



# Still Booming

If there was a soundtrack to Macon State's progress of the past decade or so, it would have to include the snip of scissors cutting through ribbon.

**[S]**ince late 1997, when the first shovelful of dirt was turned over on the site of what is now the Student Life Center, the signs of a campus under construction, followed by formal openings and ceremonial ribbon-cuttings, have been nearly as commonplace as new degree programs and enrollment increases.

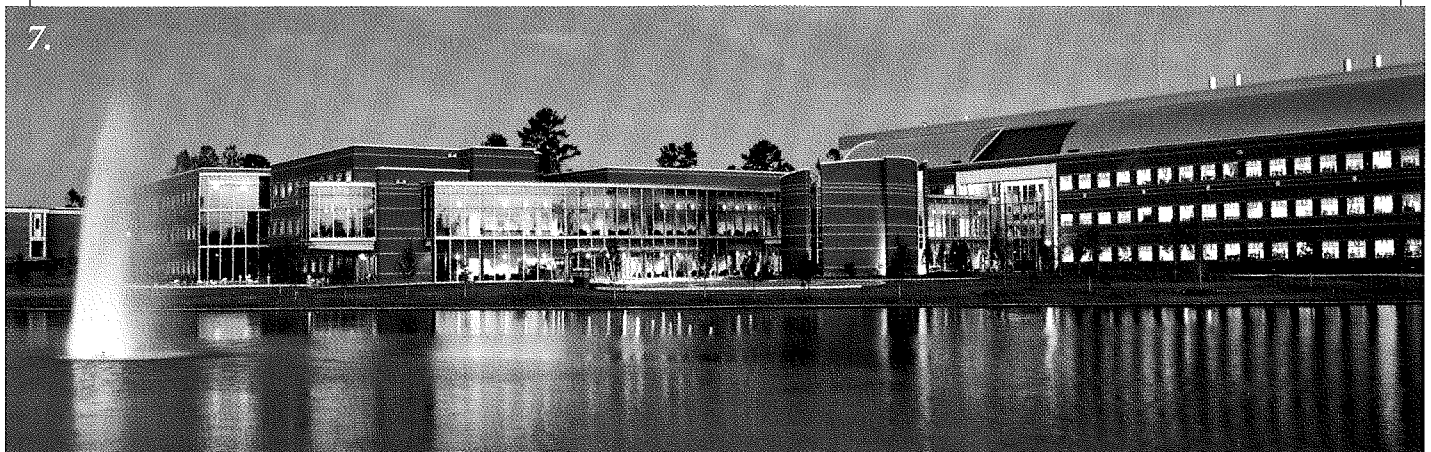
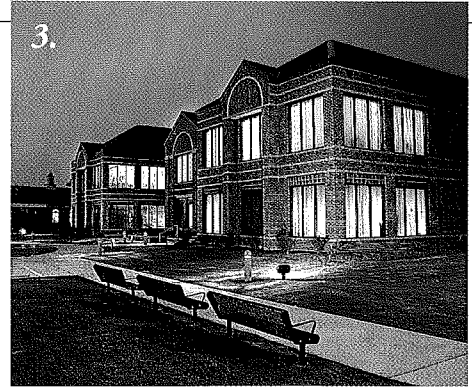
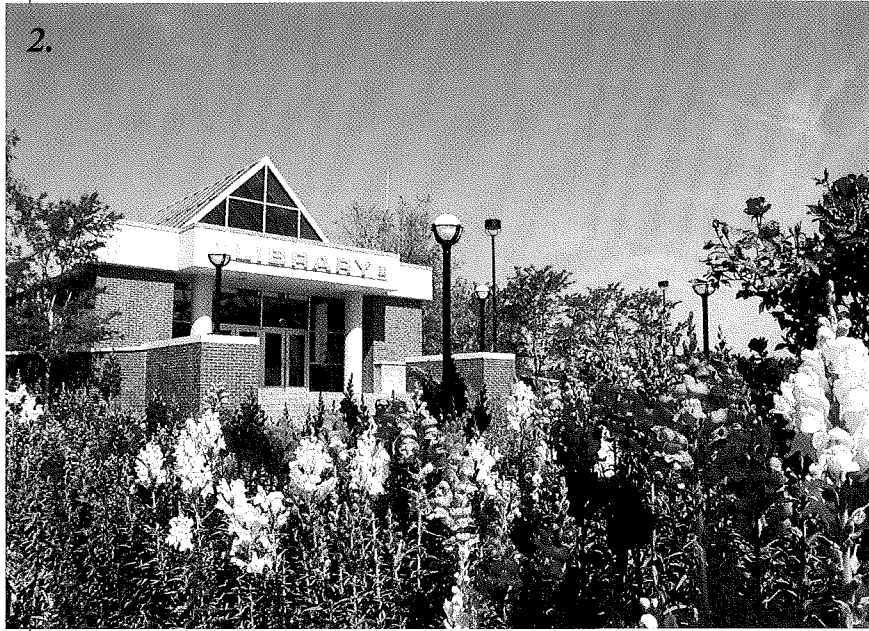
The trend continues this academic year when work begins on a \$24.2 million teacher education building on the Macon campus. Estimated for completion in 2011, the building will house the School of Education and its two important state partners – the Educational Technology Center and the Regional Educational Services Agency.

“This building is in response to a fast-growing school with fast-growing degree programs,” said David Sims, who, as Macon State’s director of Plant Operations, has worked closely with the design and construction teams of all campus building projects since 1997. “It’s exciting to play a part in making sure the college has the facilities it needs to carry out its mission.”

The teacher education building will be three stories high with lots of glass for natural lighting and a look that complements the Professional Sciences & Conference Center.

Three of Macon State’s oldest buildings were demolished to make way for the new facility, which was designed by Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback and Associates (TVS), an international architectural firm. The project manager is SP Design Group of Macon. Chris R. Sheridan and Co., general contractors of Macon, will build the facility.

In total, Macon State has carried out \$91.1 million in construction projects, including the teacher education building, since 1997. Over the same time period, enrollment has grown by 83.5 percent.



- 1. Student Life Center. Completed 2000. \$8.9 million.
- 2. Library (total renovation). Completed 2005. \$5 million.
- 3. Warner Robins Campus (renovation of Thomas Hall and construction of Academic Services Building). Completed 2003. \$5 million.
- 4. Oak Hall, Warner Robins Campus. Completed 2009. \$5 million.
- 5. Charles H. Jones Building. Completed 2004. \$17.5 million.
- 6. Teacher Education Building. Projected Completion 2011. \$24.2 million.
- 7. Professional Sciences & Conference Center, left. Completed 2009. \$25.5 million.

# Oak Hall Makes Its Debut

**[E]**arly autumn sunlight streamed through the multiple windows as students Barbara Goad and Amanda Giberson picked out a table in the atrium of Oak Hall, spread out their books, and settled in for a study session.

The newest building at the Warner Robins Campus had everything they needed: a comfortable place to get their work done, computer access and, from the bookstore a few steps away, snacks and drinks if they got the munchies.

"It's a very nice building with a professional feel to it," said Giberson, who, like Goad, is a junior majoring in early childhood education. "It's got a lot of space and natural light."

With a record enrollment of 2,010 students, the Warner Robins Campus welcomed the opening of Oak Hall this fall. Enrollment growth over the past few years meant the campus had run out of room during peak class times in its two original facilities, Thomas Hall and the Academic Services Building.

The two-story Oak Hall – named for the century old tree near the building – added six large classrooms and also became the new home of a greatly expanded bookstore and Academic Resource Center. The old bookstore and ARC spaces in the Academic Services Building were converted into classrooms.

"It's made a huge difference," said Pella Murphy, Warner

Robins Campus director. "We had no space issues this fall like we've had in the past."

Oak Hall, which cost \$5 million to build, is located on part of the 70+ acres deeded by the city of Warner Robins to the Board of Regents for the campus's expansion.

SP Design Group, the company that designed the rest of the Warner Robins Campus, crafted the look of the 28,000-square-foot building. The builder was Piedmont Construction Group.

Macon State formally opened Oak Hall during a short ceremony for civic and business leaders on August 11.

The event featured brief remarks by college officials, refreshments, and a tour of Oak Hall, which is located at the corner of Robins Drive and Martin Luther King Boulevard, behind the campus's two original buildings.

Students got their first look at Oak Hall a week later, when fall semester began, and their early reviews were positive. They were especially impressed with the atrium, which was a great improvement over the small student lounge areas in Thomas Hall and the Academic Services Building.

"It's nice to come in here and sit and chill," said Christina White, an 18-year-old aspiring art major, who lounged in a soft chair and worked on some sketches. "It's not that far

