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Two departments share $25 million worth of new space

The University of South Florida will dedicate the new Psychology and Communication Sciences and Disorders building — the first interdisciplinary building on the Tampa campus — at 10:30 a.m. Nov. 19.

The Psychology/Communication Sciences and Disorders building combines two of the university's largest departments, in terms of faculty and students.

Designed by Alfonso Architects of Ybor City, the $25 million building spans 113,000 square feet and boasts state-of-the-art research facilities that link the medical and social science communities — both physically and academically. USF's Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is on the west side, facing the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute. The Psychology department is on the east side and overlooks the university's Contemporary Art Museum and College of Visual and Performing Arts.

"This new building is a major milestone for the University of South Florida — a milestone that reflects our emergence as a major, national research university," said USF President Judy Genshaft. "The design of this building enhances our capabilities for teaching, research and service in psychology and communication sciences. And it encourages researchers in many different areas to work together to develop new understandings and clinical approaches."

Those participating in the ribbon cutting include Genshaft; Renu Khator, interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Steven Gift, USF architect; Arthur Guilford, chair of Communication Sciences and Disorders; and Emanuel Donchin, chair of Psychology.

At least 200 patients will be seen in the CSD clinics each week. The building's other features include:

• A Veterans Administration clinic to provide adult audiology services;
• The United Cerebral Palsy clinic, funded through a generous donation by Pauline B. Smith, will serve children up to 3 years old;
• A clinic will dispense hearing aids and provide hearing tests;
• An on-site preschool for children with communication disorders;
• Adult clinical facilities for voice, fluency and patients with neurogenic communication disorders;
• Research labs for acoustic, audiology, and speech, language and hearing research.

The Communication Sciences and Disorders department is the largest of its type in the United States, and this new facility enables the department to provide comprehensive clinical, academic and research opportunities to USF and the Tampa Bay community, said Guilford.

Psychology Chairman Donchin says his department is particularly excited because the new building brings faculty and students together in an environment that will help them become a more integrated and cohesive community of scholars. They are also enthusiastic about the facility's modern features.

"Psychology is a laboratory science, and our ability to push beyond the frontiers of knowledge is strongly affected by the quality of our laboratory facilities," he said. "The new building will, we are confident, serve as a launching platform for a golden age of research in psychology at USF."

The psychology side includes:

• A psychology clinic for families and individuals on a sliding-scale fee basis in an easily accessible, private setting;
• Full access to a state-of-the-art computer network;
• Research space tailored to the faculty's diverse needs;
• A large auditorium and classrooms for undergraduate and graduate students;
• A teaching lab on the second floor; and
• Additional space for support staff.

Researchers Lise Fox and Glen Dunlap have received a $5.5 million federal grant to help preschool children with behavioral concerns. Page 2.

Debating federal powers during wartime. USF History Professor Sherman Dorn addresses what kinds of debates may arise while we are at war with Afghanistan. Page 6.

Due to the Sept. 11 attacks and a decrease in donations, United Way of Hillsborough County has extended the USF Florida State Employees Charitable Campaign/United Way until early next year. Page 5.

USF recently earned a federal grant to create a national center designed to help reduce patient falls and medication errors, especially in the elderly. It will work with the Veterans Administration. Page 4.

USF St. Petersburg prepares the campus for earning its own accreditation while growing quickly. Page 2.

The Psychology/Communication Sciences and Disorders building combines two of the university's largest departments, in terms of faculty and students.
Researchers' $5.5 million grant to help preschool children

USF's Research 1 institution status is constantly justified. Glenn Dunlap and Lise Fox, both with the Division of Applied Research and Education Support in the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute's Child and Family Studies department, were recently awarded a $5.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The grant establishes the Center for Evidenced-Based Practice for Young Children with Challenging Behavior.

Dunlap, the project's principal investigator, and Fox are looking forward to the opportunity. "We were absolutely elated," says Fox. "It is a huge, huge compliment." Their research will focus on "understanding how to improve services for families and children with challenging behavior," says Fox, a specialist in early childhood special education. The work will include parents, caregivers, teachers and counselors of children. Dunlap, an old who have identified disabilities or who are at risk for disabilities.

"Our work is unique," Fox says. "We do research around providing family-centered, intensive support to children who have severely challenging behavior. We work in the natural environment, side-by-side with families and providers, to show them how to deal with the problem behaviors, and to make sure we achieve the desired outcome. The work is very applied, in the real world, dealing with real problems."

The researchers will focus on a method of behavior intervention called Positive Behavior Support. Fox describes this approach: "We need to help the adults figure out why the child engages in challenging behavior, then develop a plan of intervention based on that why." She credits Dunlap, a "national leader in Positive Behavior Support," with much of the impetus for the center's creation. Dunlap will be working with other leading researchers from the University of Colorado at Denver, University of Florida, University of Kansas, Lehigh University, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Tennessee Voices for Children.

Positive Behavior Support is a "cutting-edge approach to behavior intervention based on scientific principles of behavior change and person-centered values," explains Fox. The focus of the approach is on skills development, Fox says, and on "supporting individuals with disabilities in achieving their dreams and visions for a high quality of life."

For example, Fox says, she worked with a preschooler with developmental disabilities who "got" other children by pulling their hair. Dunlap determined that the child was simply not able to verbalize greetings; in her own way, she was saying "Hello."

Fox taught the preschool staff members to intervene: the staff learned to help the child hold out her hand and wave, or touch a peer's shoulder. This intervention stopped the problem behavior, and greatly helped the little girl learn socialization skills.

Challenging behavior, although not malicious, usually has an underlying cause, Fox says. "Problem behavior doesn't just come out of the blue. Kids just don't do things for no reason. They do things for a reason. They're not thinking 'bad.' If you have developmental delay, if you're not a good communicator, then the problem behavior becomes the mode of communication; it becomes the way in which the child gets needs met.

"Unfortunately, the cultural norm seems to be that if you misbehave, you get punished," Fox adds. "If a child doesn't know how to read, we teach. If a child doesn't know how to swim, we teach. If a child doesn't know how to behave, we punish. We need to teach."
Child-focused program earns new AIDS grant

A USF College of Public Health program that co-ordinates medical and social services for HIV-positive children and their families in West Central Florida recently won a new, federal, three-year $3.7 million grant.

The Florida Family AIDS Network serves Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, Manatee and Sarasota counties. It brings comprehensive, case-managed services into the communities, rather than having families rely upon a single hospital in each county as the only source of care for high-risk HIV/AIDS patients.

The project has been continuously funded through The Ryan White Title IV Program Grant since it started in 1992, and now works with more than 100 health and social-service agencies in five counties. “Our program truly is a national model,” said Jay Wolfsen, professor of Public Health and Medicine and the grant’s principal investigator. “Working with many culturally distinct community partners makes this program extremely challenging to manage, but it is more appropriate for meeting the needs of our clients and their families.”

The network’s effectiveness in identifying and treating HIV-infected women with antiretroviral therapy early in their pregnancies has dramatically reduced the risk of their children contracting AIDS, Wolfsen said. “This has been one of the program’s most successful outcomes.”

The HIV perinatal transmission rate — the rate at which the virus is passed from mother to child during pregnancy, labor or delivery or by breast-feeding — decreased from 25 percent to less than 3 percent in the network’s service area during the last nine years.

The network’s other successes include:
- A 58-percent increase in clients served from 1998 to 2000.
- Enrollment increased for all groups, but especially among women.
- The opening of a clinic for HIV-positive adolescents and helping to develop a clinic for HIV-infected mothers and their babies.
- The recent receipt of a National Institutes of Health grant to begin clinical trials for HIV-infected adolescents and adolescents at high risk of contracting HIV.
- By the end of this year, 2000, the network will have been serving clients for six years.
- By 2001, the network will have been serving clients for seven years.
- By 2002, the network will have been serving clients for eight years.
- By 2003, the network will have been serving clients for nine years.
- By 2004, the network will have been serving clients for ten years.
- By 2005, the network will have been serving clients for eleven years.
- By 2006, the network will have been serving clients for twelve years.
- By 2007, the network will have been serving clients for thirteen years.
- By 2008, the network will have been serving clients for fourteen years.
- By 2009, the network will have been serving clients for fifteen years.
- By 2010, the network will have been serving clients for sixteen years.
- By 2011, the network will have been serving clients for seventeen years.
- By 2012, the network will have been serving clients for eighteen years.
- By 2013, the network will have been serving clients for nineteen years.
- By 2014, the network will have been serving clients for twenty years.
- By 2015, the network will have been serving clients for twenty-one years.
- By 2016, the network will have been serving clients for twenty-two years.
- By 2017, the network will have been serving clients for twenty-three years.
- By 2018, the network will have been serving clients for twenty-four years.
- By 2019, the network will have been serving clients for twenty-five years.
- By 2020, the network will have been serving clients for twenty-six years.
- By 2021, the network will have been serving clients for twenty-seven years.
- By 2022, the network will have been serving clients for twenty-eight years.
- By 2023, the network will have been serving clients for twenty-nine years.
- By 2024, the network will have been serving clients for thirty years.