



A major gift will allow the University of Oregon to purchase the permanently closed Concordia University campus at Northeast 28th and Holman and turn it into a new UO campus for educational programs that address children's behavior and mental health, officials announced last week. (Photo from Google Maps)

UO to Buy Concordia

Campus site eyed for new educational model

In the coming days, the University of Oregon Board of Trustees is expected to review a purchase agreement for the former Concordia University campus in northeast Portland, which will become home to a new UO institute addressing children's behavior and mental health, college officials announced last week.

The Concordia University campus at Northeast 28th and Holman closed under a financial cloud with no warning to students in 2020 after 115 years of operation. The new plans would take over the

campus from the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, the religious-based founders of the school.

A \$425 million gift from Connie and Steve Ballmer to the University of Oregon will allow the state university to purchase the permanently closed private campus and make into a new public campus for the UO, delivering a new model of education programs that would also serve local school districts, including Portland public schools.

The new Ballmer Institute for Children's Behavioral Health will be a bold new approach to addressing the behavioral and mental health care needs of Oregon's children, UO officials announced.

The institute would establish a new national model for behavioral and mental health care by uniting the UO's top-ranked research programs, Oregon public schools

and families, and community support groups in the creation and delivery of intervention and treatment programs that can be part of the daily lives of K-12 students.

The UO will propose a new degree program and launch a certificate program to empower a new workforce eager to meet children's needs within schools and organizations.

"Connie and Steve Ballmer, who have already provided exceptional support and inspiration for children's behavioral health, are now empowering the university to make immediate and lasting positive impacts on children's behavioral and mental health," said Michael H. Schill, University of Oregon president and professor of law. "A bold effort is needed to address the behavioral and mental health needs of our youth. This gift is monumental. It enables

UO researchers and experts to build on a collective vision to develop innovative and scalable programs, and to address the need for a sustainable workforce that can work directly with our children."

Portland Superintendent Guadalupe Guerrero said he believes this type of collaboration has tremendous implications for both young people and educators.

"The global pandemic has only amplified the mental and behavioral health needs of students here in Portland and across the country," said Guerrero. "School districts are often ill-equipped to adequately address these barriers to learning. We have a responsibility to find innovative ways to support the holistic needs of our students and are excited for our groundbreaking partnership with the Ballmer Institute."