



Knudson Makes a Conference Call

Dr. Lin Knudson has developed a three-year business plan for the Regnier Center's conference center.

As part of the new Regnier Center dedicated to business and technology, the first-floor conference center will be able to

offer customers a 5,000-square-foot technology-infused room for multimedia presentations, exhibitions, special events and banquets.

With space for exhibits in surrounding hallways, the Shull Foyer serving as a meet-and-greet lobby and information center, breakout rooms and a full-service kitchen nearby, the conference center offers all the amenities of a full-service meeting facility.

Use

The first priority for the conference center's use is Continuing Education and Community Services classes, seminars and events, according to Dr. Lin Knudson, dean, Continuing Education and Community Services.

The conference room can be used as one large room or divided into halves (lengthwise or crosswise) or fourths by partitions that go into place with a flick of a switch. The room is designed with multiple floor outlets for exhibits and computers. Tables can be configured to create a conference room, classroom or lecture hall. The kitchen will provide food for coffee breaks, sit-down dinners or informal buffets. Because of the conference room's proximity to the glass

atrium and the 250-seat Nerman's M.R. and Evelyn Hudson Auditorium, events can overlap between the two buildings.

"I think it's going to be a very versatile space," Knudson said.

The Center for Business and Technology has a more than 20-year history of providing continuing education units, licensure and certification to professional groups so it would follow that the conference center could manage an organization's conferences and transcribe CEUs.

Campus events are the second priority for the conference room – events for groups like Staff and Organizational Development, Student Activities and the Foundation. Community rental events will be given third priority, including weddings, bar mitzvahs and family reunions.

Knudson has developed a three-year business plan with pricing, description of services, menus, floor layouts, stationery and staffing. Staffing calls for a full-time person to manage the conference center and a dedicated Media Production and Services staff member, both housed in the Regnier Center scheduling office.



Technology

“There is so much technology in the Regnier Center that it warrants a person who knows how to use the equipment,” Knudson said.

That equipment includes 50 podiums designed for the Regnier Center and Nerman Museum engineered with a user-friendly touch screen to control a computer, LCD projection screen, plug-in for laptop, DVD/VCR/CD player, digital visual presenter and microphone. Each quadrant in the conference room can have its own set of controls or the entire room can interact simultaneously. The Regnier Center will have digital signage throughout the building and a very bright (11,500 lumen) projector to display art or messages in the “flash cube,” the Regnier Center’s two-story glass box.

Each Regnier Center room has its own processor that can feed into the campus network, according to Kam Wagner, media services technician. The gee-whiz factor is that all of the electronics in the Regnier and Nerman rooms can be monitored from a single computer. The computer can schedule rooms’ electronics to turn off and on at certain times, and receive e-mails when a piece of equipment malfunctions.

While all the technology for the new buildings sounds daunting, Wagner says the idea is to make the control centers easy to use and

standardized, looking toward retrofitting the entire campus with the same equipment.

During fall 2007 professional development days, anyone using the new podiums will receive training.

“We have needed a space like the conference center for a long time,” Knudson said. “The Center for Business and Technology and the entire branch is envisioning the different kinds of things we can do in this beautiful space.”

Adrian Swan and Kam Wagner, media services technicians, stand next to a podium prototype designed for the Regnier Center and Nerman Museum.



Drawings of Regnier Center’s conference center are courtesy of Gould Evans Associates, LLC