Promising to bring a significant degree of efficiency, synergy and innovation to the College of Arts and Letters academic enterprise, the Wells Hall Addition was officially kicked off with a ceremonial groundbreaking on Thursday, September 16, 2010. The 88,000-square-foot facility will provide offices, instructional and research space, primarily for the language programs, and is a key component of the overall Morrill Hall replacement project.

As a place, the Wells Hall addition will allow the university community to carry on the values of the Land Grant tradition and the heritage of the many programs and individuals that have passed through the halls of Morrill Hall. It will position us for continued and new endeavors, and create memories for the thousands who will take classes in the building, engage in research, and the planned or chance conversations that shape our future.

The Wells Hall project will include a three-story addition spanning across the existing B-wing of Wells Hall, a two-story atrium and coffee shop to promote faculty and student interactions, three new classrooms and language labs, a blend of private and open office environments that will take advantage of the park setting, and a clear east – west corridor that will invite people into and through the building. The addition is scheduled for occupancy August 2012.

The Wells Hall enhancement has its roots in the finest traditions of the Morrill Hall era with a distinctly future-oriented approach to the needs of our changed learning environment. It will allow the College to bring several departments and programs in close proximity to each other.

The Department of English, the African American, African Studies program, and the Department of Religious Studies will move from Morrill Hall. The Department of Linguistics, African, Asian, Germanic and Slavic Languages will move into the new annex, and will be joined by the departments of French Classics and Italian, and Spanish and Portuguese which are vacating the Old Horticulture Building.

The new addition will also provide a home for innovations in language advancement through the Center for Language Teaching Advancement, CeLTA, which, among other functions, provides experiential learning opportunities for our language majors. The College’s Community Language School, with its early language learning component and workshops for language teachers, will also be housed in the new addition. And the Global Studies in the Arts and Humanities program rounds out the new facility’s tenant list.

There will also be:
- new research spaces and labs
- several smart classrooms that will allow for new ways of teaching that advance student-centered learning, and lead to flexibility for group work and collaborative learning. This, in turn, will allow for seamless deployment of technology to:
  - link our campus to others around the world
  - share courses with other universities
  - have students chat with each other in the target language or
  - exchange information on a common problem or issue.
- the addition’s close proximity to the International Center will further enhance shared programming.
- open architecture with flexible
seating arrangements, the presentation space, and a café will all invite collaboration and conversation between faculty, between faculty and students, and among students. They will create attractive and convenient zones where the co-curriculum can take place, as the more engaged students are with their studies, the better results we see.

- the building also features a green roof in one area and pays close attention to energy efficiency. There is superb use of daylight as the building allows a great deal of light to penetrate deeply.

Overall, this new addition will be a visible beacon highlighting MSU’s global-international focus, its major emphasis on language learning and teaching, and the strongest Study Abroad Program in the country.

Highlighting the College’s focus on creativity, William T. Langford IV, son of William and Sandra Langford of Detroit, Michigan, a College of Arts and Letters senior majoring in English, presented an original poem during the ceremony that he wrote specifically for the groundbreaking. William is the recipient of the Wade H. McCree Jr. Scholarship, and a past recipient of the Ambrose Patullo Poetry Prize. He serves as a residence life mentor, is president/founder of the MSU Slam Poetry Team, and studied abroad this past summer in the United Kingdom. He intends to go on to graduate school, and pursue a career as a professor of English, African Literature and Creative Writing.

MSU Board of Trustees member Colleen McNamara, Provost Kim Wilcox and MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon spoke at the groundbreaking ceremony on building connections that will bring together departments that deal with languages, literatures, and cultures including the new Global Studies program, English Language Instruction and Linguistics. They spoke of the new addition as:

- fostering collaborative teaching, critical thinking, and research
- creating space that blends the private and open concepts to encourage interactions, and
- attracting the best students and researchers to MSU
- an example of the investments we must make now to ensure our continuing success and leadership position among universities worldwide, and
- a catalyst to create and expand the vision of MSU’s global-international focus

In her closing remarks, Dean Karin A. Wurst noted that this outstanding new addition to Wells Hall holds great promise for our students, faculty, staff and the greater Michigan State and East Lansing communities.

“When the construction began on the current Wells Hall in 1968,” Dean Wurst said, “I am sure there were similar expectations. And over the past 40-plus years, that promise was certainly realized. Present and former faculty members and students, MSU staff, alumni – and many individuals in the East Lansing and surrounding community – are quick to tell us that they hold very warm feelings and recollections of time well spent in Wells Hall. And I am certain that 40 years from today, the same will be said of this beautiful new addition.”

(Top right) MSU Provost Kim A. Wilcox, President Lou Anna K. Simon, and College of Arts and Letters senior English major William T. Langford IV at the Wells Hall Groundbreaking.
Legion

William T. Langford IV

We come here to be a part of a legend
This land was granted for that purpose
a seed was sown
and Kinsley Bingham
called us a college

We come here to be a part of a legend
Four years forth from gaining a four-year curriculum
Our Forefather Spartans marched into Civil War

We come here to be a part of a legend
Booker T. Washington commenced the class of 1900
and thousands upon thousands of days since…

We are writing
If MSU teaches but one skill
It is that, writing—scribing wildly onto the future

It is written
In the tremble of 46 thousand footsteps
It is written in classrooms
Watch that professor sketch something epic-like
I’ve seen equations like—
Black and white like
Poetry—sprawl like
Fire bursts
Bright against the bubble
That says change is bad

We are the unstoppable force
Behind a moveable object
That being renewal
That being progress

Compress our passion into the point of a spade
and we will dig trenches at our feet
Line them with language
and Pack them with prose
Send this Spartan Legion
marching in rows
towards a dawn of shapelessness
and we will mold it
into fraternity
and we will mold it
with mortar
into a road that begins

Here
53 thousand, 137 days into a legend we live
Let us break ground
like bread among us
that we might be remembered
for a singular step
forward