



College replacing building where massacre occurred

By: Garrett Andrews ■ in Construction ○ September 7, 2017 3:36 pm



The new Snyder Hall under construction at Umpqua Community College will replace an academic hall where eight people were murdered by a gunman in 2015. (Courtesy of Umpqua Community College)

Snyder Hall at Umpqua Community College near Roseburg is being replaced nearly two years after it was the scene of the deadliest shooting in Oregon history. But there will be no memorial in the new building.

A commemorative meditation garden was originally included in plans for the new Snyder Hall, now under construction, but the space was scrapped by a board of trustees subcommittee now looking at how best to memorialize victims of the massacre.

"The thought process there was that this was a building that was going to fall back into the essential functions of instruction for the campus," said Jess Miller, UCC director of facilities and security and a subcommittee member. "Even though the new building is forever going to have that stigma with it, we really want to develop our memorial area unassociated with the building."

Programming of the new Snyder Hall will be roughly the same as the previous, though the footprint will be different. It will be a 9,500-square-foot, single-story structure with five classrooms and eight offices and some common areas. The new Snyder Hall will include "defensible spaces" for security, but overall it's intended to blend with campus aesthetics, Miller said. An exterior breezeway – where the gunman, Chris Harper-Mercer, stashed ammunition during the shooting – was lost in favor of an interior hallway and internal doors to the classrooms.

Harper-Mercer arrived at Snyder Hall around 10:30 a.m. on Oct. 1, 2015 and opened fire in the classroom used for his Introduction to Expository Writing course. In all, he murdered nine people and injured eight more before killing himself in a shootout with police.

The former Snyder Hall (built in 1969) was demolished and the site scraped clean 12 months later with no clear plan for how to replace it.

The board of trustees subcommittee is now considering several options for memorializing the victims, including a deck structure that overlooks the North Umpqua River at the back of campus, a memorial at the entryway to campus, and one at one of the area's public parks.

The architect of the new Snyder Hall is Portland's **Mahlum Architects** and the contractor is **DSL Builders** of Salem. The total project cost is \$4.25 million, with \$3.4 million dedicated to hard construction costs.

"This is my favorite building that we've put on campus since I've been here," Miller said. "It will blend nicely with what we already have, but with a modern twist."

The stonework and cedar siding will match surrounding buildings. One big difference is that the new building will feature a heavy asphalt composite roof, rather than a concrete roof like the old building.

Site work and the concrete floor are completed. Stick framing is under way and the builder expects to be dried-in by the time the wet season hits in October.

"There will be rains if we're lucky," UCC purchasing director Jules DeGiulio said, referring to the long dry spell gripping Douglas County and all of Oregon.

Completion is scheduled for March 9, 2018.

The original building was named in honor former UCC dean Ralph I. Snyder, and the subcommittee decided early against renaming the building. The group's final plan was forwarded to the Oregon Legislature, which approved a request for \$6 million to pay for the project.

UCC, the only public higher learning institution in Douglas County, is in the middle of a larger capital program to build and upgrade facilities around campus. Winemaking and nursing facilities have been completed in recent years, and an engineering building is scheduled to be constructed in the future.

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