Center accommodates performers, audience

By Caroline Leong

The triangular lot on 30th and Burt Streets is currently in its second year as the home for the Interim Performing Arts Center.

Formerly the site of the City Parks and Recreation Department maintenance garage, the 250-seat theater now stands in its place.

The theater's location serves as a "prime corner" for the public to find, unlike its predecessor "buried under the Eppley Business College basement," said the Rev. Don Doll, S.J., fine arts chairman. The University College has since taken over the basement.

Not only was the basement difficult to find, space was limited in the 100-seat theater, he said. Finding space to build the sets also posed a problem along with not having any restroom facilities.

Acting classes

Acting classes were held on 22nd and Burt Streets where the costumes were also stored, he said.

Although the crew "did a wonderful job of transforming the space and making you forget where you were, (the current theater) is much more open with a pleasant feeling to be in," Doll said.

Besides pleasing the audience, the "large volumes of open space" serve the performer's needs as well. The stage measures 35 feet deep and 70 feet wide to accommodate theatrical, musical, dance and one-act play productions, Doll said.

An acting/dancing studio serves as a multi-purpose room for rehearsals, teaching purposes and receptions.

A dinner reception honoring the performers from A Company of Dancers will be held in the dance studio on the Nov. 9 opening night.

Other facilities

Other facilities include a costume workshop and storage area, showers and dressing rooms for the performers, and a gallery in the foyer.

The theater's 11,000 square feet also provide adequate space for the crew to build sets along with three faculty offices, Doll said.

The decision to relocate and expand came "with the pressure of being kicked out by the University College," he said.

With the assistance of architect Jack Swaney and technical director Tom Mazur, plans were made and implemented for the theater.

The $130,000 spent to remodel the building was a reasonable price to pay, Doll said. An additional $3,000 was saved when the Phi Kappa Psi Fraternity volunteered to paint the theater.

Arts sophomores Sharon Jenkins and Jim Whitsett warm up with classmates for acting class, above; the Interim Performing Arts Center, below.