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## Fletcher Hall renovations to begin in December

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Linda Perkins Melton, a 68-year-old grandmother, is on track to earn a bachelor's degree from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette next spring.

Work will begin soon to renovate Joel L. Fletcher Hall. The three-story building on the University of Louisiana at Lafayette campus houses the School of Architecture and Design and the Department of Visual Arts and the College of the Arts' Media Center.

The low bidder for the project was M.D. Descant Inc.

"We expect to sign a contract as soon as possible," said Bill Crist, director of Facilities Management for the University. The renovation is expected to begin in December and be complete by the end of next year.

Ziler Architects, the firm that designed the project, received input from students, faculty and alumni.

Fletcher Hall opened in 1977. The original design called for its interior atrium to be covered in glass, but because of budget constraints, it was built with an open-air courtyard instead. Years of exposure to rain have resulted in extensive water damage.

The renovation project will correct leaks and add 20,000 square feet of educational space to the second floor.

The first-floor exterior walls will be repaired, cleaned, weatherproofed and coated to complement new metal panels that will be used on the exterior of the upper floors.

A sprinkler and fire-alarm system will also be added to the building.

Crist said classes will continue to be held in the building during the renovation. "Obviously, that's going to present some challenges, but the end result will be a much-improved facility that will serve students in the years to come," he added.

The building is named for the University's third president, Joel Lafayette Fletcher, who served from 1941 to 1966.

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