



New Landscape



The Polymer Engineering Academic Center, above and at right, which is nearing completion, will be open for tours at the June 8 dedication ceremony.

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for Learning:

By *Dave Nypaver '82*

Zippy may be our official mascot, and the phoenix occupies center stage on the University's seal, but the building crane is fast becoming UA's unofficial campus symbol.

The first year of the five-year, \$200 million New Landscape for Learning building program already has transformed sight lines to the campus from three directions.

To the north, the new four-story Polymer Engineering Academic Center is nearing completion and will be dedicated on June 8. This new home for the department and the Institute of Polymer Engineering provides faculty and students with new classrooms, offices, lab space and a lecture hall. The brick and glass structure, located at 250 S. Forge St., beside the Sidney L. Olson Research Center, has a curved, mirrored-window lobby that reflects the design of its big brother on Buchtel Common, the Goodyear Polymer Center.

Near the center of campus, the steel skeleton of the new Arts and Sciences Building has risen beside Bierce Library at the intersection of College Street and Buchtel Avenue. The former location of East Hall, which housed the Black Cultural Center and UA's Nursery Center (more recent alumni know the spot simply as "the big parking lot behind the library") will soon boast an academic building with a soaring four-story atrium. Scheduled for completion next spring, the Arts and Sciences Building will house the departments of: history, math and computer science, psychology, geography and planning, statistics, public administration and urban studies, and the English Language Institute.

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Construction is under way on the new Arts and Sciences Building, seen here in an artist's rendering.

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Renovation work has begun on the Interim Student and Administrative Services Building (formerly Goodwill Industries) on Mill Street. When completed in October 2001, the facility will house all the units now located in Spicer Hall, such as University College and the Office of the Registrar. Once vacant, Spicer will be demolished to make way for the new Student Recreation and Wellness Center.

On the campus' eastern border, the new 1,100-space East Campus Parking Deck is beginning to cast its shadow across Route 8. Opposite The Chapel on Buchtel Avenue and

down Carroll Street from the James A. Rhodes Health and Physical Education Building, the new deck will be a five-minute walk from such central campus academic buildings as Leigh, Kolbe, Olin and Zook halls. Remodeling work on the Exchange Street, E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall and West Campus (Polsky) parking decks was completed last year. All told, the new and remodeled decks will give students about 4,600 covered parking spots when the snow begins to fly next winter.

Not all the construction on campus last year involved new structures. Ritchie Residence Hall was closed for renovations that will be completed this summer. In 1999, Bulger and Spanton residence halls reopened after extensive remodeling that included expanded living space, new furniture, improved exterior plazas, and state-of-the-art fire-suppression and mechanical systems. Renovations to the Knight Chemical Laboratory roof are complete.

Work continued on an addition to the Science and Technology Library in Auburn Science and Engineering Center. When it is completed next spring, the library will be approximately 140 percent larger and offer students and faculty 12

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UA's Student Recreation and Wellness Center, set to open in mid-2003, will feature a wide variety of equipment, from a rock-climbing wall to a four-lane elevated running track and a swimming pool.

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study rooms, 18 study carrels, seating for 150 at study tables, a conference room and a class/seminar room.

University President Luis M. Proenza and Akron Mayor Donald Plusquellic reached an agreement in December 2000 to close the sections of Carroll Street and Brown/Union streets that traverse campus. The section of Carroll Street from Brown Street to Mary Gladwin Hall is already closed for construction of the new Student Union.

While the building crane has become an unofficial campus symbol, campus construction has required that some space be cleared. Three

structures on the southern portion of campus were removed in 2000 to make way for the new Student Union. At 84 years, Simmons Hall was the oldest academic building on campus when it was razed in February 2000. The little brick cottage across from "The Rock" on Memorial walkway that served as a post office, student mailroom and finally, a computer store, is now part of campus history. And the unobtrusive, somewhat mysterious boiler plant, wedged between Gardner Student Center and Simmons Hall, vanished as quietly as it operated.

For the moment, students on the upper floors of Ayer Hall can gaze south across the green and

see all the way to Exchange Street — several hundred yards away. That view will soon be replaced by a scene of progress. Construction crews and their heavy equipment have already set the foundation for the first phase of the new Student Union, which will be built adjacent to the existing Gardner Student Center. ■

Here's the long view of the Student Union. The groundbreaking ceremony for the structure that will replace Gardner Student Center was held on April 11.

