

# Crews wrapping up renovation of OSU's Furman Hall

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When **Oregon State University's Furman Hall** was remodeled two years ago, officials could afford to improve only the first three floors. Now, money is available to pay for a renovation of the building's fourth floor, and **FFA Architecture and Interiors Inc.** is back to finish the job.

The Portland-based firm was tasked with designing offices, meeting areas and classrooms for the **College of Education's** graduate and doctoral students in an attic space with slanted ceilings, said Amalia Mohr, an associate partner and director of interiors.

"This was all a unique challenge," she said. "Because of the sloping roof there were a lot of space constraints."

The \$1.2 million project also took into account the university's desire to encourage student collaboration, Mohr said.

Portland-based contractor **Fortis Construction Inc.** is scheduled to finish work on the fourth floor in November.

Two years ago, FFA designed an extensive renovation for the first three floors of Furman Hall, principal Troy Ainsworth said. A modern interior was created for the 111-year-old building. Also, a crumbling stone exterior held up by a chain-link fence was restored, he said.

Aside from skylight additions and basic upgrades, the fourth floor was left untouched, Ainsworth said.

"OSU raised money from other sources and donations, but there still wasn't enough for the fourth floor," he said. "The actual use of it was left up in the air."

More donations have allowed OSU to complete the renovation project, and a recent reorganization of two of the university's departments has shaped the future of Furman Hall's fourth floor, said Larry Flick, the dean of the College of Education. The **College of Science's** science, technology, engineering and math teaching department will become part of the College of Education and move from another part of campus into the fourth floor of Furman Hall, he said.

“That renovation was designed to accommodate that move,” Flick said. “Having everybody there in one location is going to be so much better. In terms of getting work done and building collaboration, this is a big move.”

The fourth floor will have two classrooms for graduate students to practice teaching, he said. Graduate students also will have shared office space and common areas with tables and white boards, Flick said.

“The fourth floor was designed with gathering spaces in mind,” he said. “The whole idea being that area up there is a research and teaching area with graduate (students) and faculty easily interacting.”

This consideration inspired a central wing on the fourth floor with a mix of quiet study areas and spots to host informal meetings, said Phillip Chubb, an associate with FFA.

“They wanted it to be open so they could share ideas,” he said. “They really wanted an architectural environment that conveyed that.”

To achieve an open floor plan, rarely used common areas on the second floor will become private faculty offices, leaving the fourth floor strictly for graduate students, Chubb said.

“We can enclose these spaces and completely open up the fourth floor,” he said.

The ceilings on the fourth floor lend better to an open floor plan, Mohr said. A sense of openness will be further enhanced by glass doors and windows looking into rooms, she said.

“The way the roof lines are, it doesn’t work for little offices,” Mohr said. “The lines of the roof dictate so many things. When you have a sloping ceiling you already feel boxed in. We were glad we had the opportunity to move those offices on the second floor ... It made the fourth floor better.”

Although it was a challenge, the slanted roof created some interesting design quirks, such as a classroom with a loft ceiling 18 feet high, Mohr said.

“You’re going to notice (the roof), but you’ll enjoy it,” she said. “It’s much more celebrated now.”