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Updated: 6:09 AM Jan 28, 2010

GGC breaks ground on student center

LAWRENCEVILLE - State Sen. Don Balfour said his son, Trey, won't recognize his college campus when he returns from Afghanistan in the fall of 2010.

Posted: 10:00 PM Jul 16, 2009

LAWRENCEVILLE - State Sen. Don Balfour said his son, Trey, won't recognize his college campus when he returns from Afghanistan in the fall of 2010.

When Trey returns from his deployment with the Army National Guard's 48th Brigade, Georgia Gwinnett College will have a new library, dorms, a student center and possibly twice the number of students, Balfour said Thursday during the college's third groundbreaking ceremony since November.

The latest construction project - a four-story, 77,000-square-foot student center - will house a 700-seat dining hall, a 5,000-square-foot Barnes and Noble bookstore, a game room, and office and meeting space.

"This building was designed by students for students," Georgia Gwinnett College President Daniel J. Kaufman said. "This newest addition to the campus' quad gives our students a place to congregate, make friends and socialize - moving forward our vision to making GGC a campus dedicated to developing the whole student."

The \$17 million, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver Certified building will open in the fall of 2010 in conjunction with student housing and will house the college's student affairs offices, student government offices, activity centers and meeting rooms with state-of-the-art audio/visual equipment.

The student center will adjoin the college's new Library and Learning Center, scheduled to open next summer.

"As students we have been fortunate enough to be involved in the creation of this building from the ground up, from the building design, to the layout, to the interior decor, and even the furniture," GGC Student Government Association Vice President-elect Brittany Dertz said. "When this beautiful structure opens next year it will be the heart of student life on campus, a building that all GGC students will be proud to call their second home. The Student Center will house new places for our students to eat, study, and gather."

Like the student housing, the student center is public-private partnership, which means no tax dollars are being used for its construction. The Georgia Gwinnett College Foundation is facilitating the financing for the two projects, and bonds will be repaid by student fees.

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