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UWF sophomore Cypress Howes, 20, a music teaching major, walks past the site of the future science and technology center.

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## UWF campus going green

University known for natural beauty to get makeover that saves energy



**Sara Rabb**  
srabb@pnj.com

Utilitarian and well-kept, the earth-tone buildings of the University of West Florida generally blend well with the rolling hills and many trees on a campus noted for its natural beauty.

But there is very little "wow" factor in campus architecture.

"They're more just plain, to be quite honest," said Manny Rosario, a computer-science and engineering student at UWF.

And when Rosario and his friends gather to look over a computer program or lesson, they usually do so in a small room hidden in one of the campus buildings.

Despite the campus' natural ambience, it lacks a large open-air gathering place or terrace where students can set up their laptops for a mix of wireless Internet and fresh Florida air.

But a major change to UWF's look is on the horizon.

Construction of three new buildings is to begin early next year, part of an evolving master plan to take the sprawling, 40-year-old university into a new era in campus building.

University officials say they aim to create a more compact, more organized space that encourages walking, biking and energy conservation.

Details of the plan include:

-- A sleek new \$31.3 million science and technology building that will feature a four-story glass atrium, solar energy, virtual reality classrooms and a Starbucks coffee shop that opens onto a large terrace with wireless Internet access.

-- A \$1.1 million demonstration house, built with private funds, to showcase building materials and construction practices that are environmentally friendly, wind-resistant and energy-efficient.

-- A \$2.8 million campus child-care facility near the same buildings where students study early childhood development, putting them within walking distance of classroom observation.

-- Eventually closing off a portion of Campus Drive between the Center for Fine and Performing Arts and the new science and technology building to create a pedestrian mall that will give a view of the campus from the crest of a large hill.

The State of Florida already has appropriated money to fully fund the science and child-care buildings. The capital project budget is separate from the operating-expense budget, which has been the source of much uncertainty lately.

### SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BUILDING

Size: 94,400 square feet.

Construction: Begins in February; completion in July 2009.

Details: Glass atrium, robotics lab, virtual reality classrooms, Starbucks.

Cost: \$31.3 million, state-funded.

B.E.S.T. House

Size: 3,300 square feet.

Construction: Begins in March; completion in spring 2009.

Details: Will educate and showcase green building, energy efficiency, windstorm mitigation.

Cost: \$1.1 million, privately funded

Campus child-care center

Size: 11,000 square feet.

Construction: Begins in January; completion in December 2008.

Details: Relocates child-care center.

Cost: \$2.8 million, state-funded.

### WHAT 'GREEN' BUILDING TAKES

n CERTIFICATION: Each of the three buildings planned for the University of West Florida will meet the silver certification level of standards set up by the U.S. Green Building Council. UWF is a member of the council.

n STANDARDS: The group's Leadership with Environmental and Energy Design program sets voluntary, national standards for evaluating buildings based on a number of factors related to energy use, water use, sustainability, materials and indoor environment.

n DESIGN FEATURES: UWF gets points toward its LEED certification for positioning buildings to take advantage of natural light and for

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using paint and carpeting that have no volatile organic compounds. Other design and building features contribute points that determine LEED certification.

Online

For more information about the LEED program, visit [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org).

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### Green standards

Each of the three new buildings will follow U.S. Green Building Council standards, considered the national benchmark for design and construction standards in energy use, waste disposal, landscaping and irrigation.

UWF President John Cavanaugh said he has been happy with recent building projects, which have focused on quality construction and raised the bar on interior finish.

"What we're doing is taking that one step further and saying, 'You know, let's do some things with building design to make it look distinctive,'" he said.

In addition to meeting the needs of a growing campus, the new buildings will help connect the north and south parts of campus, part of a plan to fill in existing campus areas before spreading out into undeveloped acreage.

"I think another aspect of these buildings is that we're actually thinking ahead," Cavanaugh said.

Finally, the buildings will put UWF in a leadership position when it comes to environmentally friendly construction and design. The only other local buildings that have achieved similar green building standards are on the campus of the Navy Federal Credit Union in Beulah.

"We really want to start practicing what we preach," Cavanaugh said.

### Solar glass

During a visit to Tokyo, Cavanaugh saw a building that had solar cells embedded in its windows so that natural light generated energy.

He brought back photos to Jim Barnett, associate vice president of facilities planning and construction at UWF, so the idea could become part of the new science and technology building.

Barnett said the building will have one of the largest installations of architectural solar glass in the Southeast.

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