‘The face of the university’

Martin Hall receives fresh paint, flooring in 1st renovation

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Martin Hall, the university’s main administrative building, is receiving a tune-up that includes new lights, ceiling and doors, marking the first renovation since its construction more than 50 years ago.

Bill Crist, director of facilities management for the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, said “it was just time” for the building to have a “facelift.” The estimated cost of renovations is $300,000.

The price tag is substantially less than the projected almost $1.9 billion bill predicted in the university’s master plan, a 20-year blueprint for campus improvement. Crist said the estimation was calculated nearly six years ago and holds little relevance.

“When we did the plan in 2011, we knew certain things needed to be done,” he said. “Obviously we know more today than we did then, so I’m not going to tie myself to those numbers.”

Crist said the renovations, which began at the beginning of June, will not include any structural work or remodeling individual offices. Renovations are happening mostly in the hallways and include painting, replacement flooring to “higher level flooring,” installing LED lights and ceiling and door replacements.

He added the project was “not an expensive one,” with the focus lying on cost effectiveness for both the university and students, who ultimately pay for the renovations.

“The whole idea is to get the money that the students pay us to operate this institution and do it in the most efficient way that we can,” he said.

The renovations, Crist said, will give the building a more modern interior that matches the newer buildings around UL Lafayette.

“We’re trying to bring it up to a level to where it appears to be like the rest of the campus is starting to look,” he said.

Thomas Wilmore, a psychology major who has been a student worker in Martin Hall for the past two years, said he hasn’t encountered anyone who has had an issue with Martin Hall’s appearance. He also said he didn’t mind working in Martin Hall before the renovations, but is looking forward to the changes.

“If anything, the worst parts about the building are probably the floors and the bathrooms,” said Wilmore. “I’m most looking forward to the new floors, but the new lights are a nice touch as well.”

Patricia Cottonham, vice president of student affairs, whose office is on the second floor of Martin Hall, said she feels the renovations fall right in line with what the president said he will do for the university.

“With Martin Hall being a main administration building, it’s nice to see it get some of those touches, too,” she said. Cottonham added she is excited to see the combination of all the renovations.

“But I’m a fan of lights and I like good lighting so I’m most looking forward to that,” she said. “I think you can say it represents the future of this university. It is bright!”

Scott Hebert, the project manager, and Crist both admitted this has been a complex project involving lots of careful planning.

They say the complexity was because most renovations needed to be done, have a short time frame of when they need to be completed and can only be worked on when there is little-to-no activity in the building.

For example, Crist said with door replacements, they have to be done in one day because failure to do so leaves an unsecure office.

Hebert said replacement needing to be done when no one is in the building to walk on the work.

During the weekdays while there is activity in the building, Crist said some light trimming and painting is done, but workers are mainly restricted to nights and weekends for most jobs.

“It’s like trying to fix the engine of a vehicle while it’s still running,” Crist said. Crist said the significance Martin Hall holds in regards to UL Lafayette adds to these renovations' importance.

“It’s the face of the university,” he said. “Every student that has to go through enrollment has to go through that building. Every visitor pretty much goes through that building.”
management."

"They're one of the main facilities we focus on solely because of the number of primates that they deal with," Budkie stated.

On SAEN's website, Budkie referenced several articles that detailed this purpose. SAEN's earliest such complaints were filed to the USDA in 2009.

"It is a step in the right direction," said Budkie of the USDA fine. "From what we know, it is the fifth largest fine ever levied against a laboratory."

Budkie said the NIRC adopt research methods similar to other facilities that utilize "cutting-edge" technology.

"The NIRC contributes significantly to the University's annual research and development awards and expenditures," Villinger stated. "Fines are paid through self-generated, non-state funds."

According to UL Lafayette's webpage for the NIRC, the location has undergone several changes in ownership and renovation since the 1950s, when it was constructed to serve as a naval base.

The university purchased the land in 1984 to serve as a primate research lab with emphasis on contract work. Since then, the NIRC maintains it has also expanded into evaluations of pharmaceutical and biotechnology products.

With roughly 200 employees and newly hired research faculty, Villinger said: "We anticipate increased access for students at undergraduate and graduate levels in the next few years."

Villinger pointed to "new abilities to image pathological and physiological process at the macro and microscopic level, that will be quite attractive to students."

Ramesh Kolluru, UL Lafayette's vice president for research, did not respond to requests for comment on the USDA decision. Dominique Rosado, the university's research coordinator, redirected The Vermilion to the Office of Communications and Marketing. They were unavailable for comment.

SGA

"Again, after getting to see the university in a whole other aspect as vice president, my love to serve the students continued to grow throughout that time," she continued. "From there, I decided I wanted to run for SGA president."

According to McMahon, SGA has had its fair share of accomplishments in past years. This includes the opening of the cafeteria as an extra study space from 11-2 a.m. for finals week and the restructured red dot discount program.

Besides SGA, McMahon is on the discipleship team of Ragin' Cajun Catholics, a member of Delta-Delta-Delta sorority, a member of the National Student Speech Language and Hearing Association, a previous student mentor on the SOUL Camp staff, a social mentor for the UL Lafayette LIFE Program, a parliamentarian for the council of student body presidents and a member of the Honors Programs, Alpha-Lambda-Delta and Phi-Kappa-Phi.

McMahon said being a mentor for SOUL camp opened her eyes to how different each path is that each student walks, and the UL Lafayette LIFE Program showed her that the Ragin' Cajuns are dedicated to providing an education for all individuals, regardless whether or not they have a disability.

"We really are a Ragin' Cajun family here at UL," McMahon said. "I'm not a number in any of my classrooms; I'm a person. I struggle with the tests as much as any other person in that class."

McMahon is majoring in speech language pathology and audiology and wishes to pursue a career in language and literacy disorders. She said she intends to work with individuals with spectrum disorders.

"My biggest hope is for student government to truly, 100 percent, be the voice of the students and for students to utilize it," McMahon said. "We would love to be able to work beside them to rectify situations and to be able to allow the students to actually have a true voice that faculty and staff are listening to."

"I think this is a passionate group, and I believe we will be able to bring some of our ideas to fruition," said SGA Treasurer Kristopher Harrison.