

\$4.5 M addition planned at NTID

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More bricks are headed to Rochester Institute of Technology, as plans were announced Thursday for a new \$4.5 million student development center for the college's National Technical Institute for the Deaf.

The two-story, 30,000 square-foot building is the first major addition to NTID in decades. President Lyndon Baines Johnson established NTID 40 years ago as an educational option for underserved deaf students.

RIT President Albert Simone said the building is intended to discover, nurture and empower tomorrow's deaf and hard-of-hearing leaders."

NTID Dean and CEO T. Alan Hurwitz said the building is needed to help students grow while at college. Only 25 percent of their time is spent in the classroom.

"This will help students look forward to the future," Hurwitz said.

The building will feature numerous skylights and large spaces, allowing student to gather and chat informally. It will also be home to student clubs, which are now vying for space in a neighboring building.

Karen Black, an NTID spokeswoman, said the building is also significant for the greater Rochester community, which boasts one of the largest deaf populations in the country. She said the building will help recruit more students who may graduate, work and raise their families in Rochester.

The new building, expected to be completed in the fall of 2006, will be called the CSD Student Development Center, named after CSD, or Communication Service for the Deaf, based in Sioux Falls, S.D. CSD has made the lead gift for the building, although more fundraising is needed to complete it, Black said.

Give something back

CSD president and CEO Benjamin Soukup said 39 NTID graduates, including his daughter, work for CSD, a nonprofit telecommunications company that took in about \$90 million last year.

"This is what you have given to us, and now we can give back in return," Soukup told a crowded room filled with NTID students faculty members and members of the community. Soukup said the gift will be given in installments over the next several years.

"We try to support programs that support deaf and hard-of-hearing people," he said.

The new center will connect NTID's Lyndon Baines Johnson Building to the Hettie L. Shumway Dining Commons; students won't have to go outside to get from one building to the other.

It will house offices for the NTID student government, student life, multicultural clubs, a study center, a communication center and commuter lockers.

Ellie Rosenfield, NTID's associate dean for student and academic services, said the new building will offer space to hold up to 250 people in one area, and may encourage more interaction between deaf and hearing students on campus.

Charles Sterling, president of the NTID Student congress, was impressed with the plans. He said it will become a natural focal point where students will socialize.

"We look forward to it," said Sterling, 21 of Silver spring, Md. "We need more space in our offices for growth."

Ryan Grant, 22, an NTID student from New York City, agreed.

"It is going to be good for deaf people to get together and grow," he said.