

Hall mark

MU dedicates business building.

By JOHN SULLIVAN
of the Tribune's staff

Not everyone at the MU College of Business was involved in yesterday's high-tech dedication ceremony for the school's new building, Cornell Hall, but almost everybody put in a plug for the \$30 million facility.

"Oh my goodness, it's a different world altogether," said Omar Shehrya, who was milling about his shiny new office on Friday with fellow doctoral student Todd Morgan.

Shehrya and Morgan said they particularly enjoy the view from their windows, which overlook the building's naturally-lit central atrium and its giant television screen four stories below. The school plans to broadcast business news on the screen throughout the day, Morgan said.

Yesterday's dedication attracted a host of campus dignitaries and alumni. The ceremony was intended to thank local and state officials and the more than 3,000 alumni who contributed to the cost of building Cornell Hall.

State government contributed \$17 million toward the project. The biggest private donation came from the building's namesakes, Ann Cornell and her husband, Harry Cornell, who is the former CEO of Legget & Platt Inc. Ann Cornell yesterday led a prayer to honor the building's dedication.

To showcase the building's advanced technology, the ceremony was broadcast via live audio Web cast from both the atrium hall and a packed auditorium. Tours of the school revealed classrooms equipped with hanging projectors, dedicated computers and DVD/VCR players. Visitors were impressed by the scores of Internet jacks for laptops, the satellite access, the giant auditorium, the 125-seat lecture hall, two computer labs, administrative and staff offices, and 13 small breakout rooms.

Representatives of Ellerbe Becket, the Kansas City architectural firm that designed the building, said its neo-Georgian appearance outside compliments the stylish interior — accented by cherry-stained maple doors, hand railings and trimming, sconced-lit hallways and skylights — to provide a sense of modernity as well as tradition.

For Lindsay Proffit, an MBA student who has been at MU for seven years, the 150,000-square-foot complex was a big move up. "About 10 floors up," she said, standing near a terrace overlooking the atrium. "Just the look of the building is a big step."

Fellow MBA students Amy Ellis and Fumie Mita agreed. "There's Internet connections everywhere," said Ellis, who speculated that laptop computers might soon become required student equipment.

Mita wondered if the building isn't "a little too perfect." The first time she saw it, she said, it resembled the office building of the company she worked for in Japan. "It doesn't feel like a classroom," she said.

That's exactly what Proffit likes about the building, especially compared to the business college's former home in Middlebush Hall. Many students complained Middlebush was too old, its offices too small and the atmosphere too dark and gloomy.

Now, "you don't feel like you're walking into 1960s classrooms anymore," Proffit said.

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