Texas A&M University-San Antonio:

Four years after planting down brick and mortar on the South Side, TAMUSA is transforming into a true San Antonio landmark campus.
 Professionals in higher education will tell you: There is nothing quite like a tangible, unique campus to give students school pride and sense of place during their journey for a college degree. From a commercial real estate perspective, these campuses also are economic generators — large projects that cause real ripple effects. This quarter, freelancer Dan R. Goddard dug into the master plan for the Texas A&M University San Antonio campus to give Business Journal readers both a macro- and micro-view of the burgeoning area. Photographer Lyndsey Johnson spent a day at the campus capturing new construction and intricate architectural details. James Lochhead helped tell the story through his graphic design, both inside and on the cover. NAI REOC San Antonio’s Kimberly S. Gatley breaks down the commercial real estate data for the city’s first quarter 2013. To update your office listing, please contact Kim Hernandez at 210-477-0850 or email khernandez@bizjournals.com. Other questions, comments? Call Projects Editor Donna J. Tuttle at 210-477-3235.

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Explanation of Abbreviations:
DND: did not disclose
n/a: not applicable
N/A: not available
SIA: sales information available
BOMA: member of the Building Owners
and Managers Association
MTM: month-to-month

NNN: triple net lease in which tenant pays for its
share of certain costs.
If the leasing company did not respond before
press time, information is carried over from pre-
vious listings. If the leasing company does not
respond to requests for updated information, the
listing may be deleted.

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Shaping Minds, Building Futures

Texas A&M San Antonio opened in 2009 in portable classrooms. Today the South Side Campus is in the throes of Phase II, a $75 million campus expansion.

BY DAN R. GODDARD

The new Central Academic Building under construction at the Texas A&M University San Antonio campus is designed to be an academic beacon shining at the end of University Way — a focus point and architectural benchmark to guide all future projects, defining the pedestrian ways and green spaces, shaping the future of the emerging South Side institution.

“Our design was conceived to create a distinct sense of place that embraces the scale, character and climate-sensitive

Photography by Lyndsey Johnson | San Antonio Business Journal
building practices of the San Antonio region, especially the South Side," Geof Edwards, principal, Kell Munoz, says.

**Some highlights:**

- A new grand courtyard, formed by three sides of the Central Academic Building and set back in a modified "H" shape, will become a new public space for outdoor graduations and other large gatherings. Decorated with a giant mosaic interpretation of the school seal lined by perennial planters and featuring large oak trees that will be craned into place, the courtyard will be on the southern side of the existing elliptical grass-covered mall in front of the current Main Campus Building, which opened in 2011.

- Inspired by a cathedral in Granada, Spain, a dramatic four-story arch will rise over the large, embossed, copper-clad doors at the main entrance of the Central Academic Building. Decorative tile will accent floors and walls of the plaza features, terraces and loggias. The "H" shape allows light to penetrate deep into all the major spaces. Deep loggias, covered terraces and formally arranged...
trees in planters will help to shade the punched windows and glassed doors on the facades from excess sun exposure.

- A 430-seat auditorium is underway on the west side of the Central Academic Building.

- And taking shape to the east is the Patriots Casa, a facility designed to support military students and their families in making the transition from warrior to scholar to successful civilian careers.

Construction of the $75 million expansion on the 580-acre campus near Loop 410 and Zaxamora is expected to be completed in time for the fall 2014 semester. While enrollment is currently around 4,000, TAMU-SA plans to reach 25,000 students by 2025.

**Foliage**

Native trees and plants will be used almost exclusively to landscape the campus, Larry Clark, landscape architect, Bender Wells Clark Design, says. Following a master plan developed by Alamo Architects, shaded courtyards and plazas along with covered sidewalks will link the new buildings. Clark plans to incorporate some of the lessons he’s learned from the Mission Reach of the San Antonio River expansion that will culminate at the nearby Mission Espada.

“The campus will look more natural and a part of South Texas,” Clark says. “A lot of thought has been given to outdoor spaces and providing enough shade from the South Texas sun. The new main courtyard is right at the end of the entrance drive, so it’s the first thing you’ll see.

“And we hope to create something that will become iconic for the new campus. We’ll be planting large live oak, red oak and Mexican sycamores. The site is on what was overgrown farmland, so we’re taking out the invasive plants and returning the landscape to what it used to be, emphasizing drought-tolerant blooming native plants and shrubs in xeriscaping.”

Mike Lanford, founding principal, Alamo Architects, says the master plan uses some layout of the old farm, while taking into consideration other site restrictions, such as the ban on residential housing near the Toyota plant, which limits the location of
future dormitories.

"The pedestrian-oriented emphasis on the development of the core takes advantage of existing parking lots," Lanford says. "But we think a key to the success of the master plan is creating a place that's interesting and appealing, a place like La Cantera where people want to visit even if they can't park at the front door.

"We know it's hot so we are planning for a lot of shade. And the landscape design is for South Texas, not the Hill Country."

Air-conditioner condensate and rainwater will be collected for landscape watering, Clark says. TAMUSA plans to connect to the city's gray water system and build a water-catchment basin below the large plaza between the Patriots Casa and the Central Academic Building.

South Texas spirit

Buff-colored, sand-faced brick veneer with a San Saba sandstone rubble veneer base and special detailing will highlight the exterior of the Central Academic Building. Articulated arches and projected accents
are designed to create deep shadows and textured patterns on parapets, window heads and floor lines.

The divided light Kynar-coated aluminum windows will have an articulated mullion profile. The building’s roof is low-sloped with a highly reflective Energy Star-rated modified bitumen system.

“The reddish sandstone reflects a South Side aesthetic since the white limestone is used more on the North Side,” Edwards says. “Elements inspired by the South Side missions and the courtyards and plazas should provide a kind of Old World feel to the campus. The brick detailing and other decorative features are designed to be a little romantic and to avoid sterility.”

Small areas of clay roof tiles will be used over non-occupied spaces to enrich the mission-style aesthetic of the building. The floors in the interior public spaces are accented with patterned tile that reflects the spirit of local San Antonio craftsmen.

The Central Academic Building has a four-story cast-in-place concrete frame structure enclosing a total gross area of 180,180 square feet, approximately evenly divided among the four floors and including the detached auditorium.

**Construction work**

Raymond Heath, senior project manager, Bartlett Cocke General Contractors, estimates he’ll have 140 workers on site at the peak when the building is complete and the interior finishing begins, though the current daily average is closer to 55. Nearly all the workers are subcontractors.

“The foundation is set on pillars about 57 feet deep, which we need to cope with the shifting soil,” Heath says. “We’re using a lot of recycled materials. The concrete is all made locally and uses fly ash. The steel was fabricated by Beck Steel in Lubbock using recycled metal. We’re building to meet LEED Silver standards, but the university does not spend the money to actually be certified. However, Texas A&M is committed to sustainable building standards.”

Inside through the towering four-story arches of the Central Academic Building will be a grand lobby opening to the floor

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Two central stairs with decorative wrought iron railings are designed to provide a delicate and airy feel," Edwards says. "The first floor features a food service area with a kitchen, a book store, a Central Server Room for the entire campus and spaces for student affairs and recreation."

Matching mechanical, electrical, and IDF rooms are adjacent at the sides of each wing of the building and will stack vertically to each floor. The building has a suspended first floor to cope with the expansive soils in the area. The first level has an 18-foot floor-to-floor height to allow for taller ceilings in some of the building's prominent public spaces while the second, third and fourth levels are 16 feet floor-to-floor, with the exception of a taller large event space on the fourth floor.

Spaces for scholars

The second floor primarily is occupied by classrooms and a library with quiet study spaces offering north-facing views across the plaza below to the main campus oval. Also on the second floor will be the...
In the master plan that is Texas A&M San Antonio, Patriots Casa is truly unique in that it is a tangible show of support for our military and a nod to San Antonio’s Military City USA reputation.

“There’s nothing like it around here; it’s truly a tribute to San Antonio where we have so many veterans and active military as students,” says Jack Joyce, chief operating officer, for the university’s facility programming and consulting. “The mission is to provide academic and psychological support for veterans using the GI Bill, to help acclimate them to an academic environment and to ensure they will complete academic training.”

With a façade inspired by elements of the Missions San Juan and Espada, the Patriots Casa will house the Office of Strategic Services, computer labs, an open-use lab, an ROTC space, a veterans lounge, a ceremonial space and behavioral health healing/teaching rooms, terraces and covered arcades.

“The entry portal is a ceremonial gateway or victory arch that symbolizes the transition from an active military career to academic pursuits,” Edwards says. The lobby will be illuminated by natural light streaming in through an overhead light well comprised of Kalwall, a translucent material, as well as some clear glass panes. On special days, the translucent panels will spotlight brass symbols of units that fought in significant U.S. military. The brass symbols are inset into the floor.

“The days the objects are illuminated will correspond to the date of the battle,” Edwards says. Displayed in a gallery outside the ceremonial room will be objects that veterans carried to war, veteran art, active service photographs and dedications to those who gave the ultimate sacrifice. Glass doors will lead into the ceremonial room where twin fireplaces will frame a large window with a view of a memorial fountain outside. A highly-glazed, fenestrated wall to the north in the ceremonial room opens up for an indoor/outdoor connection so a temporary tent can be set up for dining.

On the second floor, counseling rooms will face therapeutic gardens located on the north side of the Patriots Casa. Family counseling and a children’s playroom will have access to terraces facing south.

“A hallway will display children’s artwork for fun and therapy,” Edwards says. “On the east side will be a veterans’ lounge with fireplaces, terraces and an exterior stair, designed to give psychological comfort to veterans by providing ‘two ways out.’ ”

DAN R. GODDARD is a San Antonio freelance writer.