



JEANNETTE MERTEN/FOR THE NORTHWESTERN

THE FOX VALLEY CONCERT BAND closes a performance of their holiday concert in December with a medley of Christmas music at the UW-Fox Valley Fine Arts Theatre in Menasha.

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'Not just a theater'

UW-Fox must raise \$2 million for new building

BY JEFF BOLLIER
of The Northwestern

Don't call the University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley's proposed Communication Arts Center a theater.

UW-Fox Valley Foundation Executive Director Lisa Weiner said the \$13.9 million project will play more roles for the two-year college than the term "theater" could ever signify.

"We're trying to say it's not just a theater that will be used for three or four plays or two concerts. It will be used most every single day of the year for a variety of purposes," Weiner said. "We do not have a large and safe gathering space for our 1,700 students. We have no place to hold a film series or our speaker series, our concerts and plays. There just isn't a safe and large enough area to accommodate that."

Weiner has become well versed on the multiple uses for the center's classroom spaces, 361-seat auditorium and other amenities as she prepares to engage UW-Fox Valley alumni, friends and supporters in the college's first major capital campaign.

Her task: raise \$2 million to match the \$5.3 million Winnebago and Outagamie counties have already pledged to the project and the \$1.3 million for furniture and equip-



NORTHWESTERN PHOTO

THE CAST OF THE MUSICAL "HAIR" rehearses in April 2004 at the UW-Fox Valley Fine Arts Theatre in Menasha.

ment the state of Wisconsin has pledged.

"All capital campaigns these days are a challenge, but I'm confident it will be successful," Weiner said. "We've had some preliminary discussions with supporters and friends who were waiting for the two counties to fund their portion."

The existing communications and arts spaces handle three or four drama productions each year in addition to numerous campus music concerts, lecture series, student-sponsored events, public forums, community theater group performances and drama classes.

A UW-Fox Valley information sheet provided to Winnebago County Board supervisors indicated 620 students, or about 19 percent of the total student

body, attend classes in the existing space and over a three-year average, the auditorium was used 81 percent of the semester days each year by about 170 separate events.

But the new Communication Arts Center is not needed simply to address the growing student population at UW-Fox Valley. The information sheet also notes no existing classrooms or auditorium spaces are accessible by students with disabilities and there are significant health and safety issues such as asbestos and out-of-date air handling equipment.

The foundation plans to get started on its fundraising mission right away and contact supporters and potential donors over the coming months. Weiner said a donor can acquire

How you can help

Interested in donating to the Communication Arts Center project? Contact Lisa Weiner at the University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley Foundation, (920) 832-2849, for more information.

Where is the \$13.9 million coming from?

- ▶\$5.3 million from Winnebago County.
- ▶\$5.3 million from Outagamie County.
- ▶\$1.3 million from state of Wisconsin for equipment.
- ▶\$2 million from UW-Fox Valley Foundation capital campaign.

Source: Communication Arts Center information sheet

naming rights for the auditorium for a \$500,000 donation or naming rights for the entire building for a \$1 million donation.

"A gift like this is a transforming gift for the university," Weiner said. "It's a wonderful naming opportunity for the right person or family. In the grand scheme of fundraising, those are not significant amounts for being able to name the building."

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