



## Here at Whitworth, we build students

I recently received a very generous e-mail from a Whitworth student, who wrote, “I just wanted to thank you for your commitment to the lives and education of us students here at Whitworth. Looking across the Loop right now at the new blanket of snow, reflecting on the wealth of social, intellectual and spiritual opportunities available here, I am grateful to be a part of this dynamic organism called Whitworth.”

The theme of this *Whitworth Today* is *More than Bricks and Mortar: Building for the 21st Century*. When I hear “building” used as a verb in reference to Whitworth, I automatically think of the same things this student highlights: social, intellectual and spiritual opportunities for our students.

At Whitworth, “building,” the noun, is simply the space we supply in order to do “building,” the verb. But what an assignment we give our buildings! By asking them to support the construction of social, intellectual and spiritual growth, we make buildings our partners in the sacred task of educating students. Thus, our planning, design, construction and maintenance of Whitworth’s physical plant is driven by the goal of building students more than of building buildings. And for that reason, above all others, we are committed to excellence in every nail we pound, every brick we lay, and every beautiful flower we plant.

What difference does it make to be student-driven in our capital planning

and investments? Examples abound. Not long ago I asked **Ken Pecka, '80**, head of instructional resources, where he thought we were on the continuum of technology resources in colleges and universities. Ken replied that we are definitely above the middle and definitely not at the top. I then asked where we are strongest, compared to other schools. “Our classrooms,” he replied. Right now, 27 of 37 classrooms scheduled for upgrades include fully networked computers, VCRs and fixed high-resolution LCD projectors. Within a couple of years, all 37 will be fully equipped, as will the classrooms coming online in Weyerhaeuser Hall. Ken finds such pervasive technology support rare. Many colleges and universities that boast greater video conferencing and specialized technology capacity fall short of the classroom resources that Whitworth enjoys. Why? Because we believe that technology, like fitness centers and dining halls, exists to support student growth. Critical learning connections between faculty and students take place in classrooms, and we want our faculty to have the best tools available.

In the weeks between being chosen Whitworth’s president-elect and actually showing up for work, I felt rather meek about making requests. I did, however, make two. I asked for money to be set aside in the 1993-94 budget for my newsletter and I requested funds for a facilities master plan. In this issue of *Whitworth Today*, you will read about the exciting work that emerged from the plan we commissioned in 1994. It is important to point out that both the approval and the financial support of Whitworth’s careful planning has been driven by our board. Whitworth’s trustees have stepped up to their fiduciary responsibility in driving the capital growth of the college. Overseeing

Whitworth’s resources stands close to the top of trustee duties, and they have fulfilled these duties superbly. We are more than grateful for their leadership. It is also important to recognize that without Vice President for Business Affairs Tom Johnson and his team, we would not be where we are, nor would we get where we’re going. Tom and his crew have had countless opportunities to make bad decisions, and I’m grateful to be able to say that they missed them all.

If you are like me, I know you have found yourself on the third day of a vacation wondering if whoever vacuumed your hotel room might have gotten too close to your wallet. Well, the famed “Where did that money go?” question that I’ve asked about my billfold is one I have never asked about the \$30+ million we have invested over the past eight years in Whitworth’s physical plant. I’m astonished by all we have been able to do through good planning and the great architects and builders we’ve employed. We are not close to being done, but we thank God for the progress we’ve made.

In assembling this issue of *Whitworth Today*, the contributors brought to the task many opinions and perspectives. But there is one belief that all of us share. It is found in the warning of the Psalmist: *Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain* (PS. 127:1). In all of our projects, we have been faithful in seeking God’s guidance. And as one of Whitworth’s “watchmen,” I can stay awake with confidence that God is watching over all the good building going on in the lives and confines of Whitworth College.