PSU hires architect for KCOB project

As co-owner of the Lawrence-based architecture firm Clark Huesemann LC, Steve Clark is no stranger to the campus of Pittsburg State University.

“Members of our firm, including myself, have been working on projects at Pittsburg State since 1994,” he said. “We enjoy working with PSU because the people there are fantastic. We work with a lot of universities, and the folks at PSU, from Dr. Scott on down, are second-to-none.”

Clark and his firm are again preparing to work with PSU, as the university has hired Clark Huesemann as the architect for the Kelce College of Business renovation and expansion project. The project was made possible by a $3 million pledged gift from Pittsburg State alumni John and Susan Lowe, of Houston, Texas.

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“We are very excited to hire Clark Huesemann as the architecture firm for this project,” said Paul Grimes, dean of the Kelce College of Business. “The firm does excellent work, as it has proven many times on our campus.”

Grimes said the project is now in the “programming stage,” a time when the university and architects will develop a plan of action for the facility.

“During the next 12 months, we’ll work closely with the architects to determine just what we need and how we can best accomplish our goals,” he said.

“We want to create a facility that will enhance the learning environment for our students, and we’re excited to begin that process.”

The Kelce College of Business is one of fewer than 700 universities in the world to have earned accreditation from Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). It has been recognized by national publications, including the Princeton Review and Entrepreneur Magazine, for its academics, faculty and affordability.

Students develop textbook app

Before each semester at Pittsburg State, senior Bryant Sandoval conducts extensive research to find the best prices on textbooks.

“1l actually sit down and create an Excel spreadsheet that lists the prices of a certain book at different stores,” he said. “College students don’t always have a lot of money, so finding the cheapest prices on books is a big deal.”

While he’ll always search for the lowest textbook prices, Sandoval’s spreadsheet days may be over thanks to an app he and his classmates developed in a new course within the Kelce College of Business.

As part of a project in Mobile App Development, the first app development course in the KCOB, Sandoval, Jack Felter and Jarod Hottel developed an app that searches the web for the best prices on textbooks.

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A Pittsburg State University student group dedicated to sexual assault and domestic violence prevention has been honored with a national award for a stalking awareness program it presented on campus. PSU’s Students for Violence Prevention (SVP) received the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Outstanding Prevention Program award for “P.S. I Love You: Stalking Awareness Evening,” which it presented on campus last January. The group received the award at the NASPA General Assembly, which was held in November in Reston, Va.

Ali Smith, SVP adviser and PSU’s coordinator of violence prevention and victim advocacy, said the stalking awareness evening program included a talk by a stalking victim and a panel discussion that included representatives from campus police, university administration, mental health professionals and victim advocates.

“Students could text questions for the panel members so they could remain anonymous,” Smith said. “It was a good discussion.”

She added that having a first-person story by a victim of stalking was one of the keys to the success of the program. Smith said the students she advises in SVP are committed to making a difference on campus.

“All of our students are so wonderful,” Smith said. “They are all so busy, but I can see their passion about wanting to make a difference.”

SVP is one part of an award-winning and longstanding peer health education effort on the PSU campus through the Office of Student Prevention and Wellness that includes Gorillas in Your Midst. Throughout the year, the student groups present programs that focus on responsible decision making, harm reduction, social norming, environmental management and peer health education.

The students in Jamie Oliver’s Mural and Large-Scale Painting class have been learning a lot about painting on a grand scale and also about life this semester.

The class, in Pittsburg State University’s Art Department, created a large mural that was installed in downtown Pittsburg. Oliver, a professor in the Art Department, said the students have learned not only about the techniques used to create murals, but also about the skills needed to work with clients.

The students were commissioned to do the work by Pittsburg’s Downtown District Committee. Funding for the art came from a grant from the SEK Art Fest.

Oliver said each of the 12 students in his class submitted a design, based on a set of criteria developed by the Downtown District Committee. The committee selected one design from that group.

The 12-foot-by-24-foot mural is actually a collection of 4-foot-by-8-foot MDO signboard panels that was put together when the mural was installed. The students prepared the sign boards and transferred the design to the boards using the pouncing method, the same technique Michelangelo used on the Sistine Chapel.

Oliver said the students learned a lot about schedules, deadlines and other aspects of the work world with this project.

“The mural had to be finished and ready for installation to make the Oct. 30 deadline,” Oliver said, “so we started with a pretty detailed schedule. I’m happy with the way the students stuck to the schedule and made their deadlines. They should all be proud of their work.”
Students design, build furniture for KCCTE offices

On the architect’s drawing for the new Kansas Center for Career and Technical Education (KCCTE) offices inside the Kansas Technology Center, there were areas labeled “furniture by others.” That gave Doug Hague an idea. “I thought it could be a nice challenge for our students to see if they’d be willing to design and build the furniture needed for the office,” said Hague, assistant professor in Pittsburg State’s Wood Technology Department.

Last spring, Hague approached senior Mark Welle, from Milford, Iowa, and junior Sam Galliart, from Hutchinson, Kan., as he knew both were planning to stay in Pittsburg over the summer. Without hesitation, they accepted the challenge.

“Where else could we get this type of experience,” Welle said. “We were going to get to go through every phase of the project from design to install. That’s incredible valuable experience that would benefit us for years to come.”

Save for a couple of weeks off for various reasons, Galliart and Welle worked all summer to create the new furniture that is now inside the KCCTE offices. That includes a conference table, reception desks, bookshelves and multiple cabinets. Often putting in more than 60 hours per week, the two students oversaw every phase of the process.

“Our instructors told us a couple things to think about and watch for, but for the most part, it was just us,” Galliart said. “That’s what made it such a fun and exciting challenge. We were in charge of everything, and we wanted to blow people away with the final product.”

Greg Belcher, founding director of the KCCTE, said the students did just that. “These two young men did an amazing job, just amazing. We’ve already had so many comments from people stopping by just to look at it. I couldn’t be more impressed with their work.”

Both students said they take great pride in knowing that furniture they designed and built at Pitt State will be used at the university far into the future. “It’s really hard to describe how good that feels,” Welle said. “It’s just a great feeling to know that we put our heart and soul into this and people seem to love it.”

Galliart said the entire wood technology department deserves credit for the quality of work. “We could not have done this without the education we’ve received here at Pitt,” Galliart said. “Our instructors are amazing, and they’ve taught us how to do projects like this. Plus, we’re fortunate to have the state-of-the-art equipment that we need right here in our university lab.”

Alum spurs car donation

Sometimes, it’s all about who you know. Other times, it’s all about who knows you.

Both scenarios are working out nicely for the Pittsburg State Automotive Technology Department, which has recently received another donation of a new vehicle for students to train on at the Kansas Technology Center.

Earlier this month, Nissan of North America donated a 2014 Nissan Versa to the Pitt State Automotive Technology Department. The car, which came equipped with modern functions such as a rear back-up camera and GPS navigating, will be used as a training device for students studying new car technologies.

“This car came with virtually every conceivable option available,” said instructor Mike Elder. “Our students will benefit greatly from training on a car like this with so many computers and electrical components.”

Valued at just over $15,000, the donation of the Versa was spearheaded by Greg Ebbs, a Pitt State alum who now serves as the marketing/contest incentives manager at Nissan North America’s Midwest office. “Greg was one of my students when I taught at Pittsburg High School,” Elder said. “He graduated from Pitt State and is aware of what we like to do here in terms of having cars for our students to work on. When Nissan was moving out the 2014 fleet to make room for the 2015 models, he reached out to us to see if we could use a 2014 Versa. We, of course, were happy to accept.”

Along with the car, Nissan also donated a Nissan Consult II scan tool, which helps with vehicle diagnostics. “Our students have already started diving into the car and scan tool, and I’ve been impressed with how quickly they’re running right through it,” Elder said.

The donation of the Versa comes just months after the department received donations of a 2015 Dodge Dart and a 2015 Ford Explorer.

“Having great connections and partners within the automotive industry has been wonderful for us because it has led to several valuable acquisitions,” Elder said. “We’re incredibly grateful to our industry partners and our alums for thinking of us and reaching out to support our program.”
The PSU Foundation celebrated its past and announced the start of a new campaign recently at the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts during its annual Presidents Society Dinner. Cuff links and pearls were on full display during the black-tie event, which celebrated 30 years of excellence with decorations and songs from the late '20s and '30s.

“It is a night of reflection and celebration,” said Kathleen Flannery, interim president and CEO for the PSU Foundation. “So many of the wonderful advances we’ve made over the past 30 years have been made possible by the hard work of this foundation and the generosity of its donors.”

The evening included a video tribute to the history of the foundation and special recognition by Pittsburg State President Steve Scott of individuals who helped make the night possible.

“It’s difficult to think of what Pittsburg State would be without the PSU Foundation,” said President Steve Scott. “Its support for our students and faculty has allowed this university to move forward when many others were forced to stand still.”

Since 1985, PSU Foundation assets have grown from $4.8 million to $85 million. Scholarships have grown from less than $400,000 to $3 million and new facilities include the Bryant Student Health Center, Robert W. Plaster Center and the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts.

“When you stop to look at how far we’ve come in just 30 years, you can’t help but smile,” said Flannery. “Whether through scholarships, faculty endowments or facilities, the foundation and its supporters have improved the lives of generations of Gorillas.”

The foundation provided a glimpse at what the next 30 years holds for Pittsburg State when it officially unveiled its new “Proven. Promise. Pitt State.” capital campaign. The three-year, $55 million campaign has four goals: Scholarships, Faculty, Programs and Facilities.

“This campaign’s primary goal is to reduce or remove the financial barriers that keep some of our very best students from achieving their dreams of a college degree,” said Flannery. “The additional goals will help ensure that Pittsburg State is able to offer students and faculty the very best academic environment.”

One feature of the new campaign is a plan to renovate and expand the university’s Kelce College of Business. The college, which is nationally recognized for its academic programming, is currently housed in a building that previously served as a high school.

“We have the very best faculty and students,” said Flannery. “Now it’s time to provide them with the very best facility.”

Full details of the “Proven. Promise. Pitt State.” campaign are available at giveto.pittstate.edu. Those wishing to become involved or who have questions can contact the PSU Development Office at 620-235-4768.

The students said they were glad that the KCOB added the app development course to the catalog.

“I really wanted to learn how to make an app, which is something I’ll carry with me and that will look good on a resume,” Hostel said. “I liked that we got to choose what type of app to develop. It was a tremendous learning experience.”

Dubbed “Bhooklet,” the app uses the Direct Textbook API (application program interface), which promises to yield the most search results of any app on the market. The app is available only on the Windows mobile device platform.

“We wanted to make this type of app because it’s unique and mainstream, but also because we believe it really could help a lot of students save money,” Felter said.

John Kuefler, lead architecture developer in Pitt State’s Office of Information Services and instructor for the application development course, said he is impressed with the group’s work.

“It takes a lot of time and effort to develop an app that will be accepted into the marketplace,” he said. “I am very impressed that the students were able to accomplish what they did in just one semester.”

Another group in the course developed an app called “Ping,” which is a social media app designed to connect travelers based on their location.

“The idea behind that app,” Kuefler said, “is that when you visit a place, you put out what is called a ping, and then you can add friends who are in that same area and meet up. So if you happen to be in the same city at the same time as someone you know, family or friends, this app could show you that.”

PSU Foundation celebrates 30 years of excellence

The scholarship deadline is approaching! Don’t forget to apply for admission and scholarships by February 1st for the upcoming academic year!