



Health Sciences Center

Adds New Dimension To College's Offerings

by Kirk DICKEY

When the Cary A. Israel Health Sciences Center opens on Collin College's Central Park Campus this month, the building will add more than classroom and lab space. It will also add a new dimension to the health care education being offered by the college.

The three-story, 125,000-square-foot facility will feature not only

classrooms and faculty offices, but also state-of-the-art lab facilities for students in emergency services, nursing, polysomnographic technology (sleep tech), respiratory care and surgical technology. The lab facilities, most of which will use patient simulators, will feature state-of-the-art medical equipment to help students practice patient care.

"The future of Texas health care starts in buildings just like this one, built around award-winning programs and our established Center of Excellence in Nursing Education. Collin College can deliver quality at a price point that benefits the state, taxpayers and students helping to fill Texas' critical needs," Collin College District President Dr. Neil Matkin said,



referencing recent efforts to expand degrees such as the Bachelor of Science of Nursing (B.S.N.) to Collin College.

The Board of Trustees named the new health science center after the college's second president last year when he stepped down following 16 years of service.

"I am honored and humbled by this generous recognition," Dr. Cary Israel said. "Let the letter 'A' on this building remind us of 'all' who contribute tirelessly each and every day to ensure a quality institution of higher education—the Board of Trustees, faculty, students,

staff and the community. I applaud and thank you."

The center's design will facilitate the cross-training of multiple health care disciplines, allowing Collin College students to work through realistic medical scenarios they might experience in the real world.

In the real world, emergency medical technicians work with nurses, who work with doctors, who work with surgical technicians. They all work together to treat the patient. It is the ability to work together that allows a hospital to function, and it is the ability to bring all of those specialties together that will make the health sciences center unique in North Texas.

"Health care is a team activity," said Dr. Abe Johnson, long-time dean of the Collin College health science programs and now vice president/provost at the college's Preston Ridge Campus in Frisco. "It's not just nursing; it's not just respiratory therapy. It's a team of people working together to take care of the patient."

Both Dr. Johnson and Dean of Nursing Donna Hatch described a scenario in which a patient simulator could be taken through the full hospital experience and students would work together to keep the patient "alive."

EMT students will "transport" a patient from a home in a mock-up of an ambulance moving on hydraulics

to simulate traveling. Those EMT students will bring the patient into an emergency room simulator where nursing students will begin his care. If the scenario calls for it, the patient can be moved to an operating room for surgery tech students to work on him. Assuming the patient makes it through "surgery," he can go back to the nursing hospital lab for nursing

"This health sciences center is just one more step in cementing Collin County's reputation as a leader in health care education in North Texas..."

students to continue his care during recovery with any post-surgical procedures.

"The collaboration within the disciplines is a major thing that our students need to learn, because in a hospital that is how it works," Hatch said. "Now that we have the equipment and the space, there are endless numbers of experiences we can give our students."

The new facility will allow the nursing program to grow in the

coming years. Hatch said the program now accepts about 50 students per semester. That could increase to 70-80 per semester once additional faculty is in place in the health sciences center.

The space will also open up opportunities for two new programs in the allied health sciences—Diagnostic Medical Sonography and Occupational Therapy Assistant.

"This health sciences center is just one more step in cementing Collin County's reputation as a leader in health care education in North Texas, a process that began three decades ago on the same

plot of land where the center now stands," Collin College Board Chair Dr. J. Robert Collins said, noting that the health sciences center's ribbon cutting will be held on January 20, the 30th anniversary of the Central Park Campus opening.

After the new facilities are completed and the programs move to their new locations, backfill construction in former health sciences offices and space opened up by the construction of a 23,500-square-foot



Former District President Cary Israel (second from right) receives an artist rendering of the building that will bear his name from members of the Collin College Board of Trustees (from left) Adrian Rodriguez, Larry Wainwright and Dr. J. Robert Collins.



conference center facility will increase opportunities for students in fine arts, sciences, fitness and wellness and create other collaborative spaces for student interaction in the main

building. Renovated science labs should be complete by summer 2016.

"Thirty years ago, the college was holding its first classes in high schools throughout Collin County,"

said Dr. John Anthony, the college's founding president. "Over the years, the college has made a point to hire only the best and most able faculty and support personnel, and students and faculty have been provided with the highest quality teaching and learning environments. The new building is yet another excellent example of the college's commitment to providing quality facilities for its students, its faculty and its community."

With all of that new construction, Central Park Campus can continue to strengthen and grow.

You might even say it's getting healthier. ♦

Kirk Dickey is a public relations writer with Collin College.

Photo by Nick Young, Collin College photographer.