



Photo by Steve Dykes

A recently remodeled Gilbert Hall classroom shows the curved, tiered seating favorable to teaching by the case method

Gilbert Hall classrooms rebuilt

Businessmen chip in remodeling

By JIM LUND
Of the Emerald

In these troubled economic times, it's hard enough to make ends meet, let alone undertake a construction project. But that's exactly what the University business school has done.

Oregon businesses and foundations have contributed over \$400,000 to renovate Gilbert Hall, home of the College of Business and Administration, according to the business college's assistant dean for external affairs, Don Christensen. With the funds, classrooms are being made more adaptable to modern teaching techniques.

"We didn't really have a room in the entire building that was adequate for teaching by the case method," said University vice president for administration and finance Ray Hawk.

In the case method, a professor presents an actual business problem and the students discuss possible solutions. The

room has tiered seating shaped in a curve to promote discussion and increased eye contact.

"(College of Business Administration) Dean Reinmuth started talking to some of the men in the business community that he knew, and happily the Giustinas responded to his suggestion of wanting to build a case study room," Hawk said.

Recruiting funds for the Giustina case room, sponsored by Eugene lumberman Ehrmen Giustina, represented a first for the business college.

"To the best of my knowledge, to actually do something in physical construction to remodel rooms to improve the teaching environment is not only a first for the business school, it's a first for the University, outside of the athletic department," Hawk said.

Since the project began 2½ years ago, five classrooms have been redesigned. To go along with the Giustina room, Eugene lumber executive Edwin Cone

funded a case room. John Holmes of Medford contributed to a new seminar room, the Bohemia Lumber Co. financed a new computer laboratory, and Eugene businessmen Nils Hult and L.L. Stewart funded a new conference room. Two new projects are underway.

"It seems as if tipping the first domino helps to get others started," Hawk said. A further explanation for the project's success is offered by Christensen.

"Business and industry have a vested interest in the kind of students and the quality of students that we turn out," Christensen said. "Obviously, if we turn out first-rate business students they're going to be first-rate employees. If we attract better faculty and students to Oregon, there's a good chance they're going to stay here, too."

Because of the condition of the economy, Hawk sees other schools following the business

college's lead.

"I suspect that we will see this as an example others will follow," Hawk said. "I think it will become a trend."

Christensen agrees, but cautions other schools on campus may have a more difficult time.

"It's easier for us because we have a natural constituency. Most of our construction has come about because people who are on our college of business advisory board are sensitive to our needs and have contributed the funds for them," Christensen said. "I've been awfully pleased with the kind of support we've seen from the business community and the alumni."

The state, however, is another matter.

"Unfortunately, we're stepping in where the state should be," Christensen said. "It really should be a state function, but the money simply hasn't come in for renovating and maintain-

ing some of these buildings, so we've had to go to private sources."

The likelihood of state funds filtering down to an individual school for physical renovation within a reasonable time period is slim, Hawk says.

"I would not want to hold my breath," Hawk admitted. "When you consider the backlog of demands, the chance to get down to remodeling classrooms in a given building are so remote that I would say it's not going to happen in my lifetime."

Gilbert Hall is composed of a pair of buildings — the original Oregon Hall built in 1914 and the School of Commerce building built in 1921 — linked together by another building completed in 1951. The complex was known as Commonwealth Hall until 1975 when it was renamed for the late James Gilbert, who had taught economics and served as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University.



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