

Lesley L. Walls Vision Center at NSU Broken Arrow Moves Toward Completion

The Lesley L. Walls Vision Center at NSU Broken Arrow continues to move toward completion. The Center will operate as a premier resource and service facility to meet the needs of the elderly, veterans, children and other patients seeking to recover from decreased vision and function due to brain injury, retinal degeneration and other causes. The Center serves as the cornerstone objective for Embrace the Vision, an initial comprehensive campaign for the NSU Oklahoma College of Optometry. The current plan is for the Center to open on January 13, 2014. Initially, they will see patients two days a week.

“Conceptualized as an adaptable, flexible-function, clinical center of excellence, the Walls Center will offer patient care and education and facilitate inter-departmental and inter-instructional collaboration for NSU and its sister institutions in northeastern Oklahoma,” said Dr. Leland Carr, professor and assistant dean of development at the Oklahoma College of Optometry. “A major goal is the provision of service to returning veterans with visual disorders resulting from military actions in the Middle East.”

The new \$1 million vision rehabilitation center will answer requests by local and state agencies to bring vision remediation education and care into Tulsa and enhance access to services. Patients with low vision or oculomotor and visual perception impairment resulting from stroke, concussion and other brain injuries will be able to access interdisciplinary care through the clinic. The Walls Center will offer services currently unavailable in the Tulsa metropolitan area. NSUBA had dedicated 7,000 square feet for the clinic.

The center is a tribute recognizing Dr. Lesley L. Walls’ contribution to both the college and the profession of optometry. Dr. Walls served as NSUOCO Dean from 1987 through 1992. “The naming of our new optometry clinical facility at NSUBA after Dr. Walls could not be more fitting,” said Dr. Douglas Penisten, dean of the Oklahoma College of Optometry at NSU. “Dr. Walls has always been driven by the passion of providing patients access to the best in eye and vision care.”

Dr. Carr stated, “Dr. Walls is a man who made a difference not only at our school, but at all schools in all states working tirelessly as a teacher, leader, role model and consultant.”

Low vision rehabilitation is specialized vision care for those who have lost some, but not all of their vision due to eye disease, injury or neurological damage. Their vision is not correctable with ordinary eyeglasses. An evaluation includes a functional emphasis and a multidisciplinary approach and recommendations may include specialty glasses, optical magnification devices, electronic or computer-aided equipment and training techniques to accomplish activities of daily living. For the visually impaired patient, occupational therapy, orientation and mobility and assistive technology services are available on site and in the homes of the patients.

Low vision rehabilitation is supported by nearly every national and international organization concerned with eye and vision care, including the American Optometric Association, American Academy of Optometry, and American Academy of Ophthalmology.

Dr. David Lewerenz, associate professor at NSUOCO, who helped design the clinic, said local and state agencies have approached the college with requests to bring vision remediation education and care into Tulsa to enhance access to services.

More than 90 percent of people with vision loss have usable vision, said Lewerenz, including more than 75 percent who are considered legally blind. “This means their vision could be enhanced with specially designed glasses, magnification devices, illumination and contrast enhancing devices and electronic aids.”

In research conducted by Dr. Lewerenz earlier this summer, it was determined there are over 17,000 visually impaired people in the 16 country area including and surrounding Tulsa who could benefit from the low vision services provided by the clinic.

Floor plan of Dr. Lesley L. Walls Vision Center at NSU Broken Arrow Campus

