

Law school nears completion

By Tricia Schwennesen
Oregon Daily Emerald

The intermittent hum of electric saws still seeps out from beneath long sheets of plastic. Part of the skeletal infrastructure of steel and concrete remains exposed.

However, construction of the William W. Knight Law School at the corner of 15th Avenue and Agate Street is nearing its final stages, and most of the outside is finished.

The \$24 million project is expected to be complete by early spring, said Jane Gordon, the School of Law's associate dean for student affairs.

"We've been really lucky with the weather," Gordon said. "It's been really dry."

Gordon said the original plan was to move into the new building after the fall semester, but law school officials decided to wait until after commencement because the move will be so large.

Jennifer Roth and Maureen McFadden, both third year law students, said they are disappointed they will never attend classes in the new building.

Both said they were curious about what the bathrooms would look like in the new building because the bathrooms are too small

in Grayson Hall, home of the current law school built in 1970.

"Well, they were built when mostly men went to school here," McFadden said.

Gordon said almost all 41 faculty offices in the new building are completely framed and construction crews are dry walling and putting in the ceilings.

"It's very impressive," said Jerry Hill, a second year law student. "It seems huge."

The new building will have about 50 percent more space than Grayson Hall, accommodate about 500 students and house a larger library, conference rooms and study rooms. It will also house The Commons, a central place where students, faculty and staff can meet, Gordon said.

The new school will be fully wired to accommodate the latest technology in computers. Law students are required to have a laptop computer but current classrooms are not conveniently wired for students to plug in, Gordon said.

Originally, the plan was to renovate Grayson Hall but new sources of funding provided a new building, said George Pernsteiner, vice provost for resource management.

"The bulk of the funding is gift oriented," Pernsteiner said.

In 1996, Phil Knight, CEO of Nike, Inc., gave the University \$25 million. A portion of his gift is being used to build the new law building in honor of his father, William W. Knight.

About two years ago, the University sold back some state bonds to raise \$10.3 million and more than \$14 million was raised through private funding, Pernsteiner said.

The University is currently paying the debt service on the bonds it sold for the project.

Some of the funds came from resource fees law students paid and a few thousand dollars were advanced from the chancellor, Pernsteiner said.

None of the funding came from state dollars, he said.

After the School of Law moves into the new building, Grayson Hall will undergo \$19 million in renovations for future use by the School of Arts and Sciences.

"It was definitely a win-win situation for the university community," Gordon said.

Renovations will include more office space for faculty and staff, more classrooms and the possibility of a computer lab. The renovated building should provide space for 1,850 students.

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