



Champlain College Staff Move Into New Quarters

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The day before the move into Roger H. Perry Hall, Champlain College's new Welcome and Admission Center. The grand opening celebration is Sept. 24 from 4 to 6:30 p.m. It will be up and running for the return of students at the end of August. (Photos by Stephen Mease / Champlain College)



BURLINGTON, Vt. – After months of anticipation and planning, Champlain College staff moved into their new offices this week in the Welcome & Admission Center at Roger H. Perry Hall on South Willard Street.

While they were still unpacking boxes and getting ready for the upcoming semester, workers were putting the finishing touches on the landscaping, walkways and exterior of the \$12 million facility designed to be the college's Welcome Cent and centralized student services facility. Work should be completed by mid-August and the college is planning a grand opening celebration on Friday, Sept. 24 from 4 to 6:30 p.m.

Work began 14 months ago in May 2009 to restore and expand the circa 1859 brick home located in Burlington's historic Hill section across from the main Champlain College campus. The building has served as home to several notable historical figures during its 151-year history, including an advisor to Presidents Grover Cleveland and Millard Fillmore, a local financier and a doctor. It is named for Champlain College's former president, Roger H. Perry, who retired in 2005.

New and returning students this fall will find Champlain's offices of admission, financial aid, registration, student accounts and advising and international studies centrally located in Perry Hall. The facility, which blends careful historic preservation with cutting-edge technology and sustainability practices, is also the first stop for prospective students and their families when visiting campus.

The new building incorporates energy-efficient lighting and climate control systems, including a geothermal pump from Perry Hall's deep water wells. The ultimate goal, President David F. Finney said, is to earn platinum – the highest level of certification from The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System. LEED recognizes performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

In 2008, Champlain College completed the renovation of Aiken Hall, a circa 1885 brick manor house on campus using state-of-the-art preservation and restoration techniques emphasizing sustainability and reducing the impact on the environment. It earned Gold level LEED certification in 2009.

Champlain College, founded in 1878, offers a distinctive educational approach to professionally focused majors, developing life skills and leadership based on critical and creative thinking. It has nearly 2,000 traditional undergraduate students on campus and also offers online degrees, certificate programs and seven master's degree programs, including new MFA in Emergent Media.

"This facility will greatly enhance our ability to serve our students better and show off one of Burlington's historic architectural gems restored to its former glory," Finney said. "It makes a strong first impression about the commitment to quality at Champlain College and the richness of Burlington's history to our visiting prospective students and their families."

The modern addition facing Lake Champlain includes: an elevator, stairs, offices, small meeting rooms, restrooms and a full-size presentation and conference room. A courtyard and balconies take advantage of the views to Lake Champlain.

The original structure's open staircase, ornate historic details and ground floor rooms have been carefully preserved and will be used for reception and conference spaces. Perry Hall's former library space will now house a collection of documents, photos and historic artifacts related to the neighborhood.

Engelberth Construction of Colchester is the construction manager of the project, which created employment for many

local workers and contractors over the past 14 months, during a particularly difficult economic time in Vermont, college officials said. An added benefit to the project was significant cost savings due to the economy that allowed for the historic carriage barn on the western side of the property to be restored and renovated for use as a computer and digital lab and studio for Champlain students. A small, historic caretaker's cottage was also preserved and moved to the northwestern side of the property.

Perry Hall was a private residence until 2004. It was built in 1859 by lawyer and diplomat Edward Phelps, and is one of only 11 houses in the South Willard Street Historic District that predates the Civil War.

Phelps, who served in the administrations of Presidents Cleveland and Fillmore, sold the home to local financier John J. Flynn in 1913. Flynn, the founder of Chittenden Bank and many other ventures throughout Vermont, was one of the largest landowners in Burlington at the time. The Flynn name adorns Burlington's famous theater, as well as Flynn Avenue.

Flynn's wife, Nellie, had a lifelong interest in native flora of Vermont and published the "Flora of Burlington" in 1911. Her extensive collection of 22,700 specimens is part of a permanent collection of state flora at Goddard College. Upon Flynn's death in 1940, he bequeathed the house to the City of Burlington to serve as a home for older men.

The city, when faced with high operating costs for the home, sold it to Gilbert Brewer, who in turn sold the home to Dr. and Mrs. Martin Cannon in 1955. The Cannon family lived in the home until 2004 when the College purchased it. It was renamed to honor former President Roger H. Perry, who retired in 2005. It remained vacant until restoration work began in May 2009.

The property's original iron fence along Willard Street was refurbished and the front lawn restored. A new promenade walkway will link Perry with the main campus, residence halls and parking area for visitors.

Formal gardens around the building are planted in the spirit of Nellie Flynn's native species studies. Champlain College granted an easement to the City of Burlington to maintain the west lawn as open space available for public use. Visitors will find an original iron sundial created by Vermont sculptor Kate Pond, at the edge of an innovative wetland garden on the lower edge of the property to absorb storm water runoff.

"The grace with which this 151-year-old Italianate-style brick home expands into the sleek glass-fronted additions reflects the masterful partnership of architects and preservation experts. The finished landmark is as innovative as it is spectacular - its incorporation of sustainable and efficiency features sets a new standard for energy and environmental design in the State of Vermont," Finney said.

Champlain College, located in the historic Hill Section of Burlington, Vt., was founded in 1878 and currently has nearly 2,000 undergraduate students. It offers multiple majors in Business, Communications and Creative Media, Education and Human Studies, and Information Technology and Sciences. U.S. News & World Report's "America's Best Colleges 2010" ranks Champlain College a #1 "Top and-Coming" college. Champlain ranks in the top tier of the Best Baccalaureate Colleges (North). To learn more about undergraduate and online education programs offered at Champlain College, visit www.champlain.edu or call 800-570-5858.

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