

CABRILLO COLLEGE

Arts complex opens as classes are cut

✓ Cabrillo College - 2000

9.17.09

✓ Grand opening planned
to celebrate new
\$70 million center

By J.M. BROWN

jbrown@santacruzsentinel.com

APTOS — As a popular Carlos Santana riff rumbles lightly in the background, ceramics students hover over the spinning wheels, letting their focused imaginations tell their hands how to shape the clay.

Although the metal wheels are moving quickly, the vibe in the new state-of-the-art ceramics studio at Cabrillo College is slow and relaxed. It's the kind of low-stress environment where 21-year-old Michael Baba says he can really apply what he's learned from instructor Cynthia Siegel.

"The way it's set up is great," said Baba, a Sonoma County native in his third semester at Cabrillo. "If I could have any facility, it would be this one."

Using the theme "Dedicated to the Creative Journey," the college will host a grand opening weekend Oct. 9-11 for its new Visual & Performing Arts Complex. The \$70 million, five-building complex is home to a combined 122,300 square feet of space for arts instruction, creation and performance, including the 44,700-square-foot Crocker Theater.

Paid for by voter-approved bonds and some state matching grants, the complex first envisioned by faculty members three decades ago has proven to be a big enrollment draw.

SEE ARTS ON A10

IF YOU GO

GRAND OPENING
GALA PERFORMANCE

WHEN: 8 p.m. Oct. 9-10, 3 p.m. Oct. 11

WHERE: Crocker Theater at Cabrillo College,
6500 Soquel Drive, Aptos

TICKETS: Free, distributed on first-come,
first-served basis at box office Sept. 28

INFORMATION: Visit cabrillovapa.com or 479-6464



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Dan Martinez, Cabrillo College's dean of visual and performing arts, leads a tour that included the nearly finished recital hall Wednesday.

ARTS

Continued from A1

Dan Martinez, dean of visual and performing arts, said 93 percent of all seats in arts classes are full this year, compared to 87 percent last year. The number of students electing to major in one of the college's seven arts programs has increased 35 percent during the past five years.

But anxiety about state funding has cloaked some of the excitement. Budget cuts have forced the college to cut courses in art and elsewhere, leaving rooms like the new computer studio for digital design empty 60 percent of the time.

"We just don't have the funding to do what we wanted to do," Martinez said Wednesday after leading an other-wise upbeat tour of the new complex. "The storm clouds are significant, and the scary thing is you can't see the end of it."

Cutting \$3 million from the college's \$59 million base budget has meant eliminating 100 courses this fall, with the potential to cut 100 more during the spring, winter and summer semesters combined, President Brian King said Wednesday. The cuts have made classes in art and myriad other subjects harder to get into and, for some students, harder to afford as fees increased by a third this year to offset slashing from Sacramento.

And more bad news is imminent. King expects state cuts will lead to another \$3 million to \$5 million in losses next academic year.

Still, the college, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, is gearing up for a gala performance of music, dance and theater to christen the new complex. Emeritus faculty member Wilma Marcus Chandler will direct more than 500 volunteer artists and technicians in three performances — at 8 p.m. Oct. 9 and Oct. 10, and 3 p.m. Oct. 11. There will also be an open house 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Oct. 10.

The performances are free and open to the public. Tickets will be available on a first-come, first-served basis starting Sept. 28 with a maximum of four tickets per person.

The five energy-efficient buildings that make up the sprawling Visual and Performing Arts Complex offer space to artists and musicians of all stripes — from sculptors and



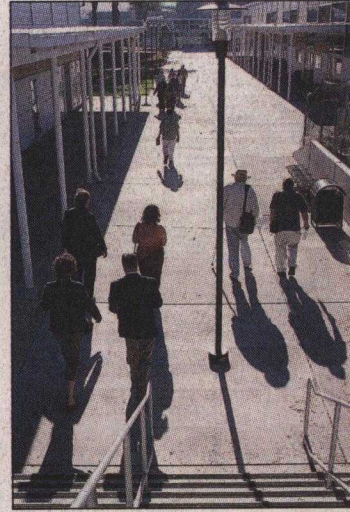
SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Cabrillo's new recital hall is visible at center through the windows of the college's new Crocker Theater.



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Sandra Frank, second from right, leads a class in studio lighting for photography students in the new arts complex at Cabrillo College on Wednesday.



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Representatives of local media outlets get a look at the new arts complex at Cabrillo College.

painters to singers and set designers.

The largest building, the Theater Arts facility, is home to the 577-seat Crocker Theater with its mobile orchestra pit and professional lighting, staging and sound equipment, as well as a separate Black Box Theater that can accommodate up to 200 people. There is also a scene shop adjacent to both venues, in addition to a make-up room, costume shop, green room and acting studio.

The 41,700-square-foot Music Building features a 369-seat recital hall with a choir loft and enhanced acoustics and air circulation. The building also has 15 individual practice stations, as well as larger rehearsal spaces, classrooms, a choral library and instrument storage area.

The 18,700-square-foot 2D Art Building contains studios for a variety of two-dimensional arts, including drawing, painting, print-making, digital design and photography. Its sister facility, the 12,700-square-foot 3D Art Building, is home to outdoor kilns and studios for metalwork, sculpture and ceramics. The smallest building, the 4,500-square-foot Office/Forum, provides meeting and library space.

Independent study students Mary Luke and Laura Howard say the new, roomier digs have made a big difference in their ability to create pieces like the enamel jewelry they were trying out Wednesday. They especially appreciate the small kilns positioned just feet from their work tables.

"It's night and day," Howard

said, adding that their previous lab was shared with fabrics classes. "It was all right, but this is beautiful."

They were both quick to praise instructor Dawn Nakanishi, who heads the small metals and jewelry department.

"We have a world-class program here," Luke said. "We have faculty here who are really interested in making sure you know techniques for working safely and properly."

And despite all of the gloomy budget cuts, Martinez, the arts dean, believes the new instructional and performance spaces are cause for celebration. As he stood in a quiet hallway in the Music Building, he said the thoroughfare is usually bustling with students.

"That really warms my heart," he said.

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS COMPLEX

COST: \$70 million, funded by voter-approved bond measures and some matching state funds

BUILDINGS: Theater Arts, Music, 2D Art, 3D Art and Office/Forum

COMBINED SQUARE FOOTAGE: 122,300



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Ceramics students work their magic on the wheels in one of the new art studios at Cabrillo College.