Renaming of Fine Arts Building Causes Student Search for Classes

Heidi Juersivich

Reporter

Hordes of bewildered students wandered through the Hitchcock Center for Communication Arts in a hopeless search for their classrooms on the first two days of the spring semester.

At least 50 lost students rambled into the office of Marti Welty, secretary to the chair of the Education Department, in search of guidance. Welty was quick to diagnose the source of their agitation: Several students mistook the HC on their schedule as an abbreviation for Hitchcock Center rather than the newly renamed Humanities Center.

Following the completion of the Lied Education Center for the Arts, the fine arts department vacated its old building on 26th and California Streets.

As the building no longer housed the fine arts department, a new title was necessary to reflect the building's occupants: the departments of Theology, Philosophy, and Classic & Modern Languages. Humanities Center was selected as an appropriate name for the mix.

However, the new name has the same first initials of the similar building next door, the Hitchcock Center for Communication Arts. As a result of the name change, Hitchcock Center inhabitants, like Welty, spent the first two days of the spring semester directing students to the correct building.

Howard Bachman, assistant professor of the Education Department, began directing traffic the day before classes began.

"I was kind of impressed by the number of students who came in even before the first classes began to locate where their classes were."

By 11 a.m. Wednesday, Welty and her coworkers reached their limit. "We eventually put signs up on both front doors because it became so bad," she said.

Arts & Sciences senior Sarah Schnepf was among the students confused by the name change.

> "I myself had a little confusion at first."
>
> -David Vanderhoegh
> Professor, Classic & Modern Languages

"I just assumed that HC meant Hitchcock Communications building."

The signs on the front doors of the Hitchcock Center told her that HC stood for the building next door.

Once inside the Humanities Center, her confusion refused to abate, for the doors were still labeled FA for Fine Arts. After a short jaunt through the building, Schnepf finally found her classroom.

As a senior, Schnepf did not expect to have difficulty finding her classes.

"I was just thinking, I've been here for four years and I have to stop and ask someone where my class is," Schnepf said.

Faculty members were not immune to the confusion created by the building's new name.

"I myself had a little confusion at first," said David Vanderhoegh, assistant professor of Classic & Modern Languages. "I knew about this from last semester, but after the long break, when I looked at my new schedule at the start of the semester, I thought, 'They put me in HC. Where the heck is HC?'"

Vanderhoegh cleared up his initial consternation by consulting the spring semester course guide where the abbreviations key lies on a much-neglected second page.

Arts & Sciences senior Christine Schraml located her class in the Humanities Center without any confusion.

"Right before break was finished, I was here on campus for rush," Schraml said. "I saw the sign that said Humanities Center. I figured HC would stand for that."