

Construction to begin on Early Care and Education Center

By Vicki Hamende

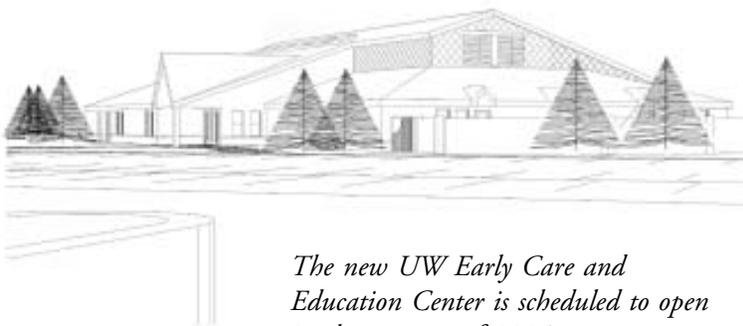
Senior Editor and Writer, Office of Ag Communications and Technology

Groundbreaking ceremonies for the new University of Wyoming Early Care and Education Center will take place July 6 at 4 p.m. at the building site on 30th and Lodgepole streets in Laramie.

A reception will follow at the Alumni House on campus.

A joint effort involving the College of Agriculture and the College of Education, the \$2 million, 9,220-square-foot training and research laboratory will consolidate the current University Child Care Center, Child Development Center, School-Age Care Program, and College of Education Pre-K program and also allow for the addition of infant and toddler care.

Special features will include a multi-purpose area for gross motor activities, parent meetings, and multi-age programs; a breastfeeding support room; an on-site nursing station with temporary sick-child facilities; a science/solar room to encourage children's understanding of nature and how to grow plants; an observation room with computers and video capabilities to better serve college students'



The new UW Early Care and Education Center is scheduled to open in the summer of 2005.

training needs; and a full kitchen with child-sized space to encourage cooking and nutrition-awareness activities.

Current plans call for the center, which will serve 90-100 children, to be occupied in the summer of 2005.

"Bringing everything together into one place will allow for better training for our academic programs and will be easier on parents if they have children in different age groups at the center," says Associate Professor Karen Williams, head of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences and a key player in the planning of the new facility.

She describes the new center as academic based and says the level of interdisciplinary involvement it will afford will be a "model" for the nation.

"We will be serving college student programs in nursing, kinesiology and health, developmental psychology, and communications disorders. The counselor education program is also interested in participating," Williams notes.

Co-directing the new facility will be Mark Bittner, current coordinator of the University Child Care Center and the Child Development Center, and Cleta Booth, a pre-kindergarten teacher and apprenticeship supervisor with the UW Lab School.

"It will be a nice blending of the two colleges that already deliver the interdisciplinary early childhood program. The new center will allow us to work jointly on curriculum development," says Williams.

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While the College of Agriculture will be fiscally responsible for the center, the College of Education is actively involved in fundraising for equipment for the new laboratory.

Dignitaries at the groundbreaking ceremony will include UW President Philip Dubois, College of Agriculture Dean Frank Galey, College of Education Dean Patricia McClurg, the UW Board of Trustees, representatives of the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming, faculty members, Facilities Planning employees, and participants in an Early Childhood Institute beginning on campus July 7.

“There are a lot of people who are strong supporters of early

childhood education who helped make this possible,” Williams says.

The 30th Street site was chosen because it provides room for future expansion and offers close proximity to student housing and the university bus system.

TSP, an architectural firm based in Denver, designed the new center with help from the colleges and departments involved. The UW trustees awarded the construction contract to Spiegelberg Lumber and Building Company of Laramie.

In line with the “project approach” used as a curriculum model for the current early care programs, Williams says the

children served will follow the building process from beginning to end, visiting the site often and making their own drawings and models. They will also help with the moving process.

“This will provide endless opportunities for really important learning,” the department head says.

In addition to providing “best practices” for the children, Williams says the new Early Care and Education Center will benefit college students doing observations, practicums, and internships.

“We are very lucky that we have people at UW who understand the importance of an academic, interdisciplinary approach and who advocate for it.”

Calendar

July 1: Wyoming 4-H Judging Series, Carbon County

July 1–August 21: Coat Couture VII, American Heritage Center Loggia

July 5: Holiday, offices closed; Wyoming 4-H Judging Series, Campbell County

July 6: Reception for Roger Hybner, 6 p.m., Sheridan College Joe and Arlene Watt Agriculture Center. R.S.V.P. Sheridan College at (307) 674-6446 or mahall@sheridan.edu by July 2.

July 7–9: Fifth Biennial University of Wyoming Early Childhood Institute in the Wyoming Union. “The Art of Awareness: Using Documentation to Design Environments and Curriculum.” The Institute is sponsored by the Daniels Fund and the UW Colleges of Education and Agriculture. Mark Bittner and Karen Williams, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, are the conference facilitators.

July 9–11: State 4-H Shooting Sports Match, Douglas

July 12–16: National Association of Agricultural County Agents, Orlando, Florida

July 13: Wyoming 4-H Judging Series, Washakie County

July 13–17: Natrona County Fair

July 16: Wyoming 4-H Judging Series, Natrona County

July 18–20: WyRED (Wyoming Resource Education Days), Cody

July 21: Sugar Beet Tour, 3:45 p.m., Powell Research and Extension Center

July 23: State Rangeland Judging Contest, Cody

July 25–August 1: Teton County Fair

July 26–30: Converse County Fair

July 27–August 1: Park County Fair

July 29: Field Tour, 10 a.m. to noon, Powell Research and Extension Center

July 30–August 7: Albany County Fair; Uinta County Fair

July 31–August 7: Niobrara County Fair

July 31–August 8: Sublette County Fair

For a statewide calendar, please access the ag college Web site at www.uwyo.edu/agcollege

Nepalese students find research home in college

By Vicki Hamende

Senior Editor and Writer, Office of Ag Communications and Technology

Sudhir Raj Shrestha, Sadikshya Rana, and Gyami Shrestha have a few things in common.

They are all graduate students with strong agricultural backgrounds in the Department of Renewable Resources. They are all linked with professors they admire and projects they find challenging. They are all appreciative of the friendliness they have encountered and the respect their research is receiving at the University of Wyoming.

And they are all from Nepal.

Their presence is helping to shorten the 7,623 miles between Laramie and the Himalayan country and to put the College of Agriculture on the international map.

Sadikshya and Gyami, who are both natives of Kathmandu, were drawn to the college to study with Assistant Professor Peter Stahl.

Sadikshya, who is just beginning work on her doctorate in soil science, will focus on the use of microbial techniques in the reclamation and restoration of land, particularly in mining areas.

Gyami started her master's degree in soil science with a water resources option in January of 2003 and is conducting field work studying the effect of land management practices on soil bulk density and infiltration at five reclaimed mine sites in Wyoming. She is also analyzing the differences in soil structure and carbon content inside and outside grazing enclosures.

Sudhir, who grew up in the small countryside town of



Gyami Shrestha, left, and Sudhir Raj Shrestha (no relation), center, met in Kathmandu before beginning their graduate studies last year in the College of Agriculture. Sadikshya Rana, right, arrived in May. The three scholars from Nepal are working on degrees in the Department of Renewable Resources.

Malangwa, began his doctoral program in rangeland ecology and watershed management in the fall of 2003 with Assistant Professor Scott Miller.

As part of a U.S. Army Topographic Engineering Center project, he is developing a heuristic model for soil classification using geographic information systems (GIS) and light detection and ranging (LIDAR) technology as well as several geomorphic indices. Once he successfully completes the model, he hopes to test it in several parts of the world.

Having already distinguished themselves in their native country through their education and work experience, the trio now hopes to create a UW legacy that will encourage other Nepalese students to seek graduate research projects in the College of Agriculture.

Sadikshya, who earned bachelor's and master's degrees in microbiology and minors in chemistry and botany at Bangalore

University in India, says her dream is to earn a Ph.D. and to promote the role of women in science in her largely rural country. "I want to do something important in my life," she says.

The graduate student credits her mother, who is a principal at a girls' school in Kathmandu, with encouraging her to pursue her goals. "She thought that my sisters and I should be highly educated."

Sadikshya was employed as a researcher at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore and as a hazard analysis and critical control point consultant in Nepal before coming to Laramie.

"With the interest of Tom Thurow (professor and renewable resources department head) and Peter Stahl and my husband's support, I am now here." She is already immersed in laboratory and field work and happy to be continuing her interest in applied microbiology. The focal point of her research will be to examine

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nutrient cycling, microbial community structure, and soil composition as they relate to the recovery of below-ground ecosystem components under different plant communities at coal mine reclamation sites.

Gyami, who recently won a P.E.O. International Peace Scholarship, worked with the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development to help create a data base of local and global water-harvesting technologies as part of her undergraduate thesis in environmental science and natural resource management at Kathmandu University.

She also modeled rainfall data to assess the appropriate reservoir size for preserving rainwater in a village in Nepal.

Although the summer monsoon season drenches the country and causes floods, landslides, and erosion, the rest of the year is very dry, she says. "If we could just harvest that water, life would be so much easier for everyone," Gyami explains.

After she finishes her master's degree at UW in May of 2005, completes a Ph.D., and gains work experience integrating her interests in soil, water, and the environment, Gyami plans to return to Nepal to organize international projects linking her homeland with universities in the U.S.

Her hope is to combine her growing scientific knowledge with societal realities while promoting governmental technologies and education in rural Nepal.

She has already been involved in helping women by introducing solar box cookers and studying the impact of improved cook stoves in villages. "These replace traditional stoves that

use fuel wood inefficiently, clogging homes with smoke and dirt and causing health problems."

In another project that she initiated and coordinated, Gyami helped village women "gain a sense of independence" by training them to install and operate water and energy technologies for household use.

"I learned a lot, but I decided I needed to do more research," Gyami says. She is impressed with the quality of education she is receiving in the Department of Renewable Resources. "I'm so glad I came here and am very grateful for all the encouraging support I get from my adviser and the entire department."

Sudhir's interest in agriculture stems from years of helping his father manage the family farm during summer breaks.

He earned an undergraduate degree in agriculture from the Institute of Agriculture and Animal Sciences (Tribhuvan University) in Rampur, Nepal, and a master's degree in soil science from the University of Ghent in Belgium.

Sudhir brings vast international experience to the College of Agriculture, having taught, worked on projects, and conducted research in the Netherlands, Germany, and Japan as well as in Nepal.

He served as a youth water ambassador in Europe, studied water erosion in Asia, helped organize a session at the Third World Water Forum in Japan in 2003, taught soil physics and water resource engineering, and worked as a consultant for the Center for Rural Technology in Nepal. He used his GIS skills to study the impact of earthquakes on the

historical monuments of Kathmandu while he was a visiting research fellow at Akita Prefectural University in Japan.

His dream is to become a university professor, first in the U.S. and then in Nepal.

"It's really great here working with Scott, and I would like to thank him," Sudhir says, adding that his mentor has made it possible for him to travel to present papers and meet other researchers. He also praises Thurow for encouraging him.

"I had always heard that the U.S. was a great place to study because everybody respects your work regardless of your ethnic group or your age," Sudhir recalls.

The doctoral candidate says he has found this to be true at UW and at other institutions he has visited to discuss his work. "The communication between professors and students is like that of friends and colleagues. You can strongly disagree with them and they will listen to you," Sudhir notes.

He says he believes that "it's not the name of the university that's important. It's the work you are doing and the person you are working with."

The graduate student says he is excited about his studies and hopeful that he will make a substantial contribution to his research field.

"The three of us have come from Nepal, and we must carve a path for the new generation there."