Digital technology has found its way into nearly every aspect of our modern lives. Our homes are full of it—from cell phones and DVDs to iPods and digital cameras.

Not surprisingly, this same technology is having a dramatic impact on the world of art and design. In response, the University has announced plans to build a new facility at the Hartford Art School that will allow generations of future students to fully explore the new media.

Dean Power Boothe says the building project will give the art school a new kind of space that will promote interaction among a variety of artistic and technical disciplines. “We’re living in a media-dominated world,” he says. “The new media are breaking down barriers among disciplines because it’s so easy to collaborate. Sculptors still make three-dimensional art, but they’re also doing installations that involve video or projection. Printmakers are printing with lithography, but they’re also using digital printers.”

Recognizing the new realities of the art world, the University’s board of regents endorsed a $5 million building project. To date, more than half of the amount needed to start construction has been pledged, and the campaign committee is hard at work raising additional funds. The Arts and Technology Complex (ATC) encompasses a 15,000-square-foot, two-story addition that will provide a new façade for Taub Hall, where 6,000 square feet of existing space will also be renovated.

Boothe says the vision for the project emerged in 2001 from a strategic planning process in which the faculty acknowledged the impact of digital technology on our culture in general, and the world of art and design in particular. In 2002 the school established the Department of Media Arts.

The department was originally designed to forge strong connections with other disciplines across the campus, such as the music composition program of The Hartt School and the Department of regents. She has involved her husband, a businessman and real estate investor, in the ATC project, just as Olivia Clemens, one of the founders of HAS, engaged her husband, Mark Twain, in the school’s first fundraising campaign 130 years ago. In addition to the couple’s financial support, Bob Samuels has served as an advisor for the building project.

“We’ve been involved for so long, and it has always been our dream to have more space for the students,” Renée Samuels says. “These students are not only phenomenal art students. They are among the top scholars at the University as well. They need and deserve these new facilities.”

“Bob and Renée have been enthusiastic supporters of the Hartford Art School and the University and good friends of mine for many years,” says President Walter Harrison. “Their generosity will make it possible for future generations of HAS students to benefit from these state-of-the-art facilities. Nothing would please Bob and Renée more than if others joined them in supporting this important project. I deeply appreciate their leadership in this effort.”
Media arts has not been fully able to realize these plans due to space limitations. With the new Arts and Technology Complex, the media arts and photography departments will finally have the facilities they need to explore cross-disciplinary opportunities. Expanded and renovated space will also allow the painting and drawing department, the printmaking department, and the foundation studies program to continue to excel.

“This project is the culmination of a dream the art school has had for many years,” adds Margaret Corie Darby, a member of the University’s board of regents and chair of the ATC campaign committee. “It is a collaborative effort among the faculty, staff, regents, alumni, and the University at large.”

In the new complex, studios, classrooms, and galleries will surround a common space to be shared by all of the departments. The central, two-story atrium will have tables and chairs for gathering and expansive walls for hanging art or projecting images. Boothe says the idea is to provide flexible space that will promote interaction among students and faculty from all disciplines.

He also emphasizes that the interdisciplinary concept of the new facilities will better support interaction between the art school and other colleges. “Our students thrive on being part of the University,” Boothe observes. “They have the best of both worlds: a rigorous professional arts program and access to the resources of a university.”

“The impact of digital technology has been extraordinary,” he continues. “It affects the way we live, work, and play. Investing in the Arts and Technology Complex demonstrates a commitment by the University to embrace an exciting interdisciplinary vision that will bring national distinction to the University of Hartford as well as the Hartford Art School.”

There have been several major gifts to the ATC campaign already (see “Renée and Bob Samuels Pledge $1 Million to ATC,” p. 17). But the University also needs support from HAS alumni, parents, and friends; other University constituents; and the local arts community to make the complex a reality.

To contribute to the Arts and Technology Complex, mail your gift to the Hartford Art School, University of Hartford, 200 Bloomfield Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06117. To make an online gift, visit www.hartford.edu/giving and click on the “Make a Gift” button.

Top:
Artist’s watercolor rendering of the two-story atrium in the center of the proposed complex.

Bottom:
The west face of Taub Hall showing the location of the ATC addition.

Both illustrations courtesy Christopher Williams, AIA, Principal, The S/L/A/M Collaborative.
Stakeholders in University’s Future
TWO ALUMNI AND A UNIVERSITY NEIGHBOR HAVE MADE LONG-TERM COMMITMENTS

BY PETER H. CONGLETON

A native son of Hartford, Bernie Rosen ’61, M’66, has devoted much of his life to education, through both his 19-year career as a teacher and vice principal at New Britain High School and his generous commitment to providing scholarship resources for students at the University of Hartford. In 1985 Rosen endowed the Bernard H. Rosen Scholarship Fund, which provides an annual award to the highest-ranking graduate of New Britain High School to enroll at the University of Hartford. Each scholarship is renewable for three successive years, provided that the recipient continues to make satisfactory academic progress.

After working at various jobs and serving in the U.S. Army, Rosen eventually took advantage of the GI Bill to pursue a bachelor’s degree in education at the fledgling University of Hartford. He would later obtain a master’s in education from the University as well. Because of the plans he has made to provide educational opportunities for others, the University has granted Rosen membership in the Founders’ Planned Giving Society. In addition to the grateful correspondence he receives each year from the awardees of his fund, Rosen enjoys the satisfaction of knowing that his giving will continue in perpetuity and that the principal will be substantially increased by a bequest through his estate.

Rosen is in excellent company as a member of the Founders’ Society. Richard Belkin is also a member. Belkin attended the original Hillyer College and graduated in 1956, one year before the founding of the University of Hartford. He affectionately refers to it as “Hillyer-on-the-Hudson,” a reference to the fact that the school occupied a building on Hudson Street in Hartford before its move to the Bloomfield Avenue campus. Belkin is the president of World of New York, Inc., which prior to 9/11 was a corporate partner of Top of the World observation deck.

In 1985 Rosen endowed the Bernard H. Rosen Scholarship Fund, which provides an annual award to the highest-ranking graduate of New Britain High School to enroll at the University of Hartford.

Bernie Rosen ’61, M’66

In 1998 Belkin and his wife, Sherry, endowed the Belkin Scholars program, which supplements the Hartford Scholars program that provides half tuition for promising inner-city students. Belkin Scholars receive generous scholarship awards to help them complete their undergraduate degrees. Through their estate, the Belkins have arranged for a substantial bequest that will establish a donor-advised fund at their local Jewish Community Foundation. The fund will continue to grant a percentage of its annual revenue to the Belkins’ fund at the University long after they are gone.

The first of his six siblings to be born in America, Sam Kaprove was raised in Hartford’s North End. Kaprove worked as a glazier and helped in the family’s grocery store until a disabling back injury forced him to find another line of work. He retired in 1968 after a long career with the U.S. Postal Service.

Having watched the University of Hartford evolve from its founding, Kaprove came to recognize its importance to his community. In 1998 he made a contribution to endow a scholarship fund and named it after his youngest brother, Abe, who was born with Down’s syndrome in 1911. Kaprove took care of his brother throughout Abe’s unusually long life and was a founder of the Greater Hartford Association of Retarded Citizens. His devotion to his little brother during Abe’s life, and the concern he showed toward others, will now continue beyond Kaprove’s own long lifetime. Now at age 98, he is an enthusiastic supporter of the Hartford Hawks and loves to quote his favorite verse from Shakespeare’s As You Like It.

In 2003 he took another step toward ensuring that legacy by setting up a charitable gift annuity at the University. The annuity will provide payments to Kaprove for the rest of his life, and the remaining principal will be designated for the scholarship fund.

Bernie Rosen, Dick and Sherry Belkin, and Sam Kaprove have already taken steps to continue their relationship with the University of Hartford for years to come. For more information on how to become a future stakeholder in the University, please contact Peter H. Congleton, director of planned giving, at 860.768.5201 or congleton@hartford.edu, or visit www.hartford.edu/plannedgiving.