



## **Golisano gifts \$7.5 million to Roberts Wesleyan College for SWBR-designed project**

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Rochester, NY According to Roberts Wesleyan College, it has received a gift of \$7.5 million from Paychex founder and philanthropist Tom Golisano to build an innovative new Community Engagement Center. The 25,000 s/f two-story, center will serve as a hub for connection, community interaction and student life resources, as well as a workplace for Roberts' growing custom training and education programs.

The center will be named the Golisano Community Engagement Center in Golisano's honor. Groundbreaking for the \$13.5 million building is slated for fall 2020 and construction is expected to take 14 months, with the grand opening set for fall 2021. The new center will be located on the campus, north of Westside Dr. The architect for the project is SWBR.

This gift and Golisano's \$5 million donation in 2001 for the B. Thomas Golisano Library are the largest financial gifts in Roberts Wesleyan's 153-year history.

The Golisano Community Engagement Center will house training programs, including the college's newly launched Community Institutes, and provide easy access to career development and student-life resources. It will be the first building on campus to provide centralized meeting space and community interaction opportunities for all students — traditional undergrads, commuters, adult students, and students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. With a growing population of adult and graduate students, especially in the area of teacher education, this center will provide student-centered spaces for studying and collaborating on group assignments.

Roberts Wesleyan's Community Institutes, which provide custom educational solutions and resources to Rochester-area businesses and organizations, offer certificate and training programs separate from the degree-based education the college already offers. They were designed to meet the significant and unserved demands of companies and organizations that seek effective and affordable learning to gain real-world experience and insight. The institutes are a go-to resource for businesses, government, health care administration, law enforcement, school districts and churches. The four institutes are:

- Business Solutions Institute focuses on workforce development by supporting small to medium-sized businesses with specific training, consulting and special-project needs. The focus is

on the delivery of targeted solutions to enable successful outcomes and be a “go to” resource for the community. Current clients and partners include County of Monroe, Economic Workforce Development, Greater Rochester Enterprise, Maximus Inc. and Palmer Food Services.

- Justice and Security Institute provides training and tools for local schools, businesses and places of worship to teach local communities about targeted violence and how to identify and stop violence before it happens through customized threat assessment strategies. Past consultations include local k-12 security teams, faith-based communities, law enforcement agencies and mental health professionals.
- English Language Institute helps upward mobility through education and cultural and language competence, demonstrating how Roberts Wesleyan values and welcomes students and employees of client businesses of all nationalities. Since 2011, the ELI has prepared students for upward mobility and success through English language mastery.
- Intellectual and Spiritual Humility Institute provides teaching opportunities focused on bringing communities together in a polarized society, creating space and respect for all people.

Other services and offices that will be in the new center to meet students’ evolving needs include:

- Career Center: A suite on the first floor near the communal gathering space and on the same floor as the auditorium illustrates the college’s commitment to providing an education that translates into workforce development and retention of critical intellectual capital in the region.
- Diversity & Equity: Offices on the second floor represent the college’s commitment to serving all students, and ensuring each one has a voice and a place in our community.
- Spiritual Formation: Offices and a prayer chapel on the second floor reiterate Roberts’ values as a Christian college and a commitment to the college’s mission.
- International Engagement: Offices on the second floor and a dedicated classroom on the first floor demonstrate the college’s commitment to students and community members seeking to gain intercultural perspective and understanding, while extending opportunities for global academic experience.

The Golisano Community Engagement Center is a key component of the college’s five-year strategic plan, established in 2016. The plan focuses on three aspects: Engaged campus culture, innovative growth and transformational partnerships. The strategies in the plan include new programs, new buildings, new initiatives and new hires. The Golisano Community Engagement Center aligns with all three areas of focus and will provide a direct impact on the college’s culture and partnerships.

In March 2017, the college began preliminary research for this project, conducting interviews with alumni, friends of the college, local businesses, thought leaders and students. Data and exploratory

research proved that a building of this nature would be a destination for training, networking and student collaboration.

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