The Inn Makes First-Floor Renovations

“Not a Rolls Royce, but for a Cadillac, rather than a Chevy,” says Ronald Watts, controller of the Oberlin College Inn, who was searching for a way to describe the quality of the inn’s first-floor rest rooms after renovations are completed in March. The women’s room will get a second sink, and both sinks will be near the mirror. The men’s room will gain another sink, too. Both rooms will be newly papered in traditional floral prints in maroon, forest green, and tan. “Most important,” Engle says, “is that the rooms will accommodate wheelchairs.”

Bringing the rest rooms up to the standards required in the Americans with Disabilities Act is the biggest reason to remodel the facilities. Engle says, but the new fixtures will also consider the environment by incorporating water-saving features. The rest rooms have not been updated since they were built with the rest of the inn’s new section (the overhang that goes out the back and runs on an east-west axis) in the early 1960s.

While the bathroom renovations take place, some other aspects of the first floor will receive attention, too. The coatroom, which could hold only 100 coats, will double its capacity to 200. It will also be deepened on both ends, easing congestion. The front desk area is being redesigned and will be replaced by a wooden construction that will be more traditional in style than the current front desk. Oak paneling will flank the nearby stairway, also increasing the traditional feeling.

The resulting ambiance will be “more like an inn,” says Ronald Watts, controller, who adds that the natural wood doesn’t look out of date as quickly as other modes of decor. And the redesign of the front-desk work area will allow for additional staffing during peak periods and help facilitate our goal to improve customer service in that area.”

7 to Go on Research Status in 1998-99

Seven members of the faculty will be on year-long research status in 1998-99, and one additional faculty member, recommended in late June 1997, is on research status this school year.

The eight new appointees—Mark Bradford, professor of biology; Norman Care, professor of philosophy; Norman Henderson, professor of psychology; Albert Mattlin, associate professor of chemistry; Catherine McCormick, professor of biology; David Orr, professor of environmental studies and politics; Lynne Rogers, assistant professor of music theory; and Anuradha Needham, associate professor of English—were approved at December 6 meeting of the Board of Trustees.

(The four others on research status in 1997-98 are Robert Harrist, associate professor of art and East Asian Studies; Heidi Thomann Tewarson, professor of German; James Tanaka, associate professor of psychology; and Grover Zinn, Danforth Professor of Religion—see the Observer of March 28, 1997.)

Mark Bradford will conduct research to study the organization of the forebrain in developing embryos of a teleost fish. His goal is to determine whether the forebrain of these fishes is composed of a series of segments like those that have been described for other vertebrate groups. The results of the study may shed light on a long-standing problem in comparative forebrain organization: the evolution of the dorsal thalamus. Work Bradford did this past year with then-senior Seth Fishman, a neuroscience honors student, provides plot information for using rainbow trout in such studies. Most of the work will be done at Oberlin.

Norman Care will complete a book-length manuscript on what it is for novel ideas to “take” in persons so that they inform and guide thought and action. In particular he is interested in the question of what motivation is necessary for people to move from knowing what is right to being moved to do right. The problem in question flows from his earlier books, On Sharing Fate and Living with Ones Past: Personal Fates and Moral Pain.

Norman Henderson will analyze behavioral measures of anxiety, fear, and depression in mice. The work will be a first step in locating genes contributing to anxiety and depression in humans. Collaboration on the project began in June 1997 with three other researchers: John DeFries and David Fulker from the Institute for Behavioral Genetics at the University of Colorado and Jonathan Flint from the Institute of Molecular Medicine at Oxford University. Oberlin’s responsibilities is to develop the behavioral test battery and oversee the testing of 1600 to 1800 specially bred mice. Hewill

Continued on page 2
Research Status...  
Continued from page 1...

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Faculty and Staff Notes

David Arredondo, associate director of admissions, was pro- fessor of English at City News, a major English-language daily in New York. The paper inter- viewed him while he was on an extended Latin America research trip. He is the author of international admissions. The Q&A article, “David Arredondo: Recruiting International Students,” was crafted in consultation with David’s work for the College. “I be- lieve that the article is very well done and almost 100 percent accurate, espe- cially in describing my work,” said Arredondo.

Johner Bucher, di- rector of computing, has been an elected member of the board of trustees of Educom, a nonprofit orga- nization of higher-education institutions that facilitates the introduction, use, and development of information resources in teaching, learning, scholarship, and research. Johner is still chair of the executive board of the Spe- cial Interest Group for University and College Computing Services of the As- sociation for Computing Machinery. Last month he led the CAUSE Recognition Committee, which selects the an- nual winners of the CAUSE Elite award (an individual accomplishment) and the CAUSE Practice award (which honors one or more best practices in higher-education information technology management). CAUSE calls itself “the association for managing and using information re- sources and technology in higher edu- cation.”

Jen Davidson, technical coordinator and lec- turer in the Theater and Dance Program, was pro- duced and managed, and stage managed for Yo Yo M in the Soul of the Tango/De- cember 4-10. The concert was performed in Seattle, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, and Washington, D.C. The CD & Soul, comprising work by the late Ar- gentinean composer Astor Piazzolla, was released by Sony Classical in November.

>> Matthew Taylor, professor of religious studies, delivered a talk at the City Club of Cleveland’s Women’s Discussion Table February 11. The discussion topic is the controversy between women’s professional and person- al lives. Dyetalk will be “Women as Leaders in Higher Education.”

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Taylor Allen to Use Worms in Human Heart Research

Taylor Allen, assistant professor of biology, has received a $30,639 grant from the Cleveland-based Templeton Medical Research Foundation to study the switch protein T (TnT), a cellular mechanism that controls the strength and duration of heartbeats. The switch is of critical importance; since mutations in the proteins that form the switch have been directly linked with the development and onset of familial hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, an inherited fatal heart disease that frequently has as its first symptom sudden cardiac arrest.

The project will explore fundamental operations of the switch, focusing on the functions and interactions of TnT. A protein essential for regulating calcium, TnT is expressed in the heart muscle. The research will address critical questions about the function of TnT in muscle and provide information essential for the development of more effective drugs to regulate the heart in persons suffering from heart disease.

Allen will carry out the research on the worm Caenorhabditis elegans. "This worm," says Allen, "is strikingly similar to humans at the molecular and cellular levels and therefore represents a powerful model for genetic research and understanding human disease. Research into the genetics underlying the switch protein T (TnT), a protein essential for regulating calcium, has contributed significantly to understanding the processes involved in the onset of cardiomyopathy, an inherited fatal heart disease, as well as heart and other muscular diseases." Allen's research will involve combining molecular genetic and physiological techniques.

Transitions

Changes in Appointment

Yolanda Cruz, in the biology department, and Gary Kornblith, in the history department, have been promoted from associate to full professor. E. Leigh Gibson, instructor in there forensics, has completed his Ph.D. requirements and has been promoted to assistant professor. Visiting instructors Linda Dorff, in the English department, and Karen Wolff, in the conservatory of music, have been promoted from visiting instructors to visiting assistant professors because they also completed their Ph.D. requirements. Anne Trubek, visiting instructor in expository writing, is now also a visiting instructor in English. Sam Goldberg, emeritus professor of mathematics, will teach a course, The Environment: Modeling and Simulation, during the spring semester, and Nathan Greenberg, emeritus professor of classics, will teach two courses, Roman Comedy and Introduction to Greek Tragedy, for the second module of the spring semester.

Other transitions include that of former acting director of career services Wendy Smith Miller, who advanced to director of career services December 15. Beginning January 1, Patricia Rutherford, a former secretary in the Annual Fund Office, is the new administrative coordinator for Development Resources. On January 19, administrative technician Deborah Sutorius was transferred from the Office of Human Resources to the Office of Public Programs.

Please Comment

Oberlin College, including the Conservatory of Music, is seeking comments from the public in preparation for its periodic evaluation by its regional accrediting agency.

The College will undergo a comprehensive evaluation visit March 2-4, 1998. Additional comments are invited for the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, which will review the institution's ongoing ability to meet the two organizations' criteria and requirements for accreditation.

The public is invited to submit written comments at the following address:

Public Comment
Oberlin College
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
National Association of Independent Colleges and Schools
30N. LaSalle Street, Suite 2400
Chicago, IL 60602

Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution and its academic programs. Comments must be in writing and signed; they cannot be treated as confidential.

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