin their college experience in a community where they can express their passion for the arts right off the bat," says George Sparks, dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

Wayland's new learning community will be the first of its kind at JMU. The community will cater to the multiple CVPA disciplines, including theater, dance, music, art and art history.

Facilitating the development of a broader, holistic appreciation of art, the learning community will expose students to a wider range of skills and talents separate from their fields of concentration.

"I am excited that all the arts will be interconnected in one living community," says Sparks. Students choosing this learning community will

take one common class together taught in their hall. Sparks is excited about the potential of teaching a cross-theory class to this diverse group of students that will include excursions and lectures from visiting faculty.

Although future composers, performers, art educators and artists will be naturally drawn to this learning community, Wayland Hall is envisioned to be a "melting pot" of students. The learning community will welcome freshmen from any major with an interest and passion for the arts.

While the learning community will consist of roughly 15 to 60 freshmen during the first year, Evans said the option of incorporating upperclass students will be considered as the program grows. ■

* Read more about the project at www.jmu.edu/jmuweb/general/news/general11283.shtml.

Artists renderings show a LEED-platinum-status renovated Wayland Hall with arts performance, exhibition, classroom and living spaces.



Students will be able to critique each others' performances and practice in the renovated Wayland Hall.