

Pat-mark-up



Staff photo by Duffy Coffman

CENTER OF ATTENTION—The newly constructed Pauling Science Center has yet to be accepted because of various problems in the construction. The problems have ranged from cracks in the courtyard to inferior plants being used in the landscaping.

Pauling Center workmanship questioned

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Final acceptance of the \$4.4 million Pauling Science Center has been delayed by the College because of obvious problems with the workmanship.

The construction problems, mainly of an aesthetic nature, include: cracks in the concrete courtyard; cracks in the above-ground foundation footings and deficiencies in the landscaping work.

These problems, believed by some construction experts to be related to sub-standard workmanship, may also be a result of the current low bid process.

According to Andy Rice, landscape architect for the Pauling Center who was responsible for the design of the courtyard and landscaping, "It's obvious to the least observant person that there's a problem in the overall quality. I don't believe that there was any consistency or real care given to the supervision or the work. That's my opinion."

Don Fisher, College facilities development and planning officer and the College's representative in the construction process, further comments, "We are still arguing with the contractor (Contractors, Inc., of Sherwood) over certain aesthetic problems, and

have yet to accept the science center."

Foremost among the construction problems is the readily visible cracking in the courtyard area.

Courtyard Cracking

The multi-level enclosure was formed with two pours of concrete which were cut by a diamond-bladed saw into four-foot by six-foot modules. The saw-cut joints were designed, according to Rice, to achieve two goals: first, to give the impression of paving stones laid in an irregular pattern; second, to control shrinkage and cracking of the concrete slab.

However, numerous cracks

have formed in the concrete and, although not uncommon, have caused what both Rice and Fisher have called definite aesthetic problems. "You know concrete will crack," stated Fisher, "but, you always hope that it won't."

Cracks form in concrete due to shrinkage as the material dries. Saw-cut joints control that shrinkage by dispersing it evenly throughout the concrete. In this case, the saw-cut joints in the courtyard were ineffective in controlling that shrinkage, which resulted in greater cracking than had been planned for.

Ron Lee, of Barrentine, Bates and Lee, the consulting

architectural firm for the project, commented, "We believe that the major problem is that they (Contractors, Inc.) did not saw-cut the control joints within the specified time that the contract documents called for."

Addressing the time frame, Rice stated, "the saw-cuts should have been made within 24 to 48 hours after the concrete was poured."

However, Larry Singleton, contractor representative from Contractors, Inc., the general contracting firm of the project, replied, "Is that right? Well, that's somebody's theory, I guess."

Cont. on page 6

DeWolfe receives
humanities
grant

page 4

The art of
tattooing

page 9

Sports year
in review

pages 10-12

