

Message to Corcoran Community

June 2017

Major renovations and improvements have been underway in the Corcoran School's historic Flagg Building and Clark Wing since 2015.

While this work will bring critical upgrades and improvements to the building's infrastructure, teaching spaces and new academic spaces, we understand that like all construction, this work comes with noise, dust and other inconveniences that can have an impact on an active learning environment.

The university has heard concerns from members of the Corcoran community related to construction and we are writing to share information with you about (1) summer construction, (2) what to expect when you return to campus this fall and (3) the actions we have taken and will continue to take to help ensure the Corcoran remains a safe environment for everyone.

Summer Construction

The Corcoran's Flagg Building closed May 22 for major renovation work during the summer months. The building will reopen Aug. 18 to prepare for fall classes.

During the summer, the project will complete major improvements including:

- Full replacement of the building's electrical distribution system
- Sprinkler piping installation in studios, computer labs and classrooms
- Air handler and piping replacement
- Building of courtyard mechanical platform
- Installation of new air distribution system in sub-basement wood and metal shops
- Installation of new dust collection ductwork in wood and metal shops
- Expansion of security office
- New single-stall restrooms on 2nd and 3rd floors and new showers on the basement level
- Installation of a new hot water boiler plant in the sub-basement to serve new mechanical equipment
- Installation of the Corcoran's historic external "night doors" after an extensive restoration

What to Expect During the Fall Semester

During the fall semester, students, faculty and staff should expect there to be continued construction in the building. Noise levels and other impacts will be similar to what was experienced during this past academic year. However, beginning this fall, the construction team will be taking additional steps to limit the impact of the noisiest work on the academic environment by scheduling this work to occur between 5 and 8 a.m.

The renovation will include the following activities during the fall semester:

- The Second Floor, Grand Stairway, Rotunda, Clark Stairway and Landing, and sub-basement (excluding wood and metal shops) will be active construction sites. These areas will be closed to students and employees.
- Scaffolding will be erected in the Atrium within the colonnade areas, and construction will be in process above the scaffolding. Scaffolding will also be built over the Grand Stairway and Clark Stairway and Landing.
- The main building entrance and corridors around the Atrium will be available for passage.

Actions GW Will Continue to Take to Help Ensure a Safe Environment

As many of you are aware, staff from GW's Office of Health and Emergency Management have engaged with the Corcoran community regarding this project and have evaluated and responded to concerns as they have arisen. In response to early complaints about dust caused by the renovations, the university's contractors installed 12 air scrubbers. In addition, a protocol has been established for daily inspection of the air scrubbers and enhanced frequency of cleaning in the building during the construction.

In addition, the university contracted with outside experts to conduct additional monthly air monitoring to ensure there are no harmful materials in the air. This spring, GW hired Triumvirate Environmental to conduct independent air monitoring in the building. The testing is based on national standards for air quality protection as defined by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), the Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory (EMSL), and the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM).

Testing was conducted on March 23, April 21, and again on May 23 for the specific materials formaldehyde, asbestos, silica, lead, and Total VOC (as n-Hexane). The sampling results for all tests showed there was no health or regulatory cause for concern. All test results were within the acceptable range for federal standards,

Testing will continue on a monthly basis during the duration of construction. If results identify air samples that are not within regulatory standards, additional testing will be conducted and remediation efforts will be implemented to ensure air quality safety standards are being met.

Although testing has shown the air to be safe, we do appreciate that some members of the community may wish to take extra precautions if they have specific concerns or sensitivities. To assist with this, facemasks that cover the nose and mouth are available for use by students, faculty and staff upon request in the director's office suite.

For any general observations / questions about environmental Health and Safety within the Corcoran, please contact: safety@gwu.edu, or [202-994-4347](tel:202-994-4347).

Students are encouraged to contact the Colonial Health Center if they are concerned about their personal health (<https://healthcenter.gwu.edu/>). Staff and faculty are encouraged to contact their doctor or the Employee Assistance Program (<https://hr.gwu.edu/employee-assistance-program>).

Looking Ahead

This renovation work will continue through the fall semester in order to preserve and restore the historic Flagg Building and provide facilities to enhance the learning environment for the Corcoran community. The current phase of renovations is expected to be completed in spring 2018.

The university appreciates the ongoing patience of students, faculty and staff as this important project continues.

We will keep the Corcoran community updated on the status of construction as conditions warrant.

Sincerely,

Darrell Darrell
Senior Associate Vice President
Division of Safety and Security

Alicia Knight
Senior Associate Vice President
Division of Operations

Sanjit Sethi
Director
Corcoran School of the Arts and Design