

March 9, 2007

Master Plan 2025 bears School of Architecture imprint

Suzanne Bilbeisi, Nigel Jones and Mohammed Bilbeisi, not pictured, spent summer 2006 helping campus groups visualize and develop ideas for the OSU Master Plan 2025. A long-term guide for future development, the plan is also an exploration of concepts to enhance the function and beauty of the campus.



The OSU Master Plan 2025, approved by the OSU/A&M College Board of Regents last week, signifies a beginning, and not an end, to campus master planning at OSU. While continuing momentum of the greatest capital improvement undertaking in the university's history, the ambitious, long range vision for development of the campus also represents a return to tradition.

OSU School of Architecture professors Suzanne and Mohammed Bilbeisi and Nigel Jones were members of the team assembled in July 2006 by Joe Weaver, associate vice president and chief budget planning officer, to lead development of the 2025 plan.

Using a map of existing infrastructure and square footage needs estimates that Weaver and architecture faculty members Randy Seitsinger and Jeff Williams compiled by querying the deans of OSU's academic colleges, Jones and the Bilbeisis sighted 1.5 million square feet of new buildings within the campus's core. They subsequently were tasked with interacting with dozens of campus groups to develop and explore architectural and infrastructural concepts to include in the plan.

"We took the map, looked at the square footage numbers and started to see where buildings would not only fit in, but by their location, enhance the campus," Jones said. "Some characteristics of the Bennett plan have been diluted over the years so we looked at where we can put buildings to reinforce outdoor spaces and the strong axes, the lines that run through the campus, that have defined our campus."

"At the same time, we knew there were other issues – movement of people and traffic, parking, housing – that had to be in the mix," Jones said.

Suzanne Bilbeisi added, "Rather than the suburban way of thinking and locating a building in the center of a piece of property, we went back to the ideals of the Bennett plan where outdoor spaces between buildings are just as important as the buildings."

The majority of the structures on the 2025

map are only concepts, but they depict the importance of site selection. Green, quadrangle courtyards create a sense of place for building occupants and encourage pedestrian travel. A rendering of a potential, northern expansion of the library into the International Plaza especially illustrates the notion.

Another of the architects' concepts – the straightening of Western Avenue and extension of Hall of Fame and Farm Road to establish visible gateways to campus – enabled Center for Veterinary Health Sciences administrators to consider the center's expansion.

Other 2025 plan concepts, such as locating new residence halls where Ag and Gunderson Halls now stand, originated with campus groups.

"Residential Life pointed out that, except for Bennett, all housing is west so we explored locating housing throughout the campus," Jones said. "It's also a look at the phenomenon of 'New Urbanism' and going back to the way housing used to be done in city planning with more of an integration."

Jones noted the site's proximity to the Mixed-use Urban Planning District, the name City of Stillwater planners have assigned areas bordering the campus's east and south

sides. The district is still a concept, but planners as well as merchants established in the areas envision University and Knoblock lined with outdoor eateries, shops and town homes, and the neighborhoods linking campus and downtown Stillwater.

Bilbeisi said working on the 2025 plan was a labor of love for her and the other School of Architecture faculty members.

"We all have significant associations with OSU, as students and as faculty," she said. "We all have at least 15 years on campus as participants and people who understand how the campus works, and we were able to look at it from an architectural standpoint."

"It was a great joy to work on something that you already love and see how you can make it even better."

OKLAHOMA STATE Portraits Celebrating the Centennial: OSU contributions



In 1987, only four years after graduating from OSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine, Dr. Dianna Willis co-founded the Mission Street Medical Clinic with Dr. Sharon Noel.

Willis' practice is centered at the Sapulpa clinic, but her influence extends to the nation's capital, where she has been recognized repeatedly for championing health care access and affordability, particularly for the elderly. She received the National Republican Congressional Committee's 2003 Physician of the Year Award and in 2006 was awarded the Congressional Order of Merit.

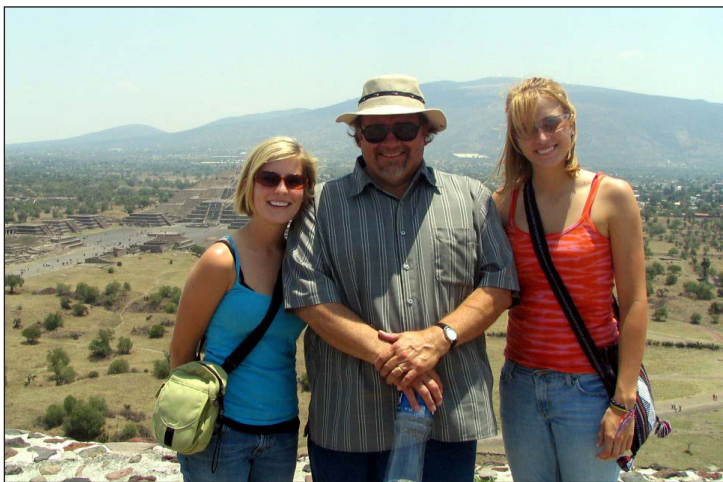
A member of the Choctaw Nation, Willis also practices at the Indian Clinic in Sapulpa, volunteers for local charities and instructs OSU medical college students in their third-year rotation.

Mexico exchange eases study abroad

ABBY WAMBAUGH

After a four-week summer trip to Mexico with OSU's College of Arts and Sciences, Spanish and public relations junior Evan Black knew she wanted to return.

"I love everything about Mexico, from the culture to the people," Black said. "Living there has given me a new perspective on America and a deeper appreciation for the rich Hispanic culture."



Evan Black (left) stands in front of the Pyramid of the sun with OUI Spanish professor Luis Cortest and fellow OSU student Erin Fisher.

Black decided to complete a semester of study abroad at La Universidad de Las Americas Puebla. When she enrolled, OSU and the Puebla, Mexico, institution were still in discussions about establishing a reciprocal exchange program.

"Before the partnership, I had to withdraw from OSU and enroll directly at UDLA," Black said. "I had to pay UDLA tuition rates that were more expensive than OSU's, and my

OSU scholarships did not apply.

"The partnership enabled me to attend UDLA while paying OSU tuition and using my OSU scholarships," Black said. "It has definitely made study abroad accessible for more students."

In an effort to expand learning and student exchange between Oklahoma and Mexico, OSU joined with two major Mexico universities to open liaison offices in Puebla in September 2006. In addition, UDLA is just one of six universities throughout Mexico involved in the exchange with OSU.

"When people want to learn Spanish, I stress Mexico because anywhere you travel you can still use the language, unlike Spain where your Spanish is no longer applicable if you travel somewhere like France," Black said.

Black said once she began to speak in Spanish, she did not feel as vulnerable or apprehensive speaking with people.

"By the second semester, a lot of my friends were natives, but I also had international friends," Black said. "Being immersed in the Mexican culture is one thing, but the international students exposed me to new ideas and a different way of thinking."

To find out more about scholarships and programs related to studying in another country contact the OSU Study Abroad Office at (405) 744-8569.

Eyes on the Sky



Associate Professor Peter Shull and students Mike McLean and Garrett Hardesty welcome the new telescope at OSU's H.S. Mendenhall Observatory. The telescope, installed last month, is Oklahoma's largest and most technologically advanced. The device will be used to discover planets orbiting other stars, track asteroids which threaten to collide with Earth and measure the changing brightness of objects whose light output varies with time.

Around the STATE...

Physicist to lecture on development of invisibility cloaks

Sir John Pendry, professor and chair of theoretical solid state physics at Imperial College London, who is credited with pioneering a new class of manmade materials to manipulate electromagnetic radiation, will speak tonight at 7 at the ConocoPhillips OSU Alumni Center.

Pendry's visit is sponsored by the DaVinci Institute, a creativity think tank formed by state higher education leaders and headed by College of Arts and Sciences Dean Peter Sherwood.

OSU-Okmulgee honor society at the top

Beta Alpha Alpha, OSU-Okmulgee's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, received 11 awards at the Oklahoma/Arkansas Regional Conference, held last month.

OSU-Okmulgee's PTK chapter earned more awards than any of the other 41 chapters at the conference, including two top honors, the Most Distinguished Chapter Award and Five-Star Program Award.

OSU-Tulsa hosts graduate studies fair

Current college students and professionals seeking to advance their careers can learn about OSU graduate programs during a Graduate Studies Fair on March 13.

Advisers from OSU's Tulsa, Stillwater and Center for Health Sciences campuses will be available from 3 – 6 p.m. in OSU-Tulsa's North Hall Lobby.

The fair will feature informational sessions on applying to graduate school, admission requirements and scholarships, fellowships and other kinds of funding.

For all these stories and more, go to: <http://osu.okstate.edu/news>



Big News

This weekend's Sunday *Oklahoman* will arrive wrapped in OSU orange. Inside, OSU's contributions to the state the last 100 years are detailed in the newspaper's special insert, Centennial Showcase.



Get scheduled

Enrollment for summer and fall 2007 has begun. Go online today at <http://prodosu.okstate.edu/> to sign up for courses. Any enrollment inquiries should be directed to your adviser.