

# Bellingham Technical College Unveils Campus Center Plans

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BELLINGHAM - Designs have been unveiled for a new building at Bellingham Technical College: a 70,000-square-foot campus center that will feature academic and socializing space.

The idea for the project started about two years ago and has been in the design phase for the last year, said Marni Saling Mayer, director of marketing and communications for the college. The project has already been at least partially approved by the legislature, although final approval and permits are still pending, Saling Mayer said.

Funding for the proposed \$29 million project will come out of the college's capital projects fund, which has no impact on the day-to-day operations of the college and is not facing the same budget restrictions as the college's operating budget.

Capital projects at colleges are being seen as a way to help stimulate the economy because they provide jobs in construction as well as related fields, said Tom Eckert, the college's president.

The 70,000-square-foot building will be attached to Building G, which houses the cafeteria, and will replace four aging buildings near the center of campus. The three-story building will also have views of Mount Baker, Bellingham Bay and mountains in Canada.

The new campus center will feature 12 classrooms and offices, helping the college meet the needs of its increased enrollment. The building will also include the college bookstore, library, computer labs, student center and a new teaching kitchen and restaurant, which will allow the popular culinary arts program to expand.

No date has been set for the groundbreaking, but the project is expected to be done by December 2012.