BOG approves building renovations, upgrades

The Board of Governors recently approved several building renovation and upgrade projects through the spring and summer months.

Manoogian Hall will undergo second-floor upgrades to 23 general-purpose classrooms and four ethnic heritage rooms. Proposed improvements include upgrades to the HVAC system, electrical, lighting, security, technology, finishes and furniture.

The College of Education Building is scheduled for renovation of five general-purpose classrooms, including upgrades to mechanical and electrical services, lighting, interior finishes, and furniture.

The design phase for renovations at Science Hall will support space for the Nutrition and Food Science Department. Included in the project scope is renovation of the third floor, six research laboratory upgrades, additional administration space, a seminar/lecture room, a food-prep lab and laboratory upgrades on the second floor.

Renovations to the Student Center Building’s (SCB) sixth floor will improve and expand space for the Student Veterans Resource Center; Hillel of Metro Detroit; and Testing, Evaluation and Research Services.

"We are working toward bringing general-purpose classrooms into the 21st century," said Deb Brazen, director of planning and estimating. "State Hall's fourth-floor renovation was just the first step. Renovations to Manoogian's second floor will continue this noticeable improvement."

Research project among first to study effects of PTSD on children

Forty-one percent of children living in Detroit will experience trauma serious enough to cause post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) — the disorder known for causing depression, nightmares and flashbacks in military personnel after returning from combat.

While researchers are beginning to understand the impact of PTSD on the adult brain, little is known about the effects of the disorder on the developing brains of children and adolescents. Moriah Thomason, professor in the Department of Pediatrics and the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute for Child and Family Development, hopes a new research project will change that.

As the director of Wayne State's SCAN (Social Cognitive Affective Neurodevelopment) laboratory, Thomason and her team are at the forefront of new research aimed at pinpointing areas of the developing brain that change when exposed to trauma.

"We think our research approach — combining clinical and behavioral information with the latest real-time brain imaging technology — will give us a great opportunity to understand the biological differences in a developing brain experiencing the effects of PTSD," said Thomason. "Once we get there, we can start addressing treatments that are going to help these young people better regulate emotions."

Warriors walk the commencement stage on May 1

The ceremonies, which conclude the university's 146th academic year, will take place at Ford Field in downtown Detroit and will be President M. Roy Wilson's first spring commencement.

Honorary degrees will be given to former Speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives Paul Hillegonds and Daniel J. Loepp, president and chief executive officer of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. Both will receive the honorary Doctor of Laws, honoris causa, for their years of service and dedication to the metro Detroit community and beyond. A live stream of the ceremonies will be available at wayne.edu/live. A full commencement schedule can be found at commencement.wayne.edu.
Faculty members to be recognized for literary achievements

Three Wayne State professors have been selected as recipients of the 2014 Board of Governors Faculty Recognition Awards.

The award winners are Anne Duggan, Classical and Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures; Richard Marback, English; and Jeff Pruchnic, English. Duggan, who’s also director of the Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies program, researched and wrote Queer Enchantments: Gender, Sexuality, and Class in the Fairy Tale Cinema of Jacques Demy, an exhaustive analysis of the French director’s films.

Marback wrote Managing Vulnerability: South Africa’s Struggle for a Democratic Rhetoric, which analyzes the tension surrounding the transition from apartheid to democracy in South Africa through a rhetorical lens. Pruchnic is recognized for his book Rhetoric and Ethics in the Cybernetic Age: The Transhuman Condition. The book provides a cogent summary of recent discussions and debates concerning the interactions of technology and culture.

The award winners will receive a citation, an engraved plaque and an unrestricted award of $2,500. They will also be recognized on April 24 at the Academic Recognition Ceremony and on May 2 at the Board of Governors meeting.

CLLAS conference explores youth activism

La Academia del Pueblo has become a landmark event for CLLAS and WSU. Youth activism and academic excellence are the focus of the fifth annual La Academia del Pueblo: Latino/a and Latin American Studies Research Conference on Saturday, April 26, at the McGregor Memorial Conference Center.

Hosted by WSU’s Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies (CLLAS), the conference theme is “El Movimiento 2.0: Youth, Identity, Empowerment.” Andreana Clay, associate professor of sociology and sexuality studies at San Francisco State University and author of The Hip-Hop Generation Fights Back: Youth, Activism and Post-Civil Rights Politics, is the keynote speaker.

“La Academia del Pueblo has really taken on a life of its own,” said Tamara Serrano Chandler, College to Career (C2C) program coordinator and conference organizer. “Our efforts to establish connections between the center and the community are reflected in the number of youth and community members presenting alongside faculty and students from WSU and across the nation.”

The conference kicks off at 6 p.m. on Friday, April 25 with a screening of the film From Hip-Hop to Mambo: A South Bronx Tale. For more information and a full conference agenda, visit events.wayne.edu/rsvp/4thacadiemadelpueblo.