

A new cornerstone for the future

Well before students received their mid-term grades, the Martha Miller Center for Global Communication was earning high marks at Hope.

"It's beautiful," said freshman Jillian Greshel of Trenton, Mich., as classes began meeting in the building in September.

Classmate Ailie Weaver of Grand Ledge, Mich., agreed. "I wish all my classes were here," she said.

The building houses the departments of communication and modern and classical languages, and the offices of international education and multicultural life, as well as the college's new leadership program, established this summer, and the *Anchor* and WTHS. The programs began moving into the building in August, with classes phasing in through Wednesday, Sept. 14, as final touches, primarily technological features, were completed.

The building totals 49,000 square feet, and was built for \$12 million. In addition to office space for its programs and the two student media organizations, the center contains seven classrooms, an 84-seat auditorium, a language laboratory, a computer laboratory, two seminar rooms (one for high-tech classes), a television studio, multiple editing suites, speech workrooms, lounges for international education and multicultural life, and a library for international education. Particularly prized are the two rooms in the building's rotunda—high-ceilinged spaces dominated by large windows, each set aside for students looking for a place to study, gather with friends or just hang out for a while.

The addition of space alone—space, moreover, designed with contemporary

instructional approaches and technology in mind—would be enough to recommend the building.

"I'm delighted for the facilities and the potential," said Dr. Kelly Osborne, associate professor of classics. "It's all new and we're still getting used to it, but to my way of thinking it's very easy to get used to it."

"I think everybody is agreed that we just are enjoying this, and thanks to the administration especially for making this work," he said.

The recording and editing space for the department of communication provides a particularly dramatic example of how the building is making a difference to Hope programs. From studio and editing space carved out of two converted classrooms on the second floor of Lubbers Hall, the program now has a purpose-built recording studio and four editing suites in which students can work privately, as well as access to a classroom with additional computers that can be used for editing. The disassembleable studio news desk of the past is gone, replaced by a professional-quality desk donated by a Lansing television station.

"It's really great. I like how in the Martha Miller Center all the media rooms are actually made for this specifically," said Peter Cote, a sophomore from Holland, Mich. "I especially like the new studio—much more spacious compared to Lubbers. We've got a lot more to work with."

"In addition to great new facilities, we have all new equipment," he said.

Although the specifics vary, the story is much the same for all four departments and programs. Even more significant, though, is the way that they have been brought together, in a mix that is intended to allow them to do more than they could alone—and with a multicultural and international focus that will ultimately better prepare students for their post-Hope lives.

"We really enjoy it here," said Habeeb Awad, international student advisor at Hope.



The dedication ceremony was set in the midst of two days' worth of activities scheduled to celebrate the new Martha Miller Center for Global Communication, which has been designed to emphasize preparing students to live and serve in an interconnected world. Above, Jack Miller '54 offers a response on behalf of the family of Martha Muller '24 Miller, for whom the building is named.

"It is the threshold of a new beginning that is larger, we hope, for the office. We see it as a unique opportunity to be here."

Where before international education was located in one of the college's cottages—a space that was valued for its homelike character, but which was admittedly isolated—the program is now integrated literally into the broader academic program. The same is true for multicultural life, which has moved from the student development office block in the DeWitt Center.

"There is a common belief that 'it is not what people say, but what people do that counts.' The Martha Miller Center is a testament of words put into action. It is a reflection of Hope's commitment to diversity and multiculturalism," said Vanessa Greene, director of multicultural life at Hope. "This is a state-of-the-art facility. But it is not just a building—it is an opportunity. The integration of multiple departments under one roof working together to prepare future college graduates to understand, appreciate and contribute to the interconnected world in which they live is exciting."

The building is also beautifully realized. The distinctive rotunda is capped by a copper roof. Nooks in the hallways have been designed to feature artwork with an international theme. Mosaic tiles and wood paneling give the building a touch of added elegance—but not too much.

"It is lovely, and the expression that I have heard often is that it is high-quality without

being ostentatious," said Dr. Isolde Anderson, assistant professor of communication. "It is functional and aesthetically pleasing—just a positive environment to work in."

Awad agreed. "Other people in other buildings are saying, 'You have set a high standard,'" he said. "So I feel kind of privileged to be in this building."

A two-day celebration on Friday-Saturday, Oct. 14-15, during Homecoming Weekend, provided the college community with an opportunity to welcome the building formally to the campus fold. In addition to dedication ceremonies for the building as a whole and for the Fried-Hemenway Auditorium, the activities included two keynote addresses and multiple departmental presentations by alumni from the '60s through the '00s.

Floyd Brady '68 of Chicago, Ill., opened the activities Friday morning with the keynote address "The Wind Beneath Your Wings—Buckle Up."

The building's importance, he said, stems from the vision that it expresses and the difference that its emphasis will make.

"What visions do is allow you to become the person that you want to become," Brady said. "I'm convinced that those who worked to make the Martha Miller Center what it is were visionaries. They had a vision of what Hope College is and what it could become."

The increasing interconnectedness of the world, he said, makes the understanding that the building is designed to foster essential.

"Yes, globalization is a reality, even though most students view it as a cliché," Brady said. "It's transforming life faster than broadband."

"It's going to require men and women, students, faculty and administrators who have a vision of not only the way the world is but the way the world can be," he said.



In a spacious corner office on the building's main floor, members of the *Anchor* staff prepare an edition of the weekly.

Reflecting on the center's physical and technological characteristics, he noted that the building's appealing nature can play its own role in realizing the vision it expresses, providing an occasion to reach those who might initially be drawn to the space itself.

"They may come for the medium, but don't let them leave without understanding the message," he said. "You see, the message of the Martha Miller Center, this place, this special place, will be as transforming as the rise of nation-states and will have a greater impact on every individual than the Industrial Revolution."

He encouraged those learning in the building to do so mindful of the faith tradition from which the college itself grew.

"It's important for each of you to understand no matter what and be grounded in knowing the wind beneath your wings," he said. "That wind has endured for over two thousand years, that we are the light of the world. Let your light so shine that men and women can see your good works and glorify your Father, which is in heaven."

The building is named for the late Martha Muller '24 Miller, who died on May 16, 1999, at age 96. In the weeks before her death, she had been making arrangements with her family to make a major gift to the college, with her children following through on her wishes after she had passed away.

During the dedication ceremony Friday afternoon, Jack Miller '54 of Grand Haven, Mich., reflected on his mother's leadership gift and the building that resulted.

"Martha Miller was not a vain person. In fact, putting her name on a building was not a recognition that she would have found necessary," he said. "However, now that I see this wonderful new structure and see the potential it brings to Hope College and the many generations of students to come, I am confident my mother would have been proud that it bears her name."

"I'm excited about the possibilities for the future of this building and the learning that will occur here," he said. "For years to come, students will be telling their peers they have class at the Martha Miller Center. And like other important names that grace this campus—the Van Wylen Library, the Peale Science Center and the soon-to-be-completed DeVos Fieldhouse, as well as countless others—they will not know who Martha Miller was, but they will know that she did care enough about this college, its students, faculty and staff to leave a legacy that will stand for many years to come."

(Editor's Note: Additional coverage related to the opening of the Martha Miller Center for Global Communication can be found throughout this issue. There are more photos on page three, the story of a history of international education at Hope written in conjunction with the dedication is on page 12, a listing of the alumni who participated in the presentations is on page 14 and an additional view of the rotunda accompanies the alumni profile on page 20. A story about Scott Carpenter '87, who delivered the celebration's second keynote address, will be featured in the December issue.)



Above are three glimpses into the new building. At top, computer technology assists Professor Andy Nakajima as he teaches a course in Japanese. At center is one of the new editing suites that provide high-end tools while enabling students to work without being distracted by others. At bottom, students take advantage of the rotunda to do a little studying.