

# Annual Report

2022-23

Missouri State University  
WEST PLAINS

## \$7.5 million in state appropriations approved for the ASCEND Program facility

*A groundbreaking ceremony for the new facility is planned for Nov. 2023*

The ASCEND program at Missouri State University-West Plains (MSU-WP) received a significant boost from the state in July 2022 when Missouri Gov. Mike Parson signed legislation earmarking \$7.5 million in capital funding for a facility to house the program, which supports autistic students.

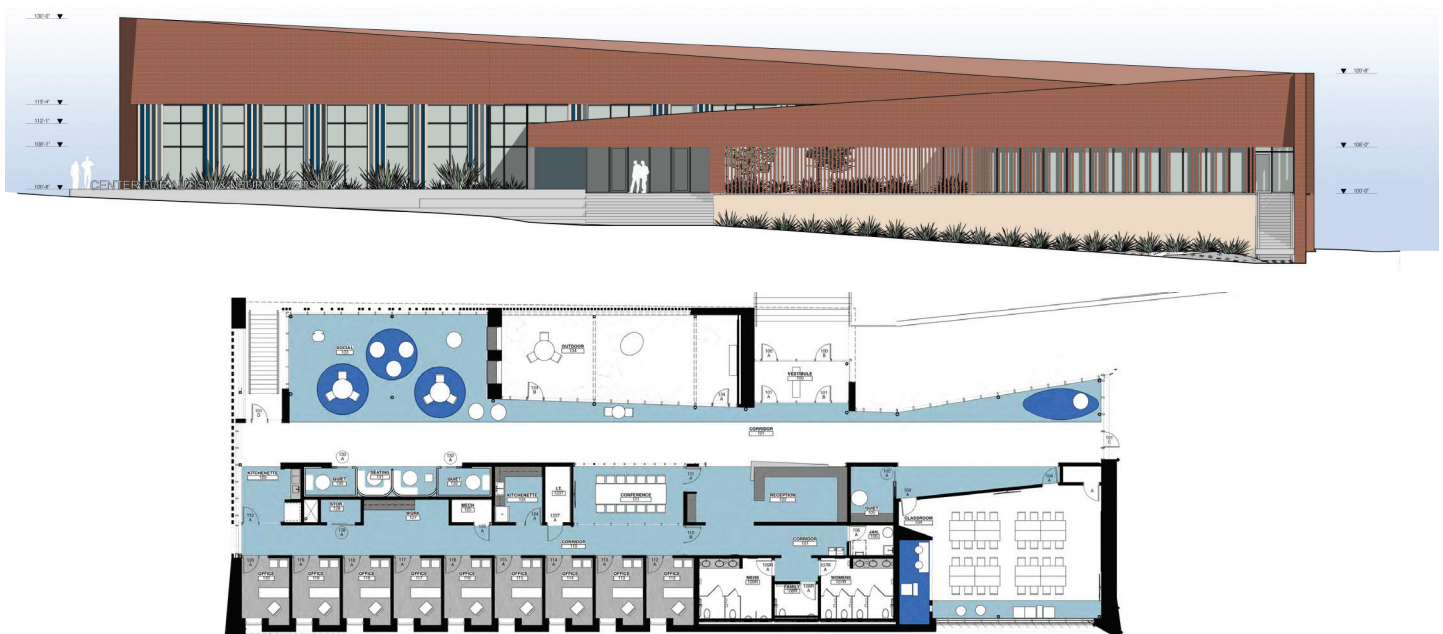
The legislation was introduced in the Missouri Senate by 33rd District State Sen. Karla Eslinger (R-Wasola) and shepherded through the

Missouri House by 154th District State Rep. David Evans (R-West Plains).

The ASCEND (Autism Support Can Empower New Directions) Program is designed to help autistic students transition into college and toward a life of personal success and independence. The program, which is the first of its kind in this region, offers specialized support services for those who wish to embark on a traditional college degree path to reach personally chosen goals.

The new facility will house office space for ASCEND personnel, sensory space to assist students during those moments when they may become overwhelmed, and gathering space for ASCEND group and one-on-one meetings.

The facility also will provide space for potential new degree programs that help students develop the skills required to address the needs of autistic individuals. Those degrees are currently in the planning stages.



*Above are architectural renderings of the ASCEND Program facility.*



*Missouri State University-West Plains (MSU-WP) administrators, faculty, staff and community members gathered with the family of Bo Pace to dedicate the Terry L. "Bo" Pace Industrial Science Center at a ribbon cutting ceremony.*

## MSU-WP officially opens the Pace Industrial Science Center

Those who attended the Oct. 7, 2022, ribbon cutting ceremony for the Terry L. "Bo" Pace Industrial Science Center at Missouri State University-West Plains (MSU-WP) described the excitement and positivity surrounding the event as "a Bo Pace kind of day."

With the sun shining brightly and temperatures in the upper 60s, well over 100 university faculty, staff, administrators and community members gathered at 218 W. Broadway to officially open the

renovated facility and once again celebrate the long-time local businessman and supporter of education in whose honor it was named.

A transformational gift from the Pace family, along with federal and state dollars, covered the conversion of the building that once served as a soft drink bottling plant into a training center for the Terry L. "Bo" Pace Advanced Welding and Fabrication Program.





*The Dr. Marvin L. Fowler Lecture Hall*

## Many turn out to honor Dr. Marvin Fowler at classroom dedication

An estimated 150 Missouri State University-West Plains (MSU-WP) nursing students, faculty, staff and community members came out to say “Thank you, Dr. Fowler” during a dedication ceremony March 10 officially naming the new lecture classroom in MSU-WP’s Looney Hall the “Dr. Marvin L. Fowler Lecture Hall.”

During the ceremony, MSU-WP Chancellor Dennis Lancaster and Josh Reeves, vice president of

development and advocacy at Ozarks Healthcare in West Plains, touted Fowler’s many contributions to the university and community during nearly 70 years of living and working in the West Plains area.

This includes his efforts to help establish both institutions, as well as the university’s nursing program, which now has 140 students, and it’s first endowed professorship, the Donna Jones Endowed Professorship of Nursing.



## Marvin Green recognized for his many contributions to MSU-WP

A large contingent of administrators, faculty, staff and community members gathered Sept. 9, 2022, at Kellett Hall to recognize former Missouri State University-West Plains (MSU-WP) campus dean Marvin Green for his many accomplishments on behalf of the university, including his efforts in establishing the Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) degree program.

Green, who served as dean of MSU-WP from 1966 to 1986, helped guide the campus from its earliest days as a residence center at West Plains High School to establishing its first

permanent home in Kellett Hall then gaining permanent status as a campus of Southwest Missouri State College, as the university was known then.

During the celebration, Lancaster presented a plaque to Green paying tribute to his many accomplishments, and noted the plaque will be hung in Looney Hall. The facility houses the nursing program and currently is being renovated again to provide additional learning and laboratory space to accommodate potential expansion of the program.



*Marvin Green with son, Matt*

In addition to the plaque’s presentation, university officials announced a significant gift from members of Green’s family to the university and the naming of the conference room in Kellett Hall the Dean Marvin Green Conference Room.



# MSU-WP receives grant to expand welding program

Missouri State University-West Plains (MSU-WP) was awarded a \$437,000 grant from the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) in June 2023 to expand the Terry L. "Bo" Pace Advanced Welding and Fabrication Technology Program.

The money was used to hire a second welding instructor and develop a night welding program that doubled the number of students being trained for area welding jobs.



## OTHER HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

MSU-WP graduate Morgan Blanck received Missouri State University's 2022-2023 Citizen Scholar Award.

Graphic designer Ron Kerns received a Silver Medallion at the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations District 5 Medallion Awards Ceremony for his poster for the "Buffalo Soldiers: From Slave to Soldier" event.

The Friends of the Garnett Library was named Volunteer Group of the Year by the Missouri State University Alumni Association.

The Driscoll family from Brandsville received the Distinguished Alumni Award.

Former Dean of Academic Affairs Dr. Doris Jensen received the Distinguished Faculty/Staff Award.

Lou Wehmer received an honorary Associate of Arts in General Studies degree at commencement.

The late Laurel Thompson was honored with the Founder's Award at commencement. The award was accepted by Thompson's son, Jim.

Barbara Caton received the Greater West Plains Area Chamber of Commerce Educator of the Year award.

Student Elaine Vaughan, West Plains, placed second in the Entrepreneurship Concepts contest at the Phi Beta Lambda (PBL) National Leadership Conference.

Associate Professor of Biomedical Sciences Dr. Benjamin Wheeler received the 2023 Governor's Award for Excellence in Education.

Dawn Dionne received Missouri State University's Staff Excellence in University Service Award.



## QUICK FACTS

### 2022 FALL ENROLLMENT

Headcount: 1,774

Students come from:

65 Missouri Counties

28 States

8 Countries

Grads, May 2023: 272

## MISSION STATEMENT

Missouri State University-West Plains empowers students to achieve personal success and to enrich their local and global communities. As a two-year public institution, we provide accessible, affordable and quality educational opportunities.

[WP.MissouriState.edu](http://WP.MissouriState.edu)

To become a student, call 417-255-7955 or go to [WP.MissouriState.edu/Admissions](http://WP.MissouriState.edu/Admissions)  
To support the campus, call 417-255-7240 or go to [WP.MissouriState.edu/Development](http://WP.MissouriState.edu/Development)