A New Home for the Health Sciences

IN AUGUST, CREIGHTON opened the CL and Rachel Werner Center for Health Sciences Education — the new home for the School of Medicine and a state-of-the-art facility embracing Creighton's commitment to interprofessional education.

Located to the east of U.S. Highway 75, the 145,000-square-foot, five-story facility brings future physicians, nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, pharmacists, physician assistants and paramedicine (EMS) technicians all together to learn and work under one roof. An estimated 5,900 students, faculty, staff and visitors will use the building every year.

The CL and Rachel Werner Center is student focused, with nearly every square foot of the facility dedicated to classrooms, collaboration and hands-on learning for the School of Medicine, the College of Nursing and the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions. Most offices for faculty and staff are located in the Criss Complex, which is connected to the CL and Rachel Werner Center via the FNBO Bridge.

Creighton's innovative approach to interprofessional health sciences education embraces team-based care, drawing on all disciplines to treat the whole person. Systems are streamlined, efforts integrated, silos squashed.

"This facility is a platform that opens up so many possibilities for the development of team-based education," says School of Medicine Dean Robert "Bo" Dunlay, MD'81. "And it's a platform as good as you're going to find anywhere in the country. As are the simulation spaces, the learning spaces and the socialization spaces."

On the next few pages, take a closer look at the CL and Rachel Werner Center for Health Sciences Education.

"This really is the best possible environment we could have created for all our students."

ROBERT "BO" DUNLAY, MD'81
Dean, School of Medicine

REBECCA GRATZ

Creighton health sciences students gather in the fifth-floor student socialization area. The facility's large, all-encompassing windows and open spaces invite a significant amount of natural light into the building, leading to greater energy efficiency and, ultimately, lower operating costs per square foot.

⊙ **Front:** Ariana Wise (Paramedicine/EMS); **Middle (from left):** Carly Gray (Physical Therapy), Emily Callahan (Medicine), Lauren Zorovic (Nursing), Grace Varga (Nursing), Alli Goetzinger (Occupational Therapy), Olivia Kent (Nursing), Mare Kinsel (Occupational Therapy) and Kayla Nedved (Physician Assistant); **Back (from left):** Dani Sasek, BSEMS'23 (Nursing), and William Jones, BS'21 (Physician Assistant).

THE BUILDING

BEYOND THE FIRST FLOOR'S glass-encased entryway, there are debrief and pre-brief rooms, socialization spaces and a 90-seat classroom. Classrooms of the same size or larger can be found on most floors, open to use for students from multiple programs and offering students the space and flexibility to work together as teams.

The second floor houses the rehabilitation science research labs, which bring together faculty committed to improving the rehabilitation, health and wellness of patients. The labs' ceilings include support structures that can hold lifts, zero-entry treadmills and other tools designed for working with paraplegic and quadriplegic patients.

The home care lab is designed to resemble a small apartment. Replicating the inherent challenges found in a typical living space, the home care lab allows students to train within a natural environment through such simulations as fall emergencies, home health visits and patient rehabilitation. The lab reveals the power of treatment and rehab sessions in a nonclinical setting.

In the acute care lab, students can quickly move from course content to practice and back again, all within the lab environment. The lab's flexible structure facilitates individual and small-group learning among students, while hospital beds and exam tables let them practice manikin-based or peer-to-peer skills.

The virtual reality room is a three-wall projected space faculty and students can interact with via touchscreens. This state-of-the-art technology is capable of immersing learners in countless combinations of settings and scenarios. Complementary equipment, such as manikins designed specifically for the VR room, allow faculty to flip the space from clinic to hospital bed to triage experience and back again, all in a matter of minutes.

The third floor is home to the William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation Simulation Center, a collection of 10 high-fidelity simulation rooms and one high-fidelity operating room simulation suite representing a number of unique hospital environments.

The simulations (which incorporate high-fidelity manikins) present scenarios in obstetrics, general medicine, trauma care, surgery and intimate care settings such as hospice. Instructors in the control room monitor students and manage each simulation as the scenarios unfold, helping to prepare students for real-world experiences.

The third floor also contains the David Vesely, MD, PhD, BS'67, Task Training Lab. This flexible environment houses tabletop trainers for low-fidelity skills therapy. The lab is available for self-directed learning outside of class time so students may increase the number of repetitions and develop competencies. The lab converts into a classroom, providing additional active learning space.

In the floor's 14 high-fidelity patient exam rooms, students train by treating standardized patients (actors or faculty members role-playing as patients).

The FNBO Bridge connects the CL and Rachel Werner Center to the Criss Complex over Burt Street. This skywalk links research to practice, and undergraduates to professional students in each of the health sciences disciplines. This prime architectural feature was supported by the Lauritzen Family, the John and Elizabeth Lauritzen Foundation and First National Bank.

"I appreciate how much more interprofessional this building feels already. We interact so much more. We're working more closely with medical students and OTs and PTs, professions we will work alongside the rest of our careers."

CHARLES CLAPP
College of Nursing Student

Photo left: Medical student Arsalan Ahmed, left, and nursing student Dani Sasek, BSEMS'23, in the William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation Simulation Center outside the exam rooms on the third floor.

Photo bottom left: Occupational therapy student Alli Goetzinger works with a standardized patient in the home care lab on the second floor.

Photo bottom right: Physical therapy student Devin Bedke with a standardized patient in the rehabilitation science research lab for physical therapy and occupational therapy located on the second floor.

PHOTOS BY COLIN CONCES

THE NUMBERS

The need for this state-of-the-art space couldn't be clearer. On Creighton's Omaha campus:

60%
freshman undergraduates who are interested in pursuing a health sciences career

3,500+
students are enrolled in professional health sciences programs across all campuses

1,500
students pursuing undergraduate degrees leading to professional school admission

80%
of Creighton undergraduates come from outside Nebraska

Photo top left: Nursing student Grace Varga in a high-fidelity simulation room in the William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation Simulation Center.

Photo top right: The fourth-floor learning commons provides a gathering space for studying and collaboration. Pictured are medical students Kurt Parker, left, and Emily Callahan.

Photo bottom: Medical students, from left, Amrita Purkayastha, Bridget Hickey and Vikram Murugan on the outdoor Mutual of Omaha Terrace, located just outside the 3,000-square-foot learning commons on the fourth floor.

PHOTOS BY COLIN CONCES

THE DONORS


DAVE WEAVER

An Investment in Creighton, Its Students and the Community

The new facility's namesakes, CL and Rachel Werner, see their lead gift to the building as an investment in the students, the University and the surrounding communities.

"Rachel and I are excited to see how this new facility will form a generation of future leaders in healthcare," says CL Werner, HON'18, founder, board chairman emeritus and the former longtime CEO of Werner Enterprises.

This fall, CL and Rachel joined dozens of alumni, friends, faculty, staff, Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert and Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen to celebrate the facility's opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"We thank God for the life and accomplishments of a business icon and his wife, who chose to share with us this phenomenal facility," Fr. Hendrickson said. "Thanks to the generosity of alumni, friends and foundations, each campus addition has propelled the University forward, expanding our mission of academic excellence and service to others."

The donor-driven project's cost, which included renovations to the Criss Complex, was $90 million.

⊙ Pictured above from left are the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, CL Werner, HON'18, Rachel Werner, Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert and Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen.