

New Detroit Building Will House LTU Design Programs

Midtown Detroit, Inc., broke ground on a 30,000-square-foot, three-story commercial building at the corner of Woodward Avenue and W. Willis Street that will have Lawrence Technological University (LTU) as the anchor tenant.

The groundbreaking ceremony was held Dec. 18. This new commercial development is being funded by a wide variety of Midtown Detroit, Inc. partners, including NCB Capital Impact, Invest Detroit, Kresge Foundation, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Detroit Development Fund, Knight Foundation, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, and Peter Cummings, said LTU spokesman Eric Pope.

The building will house LTU's new Detroit Center for Design + Technology, which will consolidate existing programs in Detroit run by LTU's College of Architecture and Design, Pope said.

Other tenants in the new building will be Invest Detroit, which played a major role in the financing of this project, and the building's architects, Quinn Evans.

The Kresge Foundation provided a \$300,000 grant to support the creation of LTU's new Detroit center.

"Having all LTU's Detroit projects and academic programming under one roof will provide synergies that will position existing programs to have a greater social and community impact," said Amy Green Deines, associate dean of LTU's College of Architecture and Design.

"Our partnership with Midtown Detroit and this new prominent location on Woodward Avenue will lead to more opportuni-

ties to engage organizations and groups that are working to rebuild and rejuvenate the city."

LTU will move additional programming to Detroit after the new center opens in the fall of 2014, Pope said.

"The arts are a driving force behind the resurgence of Midtown Detroit and this new center will add to that trend," said Sue Mosey, executive director of Midtown Detroit, Inc.

"We also need creative development in this area, and the Lawrence Tech faculty and students can contribute to that process. Adding this center is an important step in the long-term redevelopment of this part of the Woodward corridor."

The new LTU center, Pope said, will be the new home of three of the university's existing programs:

- Detroit Studio, which has moved to temporary facilities after being located in the New Center area for many years, has been providing design support for neighborhood and community-based projects in Detroit and elsewhere since it was established in 1999 by Associate Professor Joongsu Kim.

- detroitSHOP – an urban design studio in the offices of Rossetti Associates in the former Federal Reserve Building. Working in cooperation with Quicken Loans and Bedrock Ventures, LTU students have prepared design research programs for the central business district and along the M-1 transit corridor.

- Studio Couture is a storefront exhibit space on Woodward Avenue. It exhibits the work of LTU design students and professional artists. It hosts lectures and panel discussions on archi-



A rendering of the under-construction MDI building

ecture, design and urban issues. The first phase of the Detroit Center for Design + Technology will provide approximately 8,000 square feet for these and other programs, research activity and a K-12 educational outreach program.

The second phase will add approximately 6,000 square feet for other LTU programming, such as the makeLab, which provides digital fabrication services for a wide range of design projects, Pope said.

"There is nothing better for a student designer than to be part of what they are studying. They walk around the neighborhood and see how people interact with their surroundings," Deines said. "Our new center will put our students right in the middle of the dynamic changes that are gaining momentum along the Woodward corridor."

For more than 30 years, Lawrence Tech has been engaged in projects in Detroit as well as

many other southeast Michigan communities, Pope said.

Frequently, the student projects help community groups, businesses, residents and civic

leaders evaluate and develop new ideas and solutions.

Students gain practical hands-on experience in designing urban projects, said Pope.

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