

# Bliss Hall will receive update

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An 18,000 square foot addition to update and expand the art facilities will be added to the east side of Bliss Hall. The state-funded project will cost an estimated \$3.3 million.

Dennis Clouse, director of planning and construction at YSU, said the construction is expected to begin this summer and will take approximately one year to complete. "The building should be ready to be occupied by fall semester of 2003," he said.

The architectural firm MS Consultants of Youngstown designed the plans for the addition. Bids for the construction of the new facility were due July 3. After evaluation of the bids, apparent low bidders for each of the trades will be notified as to selection, Clouse said.

Chairperson Greg Moring of the department of art said that the addition is necessary to meet accreditation standards of the National School of Art and Design. He also said these standards require that certain levels of facilities be met to support the professional arts program.

"Our spatial arts facilities have been at a relatively low level. The last renovation was about five years ago, which left us in a situation where our students could not attain the proper level of training, especially in sculpture," Moring said.

Another factor necessitating the renovation of Bliss Hall is the increase in student

enrollment. "The art department has been growing at approximately 10 percent each year," Moring said.

Clouse affirmed, "The expansion is taking place because the department of art, which this will primarily serve, is growing exponentially. The demand is great for new, advanced painting studios and sculpture labs."

The new plan includes an exterior work court, a fenced area where students will be able to work on larger scale projects outside as well as inside.

"The current sculptural facilities did not allow students to work on a larger scale," Moring said. "Students were always working on a very small scale; there was not enough room and equipment for them to work larger," he continued.

Moring added that there also was not enough room in existing facilities for advanced students to work separately. When students reach a senior level, they need to have a space to work that is separate from lower-level students, he stated.

"As opposed to intro-level students, who can move their projects on and off of shelves to work on, advanced students need a space in which they can work on something that they don't have to keep pulling apart and moving," Moring explained.

Senior art education major Kristine Bogensperger recalled the environment in a sculpture class she once took and said there was a definite "need for more space and storage" in

Bliss Hall.

"There was one sculpture room with three classes going on at the same time, such as an introductory and an advanced sculpture course. There just wasn't enough room for storage of sculpture," she said.

Moring cited as another reason for updating and expanding the art facilities the ability to offer continuing education workshops and courses in bronze casting, woodworking and glassblowing.

"My vision always has been to not only offer these classes to matriculating students as part of their education here, but also to be able to offer some participation for the community in learning these skills," he said.

Further, Moring said he believes it's incumbent upon YSU to provide facilities to students rivaling those that exist at other area institutions, such

as at Kent State University and the University of Akron.

Moring confirmed that the renovation of Bliss Hall will bring YSU's department of art "to an equal level with those of both Akron and Kent."

He said the proposed addition to Bliss Hall is eliciting an "overwhelmingly positive" reaction from faculty and students.

"Although students' tuition is not funding this project, students at YSU should expect these types of projects to be done," he said.

Bogensperger said, "I think it will be an excellent addition to the art department and a good way to attract incoming students," she said.

Moring added that such projects, which accommodate and promote growth, are vital to maintaining the level of educational quality that YSU students deserve.