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Around the Columns

Simple principles guide Switzler and Tate renovations

Since becoming associate vice chancellor for facilities in 2005, Gary Ward has directed a number of major construction projects at MU, from the \$52.5 million Missouri Orthopaedic Institute to a massive upgrade of campus underground steam tunnels.

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But for Ward, the renovations of Switzler Hall, MU's oldest academic building, and Tate Hall are especially rewarding. "Not because they are the biggest or the fanciest," he says. "Just because of the importance of those buildings to this institution."

Work on Switzler and Tate began in fall 2010. Both buildings will be outfitted with new mechanical, plumbing and electrical systems. The renovations, which should be completed by June, will add 270 classroom seats and 30 faculty offices.

With a budget of about \$15 million, Ward established what he calls a "model" of financial stewardship that will guide future renovations. He revamped the hiring process by asking architects to submit qualifications electronically; that change shortened to two weeks a process that typically took about nine months. When deciding how to finish the buildings, he thought like a taxpayer — or a tuition-paying parent. He chose the same color and design schemes for both buildings, opting for basic materials that can be purchased at any big-box, do-it-yourself store.

More than 30 of MU's core academic buildings need renovations at a projected total cost of \$507 million. Ward believes the Tate and Switzler projects are good examples of how future resources can be maximized.

"What we want is for our faculty and staff and students to say, 'This is a really cool building; it's really good to be in here,'" he says. "But [the buildings] are not going to be on the cover of *Architectural Digest*."

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