

December 5, 2017

Members of the Corcoran Community,

Thank you to those of you who attended the Town Hall meeting on Thursday November 30th. We appreciated the opportunity to both hear directly from those present about their observations and concerns related to the construction that is ongoing in the building and to share information with you that hopefully helped provide context and comfort as to the actions GW has been and continues to take to ensure a safe environment for our entire campus community.

As you know, the renovation work in the building has been ongoing. We expect this phase of renovations to be completed mid-spring semester at which point the contractor will leave the building. Upon completion of this phase of renovations the building will feature newly constructed classroom facilities, dust collection in the sculpture studios, upgraded sprinkler and life safety systems, accessibility improvements, roofing and skylight work, and other non-visible infrastructure upgrades. These improvements will allow the university to provide a superior learning environment for the arts community and the National Gallery of Art to prepare to return exhibitions to the building.

A number of topics were covered at the Town Hall and some suggestions, such as relocation of the portable restrooms and rodent traps and communications protocols can be acted on immediately. We appreciate your suggestions on how we can collaborate to make construction and learning mutually successful.

Additionally, as there have been conversations about environmental concerns regarding construction, we wanted to provide information on these two topics of interest directly to the entire community:

- 1) We have been regularly testing air quality in the building, once per month, during the academic year, using external, independent contractors. Copies of test results are available at either the Columbian College Dean's office (Suite 212, Phillips Hall), or at the Flagg Building front office. As the test summaries will outline, testing was conducted for materials relevant to construction projects, including carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, mold, respirable dust, formaldehyde, asbestos (conducted during specific abatement efforts), silica, lead, and Total VOC (as n-Hexane). The test results will also be available on the Corcoran renovation website, as outlined below. All test results demonstrate that the air quality in the building is within normal and acceptable environmental thresholds. The results earlier in the fall, however, did demonstrate somewhat elevated levels of silica dust in some areas and although these levels remain within normal ranges, we have placed additional air scrubbers in relevant locations and made adjustments to automate the operation of dust collection systems in the sub-basement to ensure consistent operation.
- 2) There were also questions about the asbestos postings in the building that have been raised regarding the project.

As is common in construction projects in older buildings, there is the potential for contractors to encounter asbestos containing materials. It is DC regulation that in cases where this is possible, that the building be posted to notify occupants by posting the area. Once the work is complete, the signage is removed. As you may know, asbestos containing materials are not harmful when they are left in an undisturbed, non-friable state. In cases where construction requires that these materials be disturbed, contractors engage in a removal process that is performed in accordance with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations, which include appropriate enclosures, negative air pressure and sampling of air by a licensed Industrial Hygienist during and after the work is complete. Any areas where asbestos demo has taken place are not re-opened for general use until the final air samples have been approved by the Industrial Hygienist.

Moving forward we will be working with our teams as well as Columbian College leadership to share progress information with you. Specifically, we will post construction progress updates to the Corcoran website's Renovations page (<https://corcoran.gwu.edu/corcoran-renovations>) on a weekly basis and air quality test results as they become available. We will also provide notification for updates made to the Corcoran renovations website via twitter. You are encouraged to follow "@FixItComeFixIt" to ensure you receive notifications of these updates.

We appreciate your continued engagement and wish you a positive end to the semester. If you have any questions regarding this information please contact us at the contact information below.

Sincerely,



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