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Improvements under way across campus

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Grandmother on track for college degree after years of stops and starts

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.

As the fall semester unfolds at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, workers are engaged in multiple projects to upgrade campus facilities, according to Bill Crist, director of Facilities Management.

The renovation and expansion of the Student Union is on schedule; the project is expected to be complete by the end of 2014. All of the structural work and roofing is complete. Workers are installing the building's brick exterior and will soon begin interior construction.

The \$36 million project includes the renovation of the University Bookstore, ballroom and Bayou Bijou theater, and the addition of about 30,000 square feet of space. The energy-efficient design is expected to receive Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification for standards set by the U.S. Green Building Council.

It will feature restaurants, administrative offices and the University post office.

"We're creating the equivalent of a town square that's designed to serve the campus community, giving special attention to the needs of our students," said Crist.

The project is funded primarily by self-assessed student fees. In Spring 2003, students approved a \$55 per semester fee dedicated to the Union. They approved an additional \$20 per semester fee for the Union in 2005. To date, the university has collected about \$19 million in student fees. An additional \$23 million in bonds will be used for the project.

Improvements are also under way at Burke-Hawthorne Hall. When the building was expanded and remodeled in 2009, it almost doubled in size. The project included additional classroom space, a major expansion of KRVS radio station and the renovation of Burke-Hawthorne Theatre.

Crist said the current work is a continuation of the state-funded project. It includes:

- installation of a decorative screen around a cooling tower at the rear of the building and adjacent to Cypress Lake;
- addition of wrought-iron fencing around the Burke-Hawthorne courtyard; and
- improvements to the Burke-Hawthorne Theater (backstage renovations and additional paving in the loading dock area).

These improvements will cost about \$1 million. The building houses the Department of Communication, the Department of

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Lafayette next spring.

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Communicative Disorders, facilities for the Department of Performing Arts, and KRVS.

Work is also continuing at Angelle Hall, said Crist. Crews replaced sidewalks at the building's entrance this fall. Workers are in the process of re-roofing and waterproofing the building. Crist said work is expected to continue for about a year.

Once the roof is complete, necessary repairs will be made to interior ceilings, which have been damaged by water leaks. The \$700,009 project is being paid for with University funds.

Angelle Hall was completed in 1965. It houses the University's School of Music and Performing Arts.

The improvements are part of the University's Master Plan, which will guide the development of campus over the next 10 to 20 years.

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