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## College's big moves

**\$42 million to be spent on improvements, construction at WCCC's new campus**

August 6, 2007

**BY BOWDEYA TWEH**  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Paint is wearing off the building's exterior, the vents rattle and ping and the first floor floods when it rains.

Wayne County Community College has upgraded its northwest campus building, but many problems remain. Some students say the facility still reminds them of the high school it was in the 1970s.

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Yet nearly 13,000 students took classes last fall at the campus at Greenfield and Joy roads, including 5,474 getting college credit for it -- the most of the college's five campuses.

With that many students -- and the numbers likely to increase -- the university is beginning to relocate its northwest campus to a site at Southfield Freeway and Outer Drive, formerly the University of Detroit Mercy's Outer Drive campus. Some classes and employees will move before the next semester starts Aug. 27, and college Chancellor Curtis Ivery said he expects all the northwest campus' programs to move to the new location by 2009.

"The northwest site is in poor condition, and some areas do not provide the positive educational environment that reinforces growth and progress," Ivery said of the old campus. "We are sure that our students look forward to the new campus for a better educational-built environment in which to learn."

Yet not everyone thinks the move is needed.

Brook Smith, a Detroit resident studying to be an elementary school teacher, said moving to the new site -- seven miles north of the current campus -- would upset students' travel schedules. As far as he knows, some of his classes this fall will be at Greenfield and Joy roads. "When I look at it, it looks fairly new to me," Smith, 30, said of the old campus. "I think it'll be fine right here -- a little touch-up here and there."

Officials say a touch-up is out of the question. Built in the 1950s, the main campus building was once home to Rosary High School. The campus took over the site in 1975 and built an extension of the original building.

"We're not going to make an investment here because we know we were going to build new," said Mark Sanford, executive vice president of the northwest campus.

The ceilings, carpet, restrooms, labs, electrical wiring, plumbing, classrooms and administrative offices have all required minor or major renovation since moving to the campus.

Alicia Harris, a business administration student, said the old campus might have been in better shape if the college would have dealt with problems that occur regularly.

When it rains, the area around the main door of the building floods, said Harris, 23, of Detroit. And a standing pool of water stretches down the hallway inside the building.

### PHOTOS

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(HEATHER ROUSSEAU/Special to the Free Press)

Students study teeth molds in their dental lab class Friday at the Wayne County Community College northwest campus in Detroit. In front are Adnan Alamdi of Detroit and Omar Mozeb of Hamtramck. In back, from left, are Alicia Bracewell of Detroit, Mary Sinclair of Windsor and Christina Bliznik of Southgate.

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"That's why the financial aid office moved upstairs," Harris said. "Because when the floors were flooded, they had to close the office."

The college estimates \$42 million in projects will be done on the new campus, which includes the construction of an allied health science building. Other goals include creating a one-stop shop for administrative and student services and increased conference space.

Framed architectural drawings of the plans for the college's new campus adorn many walls in the building.

Amanda Aleshire, 21, of New Boston said the college provides her with what she needs academically, but she's optimistic the new campus will bring new equipment and lab space needed to learn her craft.

Aleshire is studying to be a dental hygienist and said she welcomes the opportunity to have nonsqueaking dentist chairs and improved X-ray machines.

"It's a good program," Aleshire said. "It's just we don't have the environment we should."

Contact **BOWDEYA TWEH** at 313-222-6513 or [btweh@freepress.com](mailto:btweh@freepress.com).

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**matthewb2015**

There is a direct correlation between student body pride in their schools and the school's respective attempt to improve facilities and offerings. Even news a school plans to drop some serious dough on improvements can cause a spike in school spirit. I hope the money gets to where it is supposed to go because so many folks need community colleges as the academic middle man between high school and a four-year degree. I hope all colleges such as WCCC get moving on improving. Best wishes.

Posted: Mon Aug 06, 2007 11:21 am

**wjb123**

Unless I'm missing something, WCCC is not a University. It is a community college. You can't get a 4 year degree there, only a 2 year associates degree

Posted: Mon Aug 06, 2007 10:15 am

**dorian**

finally some good news about some detroiters trying to educate themselves. it would be nice if they could afford some of the other universities.

Posted: Mon Aug 06, 2007 9:48 am

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