



## UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

120 David L. Boren Blvd  
Norman, OK 73072  
Phone: (405) 325-1819  
Fax: (405) 325-1108  
www.weathersphere.org

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### **Research campus nearly ready**

*Two new buildings slated to open in 2009, 2010*

By: Meredith Moriak/The Daily

A dream from the early 1990s has become a reality during the past eight years on OU's research campus.

The campus, located on 271 acres of land north of State Highway 9 on Jenkins Avenue, is home to four state-of-the-art buildings.

Additionally, construction has begun on two new buildings: Three Partners Place and the Stephenson Life Sciences Research Center.

The buildings are the fifth and sixth to be constructed since the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education first approved breaking ground for the Stephenson Research and Technology Center in 2001, said Lee Williams, vice president of research and graduate school dean.

The goal of the research campus is to create a place where researchers from various disciplines work together trading ideas about different projects, Williams said.

"We wanted to bring different disciplines together and have them interact and recreate the classic university," Williams said.

### **Bringing it all together**

The research campus coins itself as the place to bring together the academics of the university, government programming and the private sector, said Melany Dickens, director of research campus operations.

Williams said he feels the National Weather Center is the center of the research campus and is a good example of how the university and government can collaborate.

"[The research campus] is designed to promote the scholarly, intellectual interaction that should happen at a university," Williams said. "It reaffirms the core values of what a university should be."

The research campus is important to the university because it creates a community where scholars from different disciplines including science and math to come together and solve research problems, said Paul Risser, chair of the university research cabinet. Additionally, it allows for the university to engage and support the private sector that occupies some buildings.

“It is one of the largest engines of economic progress for our state by creating more jobs based on new research discoveries and patents,” OU President David L. Boren said in an e-mail. “Ultimately, these new discoveries launch new businesses allowing more outstanding Oklahomans to stay and continue to live and work in our state.”

The National Weather Center was completed in July 2006 through state, federal and university funds, Williams said.

### **Partnered construction**

Three Partners Place, which is currently under construction, will be similar to One and Two Partners Place on the research campus. It will house OU researchers and private companies, including the Oklahoma Climatologically Survey and Norman Economic Development Coalition, Dickens said.

Allowing private sectors to occupy parts of the buildings ensures the curriculum being taught will be valuable and relevant to the private sector, and preparing students for a career after graduation, Risser said.

“We help businesses, but the businesses help the university,” Risser said. “They are so important and part of why [the research campus] has been so successful.”

The OU researchers who occupy the building are from various departments, including chemistry, botany and microbiology; they also pay rent with grant money, Williams said.

Three Partners Place is already full, and tenants will move in when the building is complete, Williams said.

“As long as we have research groups, we can build more buildings and we don’t have to shoe hole them into existing buildings,” Williams said.

Williams said the Stephenson Life Sciences Research Center, which is scheduled to open in summer 2010, includes a number of large laboratories that allow researchers from multiple disciplines to work together in open workspaces.

“It is a spectacular building on an open plan to encourage collaboration between different research groups,” Williams said.

Aside from new buildings, a weather radar called OU PRIME is being installed next to Highway 9. The research and teaching radar is the most sophisticated and powerful radar at any university in the world, Williams said.

The research campus is meant to provide fresh space where faculty can perform research they might not have thought possible in older research buildings on the main campus, he said.

“There is really a feeling here that anything is possible and the people are not cynical,” Risser said. “We can do anything and good ideas are not discounted.”

### **Research future**

A positive aspect of the campus is its close proximity to main campus, Dickens said. She said it is an advantage that other universities do not have.

“We hold classes at the research campus that would never be possible if it were located somewhere else,” Dickens said.

Williams said there are plans and conceptual drawings for a Four Partners Place that can be built when there is a necessity for the space. He said he enjoys seeing the campus grow steadily and observing the academic, government and private sectors working together.

Risser said the research campus is alive with things he doesn’t see in other academic areas, like energy, excitement and researchers who are hungry for knowledge.

The research campus that started from scratch eight years ago currently houses 890,00 sq. ft. of space and cost close to \$240 million to build, Williams said.

The money for the research campus and its future projects is gathered from various places including bond funds, gifts, grants, state, federal and university funds. All of the Partners Place buildings are funded entirely through the rent of the tenants, Williams said.

### **Research Campus buildings**

#### National Weather Center

- Completed in July 2006
- 244,000 sq. ft. housing academic and research meteorology programs and NOAA research

#### Stephenson Research Technology Center

- Completed in 2004
- 94,000 sq. ft. of research space for interdisciplinary programs

#### Stephenson Life Sciences Research Center

- Opening in summer 2010
- 165,000 sq. ft interdisciplinary facility housing advanced graduate and undergraduate student research laboratories

#### One Partners Place

- Completed in fall 2004

- 50,000 sq. ft. of research space for private sectors and OU researchers

Two Partners Place

- Completed in Spring 2007
- 50,000 sq. ft. of research space for private sectors and OU researchers

Three Partners Place

- Opening in summer 2009
- 75,000 sq. ft. of space for OU administrative areas, OU researchers and private sectors



**1** **STEPHENSON RESEARCH TECHNOLOGY CENTER**  
 provides 94,000 sq. ft. of research space, and includes interdisciplinary programs in biotechnology, bioengineering, and robotics.

**4** **TWO PARTNERS PLACE**  
 provides 50,000 sq. ft. of social and physical science research space and space for private sector companies.

**2** **ONE PARTNERS PLACE**  
 provides 50,000 sq. ft. of space for private sector companies and research program space.

**5** **THREE PARTNERS PLACE**  
 will provide 75,000 sq. ft. of space for several OU administrative areas, as well as research and private sector company space. Opening Summer 2009.

**3** **NATIONAL WEATHER CENTER**  
 provides 244,000 sq. ft. of meteorological research and governmental programs space, including NOAA Research and Operational Programs.

**6** **STEPHENSON LIFE SCIENCES RESEARCH CENTER**  
 a 165,000 sq. ft. interdisciplinary facility providing advanced graduate and undergraduate research programs in structural biology, biomolecular science, nanotechnology, bioanalysis, and natural products, supported by core facilities in magnetic resonance imaging, mass spectrometry, and X-ray crystallography. Opening Summer 2010.