

# The Berkshires

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# Williams to begin construction

## Project will change look of campus

By Christopher Marcisz  
Berkshire Eagle Staff

WILLIAMSTOWN — The Williams College board of trustees has given the final go-ahead for a \$123 million construction project that will reshape the north side of the campus, including the building of a new library to replace Sawyer Library.

The decision extends to about 2011 the college's recent building boom. Work on a \$44 million student center — which was officially named the Paresky Center last

week — will wrap up early next year. Last year, the college opened its \$50 million '62 Center for Theatre and Dance.

The new building project could get under way in spring 2007, once the Paresky Center is completed. It will include the construction of two classroom and office buildings and the razing of the imposing, boxlike Sawyer Library, which dominates the center of campus and the view north from Spring Street.

David Pilachowski, the college's librarian and co-chairman of the committee

overseeing the Stetson-Sawyer project, said the trustees' vote came after months of review.

"We've been doing a lot of fine-tuning and a lot of work to prepare to get the budget in shape," he said.

The trustees unanimously approved the plans at their meeting in late January. The result was announced at a faculty meeting Wednesday.

The project will include several phases that will turn the campus north of Main Street. It will do for the humanities departments on campus what years of renovations and construction on the south side of Main Street did for the sci-

ence departments.

The first will phase be the construction of two faculty office and classroom buildings, one just to the north and one to the south of Sawyer Library.

In the next phase, the additions to the rear of Stetson Hall will be taken down and a new library, also to be called Sawyer, will be built in its place.

Finally, the existing library will be taken down, creating a large open space that will link the new Stetson-Sawyer building with Chapin Hall, the Paresky Center and the Freshman Quad.

WILLIAMS, continued on B4

# Williams to begin campus renovations

**WILLAMS from B1**

Pilachowski said the designs for the two new academic buildings are close to completion and are further along than the Stetson plans.

"We think we're pretty close. We have another month to work on [the academic building plans]," he said. "The library part is much more of a blank piece of paper at this point."

The project is being designed by architectural firm Bohlin Cywinski Jackson of Wilkes-Barre, Pa. Among their Berkshire projects is the Fisher Science and Academic Center at Simon's Rock College of Bard in Great Barrington.

Initial planning for the project dates back to 1998, when an effort was under way to solve several "lurking facilities" problems. Although it opened in 1975, Sawyer Library is

already running out of space. And estimates showed that it would cost nearly as much to renovate as to replace it because of such design elements as concrete ductwork and two giant light wells in the center of the building.

The project also would return stately Stetson Hall to its original, intended purpose as the college's main library. In its current arrangements, with several additions added behind it, the interior is a confusing labyrinth of cramped faculty offices and classrooms, with no informal meeting space or other modern amenities.

Preliminary designs for the project released in late 2004 had a price tag of about \$105 million. But increases in building materials and construction costs pushed the price to about \$123 million. Similar pressure pushed the cost of the Par-

esky Center from \$36 million to about \$44 million.

That prompted a thorough review by the trustees last year. "For a project of this significance, the board rightly asked us over recent months to go through a formal review of the planning to date," college President Morton O. Schapiro said.

Pilachowski said there have been only a few changes to the preliminary designs. The south academic building, which will be clearly visible to Main Street/Route 2, is slightly larger, while the north building is a little smaller.

Also, a plan to keep the foundation of the existing Sawyer Library and turn it into an underground, long-term storage area has been scrapped.

*On the Web: [www.williams.edu/go/stetsonawyer](http://www.williams.edu/go/stetsonawyer)*