



Students explore the new food options in the new Armstrong Student Center on the campus of Miami University on Monday. GREG LYNCH / STAFF

# New \$46 million student center opens at Miami

The complex, which will be open 24 hours a day, replaces Shriver Center.

By Eric Robinette  
Staff Writer

OXFORD — Miami University's new \$46 million, 203,000-square-foot Armstrong Student Center opened its doors for the first time Monday, offering students, staff and visitors everything from new meeting rooms, to meditation centers to offices to breakfast, lunch, dinner and dessert.

The complex at the intersection of Spring Street and Maple Avenue, takes the place of the Shriver Center, which had been the welcome center/student gathering place on campus until now, said Miami President David Hodge. He and students said the new facility turned out even better than they had hoped.

"It's nothing short of spectacular," Hodge said. "This has exceeded high expectations by a lot ... it's more interesting and beautiful than we could have

imagined."

The center, spanning three floors, will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It includes a theater, offices for student organizations, meeting/banquet rooms, a variety of dining facilities ranging from Mexican to a 1950s diner, and even a meditation center that contains no technology so students and visitors can disconnect from the world as needed, said Nathan Lombardi, a junior who is on the 17-strong student board of directors for the building.

Many of the ideas for the center came from students, with the project getting the official go-ahead in 2008, according to Hodge. Two-thirds of the project was financed by more than 11,000 donors, with students financing the rest via a \$115 per semester fee.

"I'm so happy it's finally open. I'm a junior, I've been part of this project since my freshman year. To finally see it here is amazing," said Cole Lyman, another member of the student board that runs the center.

The Shriver Center had room for about three dozen student organizations, with some food service and general use spaces. The Armstrong center is devoted entirely to the students, Hodge said.

"The Shriver Center was good for what it was, but it didn't really serve the needs of all 16,000 students ... I think there's really something here for everyone," Tyman said.

The new center is a combination of new construction and retrofitting. It takes the place of the former ROTC building, as well as some other facilities.

A second phase of the project will entail meeting rooms for groups of 20 people or more, career services and a sports-themed dining venue, said Hodge. That phase is expected to be complete by 2017.

"It's absolutely beautiful. I've been able to peek in a few times, but this is the first time I've set foot in here. It's kind of what I expect when Miami does something new ... I'm excited to check everything else out," senior Luke Meissner said.