

New building might welcome mediocre name

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After weeks of work and asking people what they want to name a new building on campus, college administrators said last week the new student services center will be named the "Welcome Center."

The building still could get a name attached to it, said Tara Sprehe, dean of Academic Foundations and Connections.

"While we feel confident the Welcome Center is the best name for this new building, we want to continue the conversation for how we can better demonstrate inclusivity within this building, and that process will begin soon," Sprehe wrote in an email to all staff. "Additionally, opportunities to name the Welcome Center after a person remain available to us."

The new student services building will sit next to the community center and house everything from financial aid to testing services. College staff spent months asking students for ideas during tabling, forums and during First Year Experience courses. One instructor said the college should think about diversity when naming the new building. Most buildings on the Oregon City campus are named after white men who range from scientists to pioneers; one building, the Dye Learning Center, was named after a woman.

The college says the building will be the new "front door" of the college, and house services like admissions, advising, counseling, education partnerships, financial aid, registration, testing and placement services and a welcome desk.

The college plans to break ground on the building March 13 and open it in fall 2021. The new building

will be attached to the existing Bill Brod Community Center.

At the Board of Education meeting on Feb. 12, staff said changing the name of the Bill Brod Community Center would require approval from the Foundation and the Board of Education. The college is obligated to keep the name Bill Brod, staff said, because of a donation unless major construction changes the existing building.

CCC instructor James Bryant-Trerise who teaches Native American Mythology, a class I am taking, thinks the building should be named something else. "Very specifically I want to name the building Wachenno Hall, precisely because his first name is John, just like John McLachlan, the major white pioneer of Oregon City, and John Wachenno all kind of balances out and has that sort of ironic irony of them both being John."

"Also because when I have talked to people at the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde a couple of different people have, without my asking when I said something like I'd like to create awareness through a name, they said you should consider, you know, John Wachenno." Bryant-Trerise also said "This is the opportunity to do something public and prominent about a major educational hole, and when is that opportunity going to rise again? Are we going to keep delaying it and delaying it and delaying it? How long are we going to keep from doing something public and prominent? You know, supposedly, we're focused on diversity, equity and inclusion."

Sprehe has suggested the college is thinking of diversity.

"As for inclusivity, we will continue to explore ways in which we can honor the land upon which our college was built," Sprehe said in an email to staff. "We are working with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the Native American Youth Association to ensure that anything we do isn't appropriated from their perspective."

The idea of inclusivity seems to be a sticking point for the college, as it is having to reconcile with the fact that all the buildings are named after white individuals. It is hard to send a message of inclusivity when it seems that the buildings that make up the campus tell a completely different story.

While many of the people whose names are on buildings did a lot for the community or the school, none of them were of the Clackamas Chinook, the people who had the land the school is built on. David Harrelson, the cultural resources manager of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, which the Clackamas Chinook are a member, said he likes the idea of naming a building after John Wachenno. "...[T]he Wachenno name is definitely the prominent chiefly name of the area and I think that that would be very honorific of a name," Harrelson said.

A building is not the only way to organize the Clackamas Chinook. "I think that ensuring that or encouraging professors to use curriculum that is relevant and based upon the teachings and information on the Clackamas people, I think that that is a really good way to ensure that it stays alive," said Harrelson. "[A] public art installation could be another venue within the traditional art form."



Rendering of the future Welcome Center provided by CCC.