

New student center transforms Athens Tech

Complex a one-stop shop for services

Story Photos - Click to Enlarge



Students Derick Blalock and Robyn Bondarew study literature inside a new computer lab at Athens Technical College's new student center last week.

David Manning / Staff

Computer programming student Chris Turner plays on a portable game system between classes at Athens Technical College's new student center last week.

David Manning / Staff

Click thumbnails to view



By [Don Nelson](#) | don.nelson@onlineathens.com | Story updated at 11:13 PM on Sunday, August 12, 2007

Nursing students Rebekah Blunt and Brandy Phillips are enjoying break time between classes much more in the new student center that recently opened on the Athens Technical College campus.

The school spent more than \$1.6 million to renovate and furnish a campus building to consolidate all student affairs offices and create a new student center with a Jittery Joe's Coffee shop. The center opened July 9.

Blunt praises the coffee and snack bar, but also appreciates the ample seating.

"Before, we didn't really have anything," said Blunt, a four-year nursing student from Monroe. "We had like a little area where you could just sit, but nowhere where you could order coffee and food and (feel comfortable) chatting with people."

School admissions coordinator Ginger Randall described the previous student center as a small room that once served as a cafeteria, but had become a vending and break room.

The new student center, located on one side of the newly consolidated student affairs complex, includes a computer lab; a large, wall-mounted, flat-screen TV; an office for the student activities coordinator; student ID services; and a larger bookstore that sells clothes, books, gifts and snacks.

"It's just such a transformation," Randall said.

Since the student activities director's office is in the new student center, Randall thinks students might be more encouraged to participate in Athens Tech's clubs and other activities.

Phillips, a Commerce resident who has attended Athens Tech since 2002, said the new center is a dramatic change from the previous small room, giving students space to move about or settle in with other students to relax and watch TV.

Athens Tech students can access the student center from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Fridays.

The student center's proximity to other student services makes it very convenient, said Phillips, since student services before were scattered around the campus.

"We had students who we had to send back and forth, so now they can come in, and they can pretty much in one sweep in the same building hit us all," Randall said.

The refurbished building now houses admissions, registration, career counseling, disability services, academic advisers, testing services, records and financial aid.

"It just allows us to try and give them a little better service," she said.

Funding for the project included \$225,000 from Athens Tech's student activity fund.

Students at Athens Tech can earn certificates, diplomas or associate degrees through more than 34 programs in business, health, technical and manufacturing-related majors.

If you go

School officials will host a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new student affairs complex at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday on the school's campus, 800 U.S. Highway 29 North.

Published in the Athens Banner-Herald on 081307

http://onlineathens.com/stories/081307/news_20070813032.shtml