

CASNR destinationSuccess

By: Michelle Clogston

Even the most organized and prepared student can feel overwhelmed. Pressure to be more involved, to make good grades or to find the perfect internship are common sources of student stress. Now, the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources has a new way to help students reach their destinationSuccess.

To meet students' needs, CASNR will open the Student Success Center in Spring 2006. The center, whose slogan is destinationSuccess, provides recruitment, student development and career development services. Located in Agricultural Hall's renovated lobby, the center is available to all CASNR students.

"The Student Success Center is a place for all stages of development," said Amy Gazaway, CASNR career development coordinator. "It provides a physical space for the college's philosophy of integrating academics and development with career services and student services."

Construction and remodeling for the center cost about \$65 per square foot, said Ed Miller, CASNR associate dean. At 2,050 square feet, the center's total cost was close to \$200,000 after purchasing furniture and computers, Miller said.

The Student Success Center replaced rooms 103 and 105 (known to many as the "reading room") in Agricultural Hall.

Before the opening of the center, CASNR student services offices were housed in many different spaces on the first floor of Agricultural Hall. Only one coordinator, specializing in career development, was available to offer guidance and assistance on student development and career planning.

A student development coordinator and a recruitment coordinator were hired in November 2005 to provide additional assistance to students.

The services

Immediately inside the success center's glass front, prospective students and their families can visit with Robyn Sites, prospective student coordinator, who provides information on admission, scholarships and degree options.

Computer workstations are available, allowing potential students to browse the Internet for information about the university and the Stillwater community.

Mary Ann Harris, student development coordinator, directs programs relevant to students' personal growth and leadership development. Focusing on retention, leadership development and academic success, Harris helps students define and plan for their life goals by providing connections to various learning and involvement opportunities.

"These opportunities may include activities on campus, in the Stillwater community or even around the world," said Gazaway.

The Student Success Center also provides career development services.

As a part of the campus wide OSU Career Services unit, Gazaway helps students with the transition from college to the workplace.

"I try to provide resources to help students get off on the right foot," said Gazaway.

Gazaway said she hopes the high visibility of the center will help students participate in career development activities earlier, thus making the transition from college to career less stressful and more successful.

To help with the transition, Gazaway lends guidance on exploring career options and planning for career success. She helps students make themselves more marketable by reviewing their résumés and letters of interest.

Gazaway helps students define career and life goals and assists them in developing a plan to achieve those goals.

The center provides resources to help students achieve their goals, including computers for career-related activities, an expanded career library with employer literature, and books related to job searching and preparing for graduate school, said Gazaway.

Ready references designed to answer students' questions on a variety of job search and career development topics are available at the success center. The ready references also can be downloaded from the CASNR Career Services Web site.

The financing

All CASNR students contribute to the center through student fees; however, student fees did not increase to help pay for the success center, said Miller.

Since students contribute financially to the success center, it is important for them to get their money's worth, said Allison Hayes, agricultural leadership senior and CASNR Career Liaison.

"Students need to take the first step and come to the center," said Hayes. "Like the computer labs [in Agricultural Hall and Animal Science], students are already paying for it; they might as well get good use out of it."

Miller agrees student fees do make a difference in student development services.

"All students pay fees," said Miller. "They need to make sure those fees come back to help them. The fees they pay do result in better services."

Sponsorships are another important source of financing for the center. Sponsors can become annual or lifetime sponsors. Those businesses, organizations or individuals who contribute to the success center are recognized on the CASNR Web site and are showcased in the entrance of the center.

"Private contributions are increasingly important as tuition and fees go up because students bear a lot of the burden," said Miller.

Shawnee Milling of Shawnee, Okla., was the center's first sponsor. Its commitment to help OSU students is realized each time a student uses resources at the success center, said Miller.

Organizing CASNR Student Services into a central, visible location makes it easier for students to find services they need and helps the student services coordinators better organize resources for student use.

"I am excited because we can help more students more effectively," said Miller.

Regular hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday thru Friday. Additional outreach activities may be coordinated during evening and weekend hours.

{Sidebar}

Student Success Center Resources

- Student career resource library
- Multimedia conference room
- Career and student services coordinators' offices
- Computers for recruitment, career and student development
- Rooms for interviews
- Multi-purpose rooms
- Welcome area

{Cutlines}

The CASNR student success center offers a multimedia conference room to provide space for student organizations, like the Ag Ambassadors, to discuss business. (photo by Michelle Clogston)

Amy Gazaway (left), Jamie Norrid and Allison Hayes prepare for the opening of the Student Success Center. (photo by Michelle Clogston)