After four and a half years of planning and nine months of construction, the Noble Center is now home to a truly state-of-the-art arts technology facility: the Newell Center for Arts Technology. The NCAT will be dedicated—along with other renovated Noble Center spaces—during Trustee Weekend in May.

First things first: we extend our gratitude to the generous individuals and institutions who made this project possible: Trustee Alan P. Newell; John and Susie Wean P’06, Britton Wean ’06, the Raymond John Wean Foundation, and the Double Eagle Foundation; the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; the Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation; and the William Randolph Hearst Foundation.

Thanks to the Board of Trustees, President Sullivan, and Dean Cornwell for placing the University’s support firmly behind the project; to the arts faculty; to Michael Archibald and his staff – especially Jennifer McElroy and Cindy Clusen; and to Susan Pankey and her staff. Thank you to the IT staff for their advice and assistance; and especially to Greg Matejick, who has been invaluable. —Christopher Watts, NCAT director

From bottom to top: Construction progress from May to January, as seen from the main corridor on the basement level.
Descriptions of the various NCAT spaces have been appearing in the pages of NCATnews for a year now; it is very exciting to be including pictures as well!

All of the NCAT spaces have been designed to be functional, comfortable, and inviting; they have also been designed with maximum flexibility in mind.

The four public spaces – the e-classroom, lab, and the two project studios – are designed such that each has a clear primary function, but each can serve a secondary function when the need arises.

It’s easy to imagine the e-classroom doubling as a lab; the lab is also equipped to double as a classroom. The audio studio can double as a video studio, and vice versa. Infrastructure is designed to accommodate changing needs down the road. Take a look!
Project Studios offer private space for advanced individuals and small groups

The Video Editing Studio has a single, top-of-the-line workstation equipped with a 30-inch cinema display and professional software tools, providing advanced students with a private place to work on large video projects. The room is also equipped to function as a screening room for small groups, with a 40-inch LCD display and a Dolby 5.1 Surround audio system.

Inset: A spiral stair connects the two levels of the NCAT.

The Audio Editing Studio contains two top-of-the-line workstations, equipped with large displays, multi-channel audio I/O, and professional software tools for advanced students. A student working on an audio project can listen critically with headphones, near-field monitors, and in quadraphonic or Dolby 5.1 Surround sound.

Inset: A spiral stair connects the two levels of the NCAT.
What are people going to do in the NCAT, anyway?

While this issue of NCAT news is focused on facilities, there is another important question — just what are people going to be doing there? The answer to this question has many parts, some of which cannot even be predicted. A partial list follows:

- composition
- audio editing and mixing
- video editing and postproduction
- CD and DVD authoring
- digital image creation
- digitizing images and video
- rich web development

In addition to these activities, innovative students and faculty members from all over campus will find new and exciting ways to make use of the NCAT that we cannot anticipate. There are interesting times ahead... we'll tell you all about it in these pages.

Equipping the NCAT a team effort: NCAT, IT, and Facilities Operations

Equipping the NCAT facility was a big and very complex task, and numerous individuals from all over campus were instrumental in making it happen.

IT personnel from the Network Group and the Server Group helped coordinate infrastructure and back-end issues; the AV Group consulted with NCAT staff and Audio Video Corp of Syracuse on what is now the University's most sophisticated audiovisual installation to date; staff from the User Services Group, along with staff from Facilities Operations, provided the muscle for dismantling the old Arts Technology Lab. Staff in Purchasing and Central Receiving helped NCAT staff acquire almost $450,000 in equipment over a three-month period.

In short, a number of SLU staff from all over campus worked very hard to make it all happen. Thank you!

Special thanks once again to John and Susie Wean, parents of Britton '06, who donated the funds to equip the NCAT through the Raymond John Wean Foundation and the Double Eagle Foundation.

Left: Seven pallets of computers, weighing in at 4,800 pounds, spent several weeks at Central Receiving before being unpacked, set up, and configured by NCAT staff.

These Music and Technology students create original compositions by stitching together pre-existing loops. It's a postmodern world, after all.

This flash animation by Chris Watts, entitled love_song, was created with tools available in the NCAT. It tells of the plight of a computer who has fallen for his user and wonders how he might convince her of his love. Watch the animation at http://arts.stlawu.edu/ncat/flash/love_song.html.
Faculty and staff get Pictoplasma infusion

In October, Melissa Schulenberg and Amy Hauber (Fine Arts) and Cathy Tedford and Carole Mathey (Gallery) traveled to Berlin for the 2nd Pictoplasma Conference.
The conference is designed to bring illustrators, animators, designers, street artists, and fine artists together around the theme of character design. The conference organizers describe the organization's main goal as "to free character representation from commercial intentions and the popular psychology of storytelling, while linking a new breed of character design to the birth of a language beyond all cultural boundaries."
As part of the conference, a number of character designers worked with costumers to fill the streets of Berlin with a wide variety of characters.
Experiences at the conference will inform an exhibition and several new classes of the next few years.

A virtually perfect symposium on the impact of digital media

As far as symposia go, it was virtually perfect.
The New Media Consortium (www.nmc.org) hosted a 12-day international symposium on the impact of digital media in October 2006. One of many events hosted by NMC this year, the symposium took place entirely within the virtual world of Second Life (www.secondlife.com), where NMC has built a virtual campus.
Also in October 2006, NMC announced plans to greatly expand its campus in Second Life, increasing its (virtual) size from 16 to 112 acres and adding an arts complex and a life sciences complex.
The NMC Campus is available to St. Lawrence faculty, staff and students, and the NCAT is making its resources available to classes wishing to explore issues of interaction in virtual space, collaboration across distance, and machinima. For more information, contact NCAT director Christopher Watts.

Clockwise from top: Carole Mathey and Amy Hauber with one of the costumed characters; another character poses for the cameras; one of the many character exhibits.

Second Life avatar Walter Witte, the alter-ego of NCAT director Christopher Watts, exhibits a poster about the NCAT at a poster session in the virtual world of Second Life.
NCAT baby book

May 2006

June 2006

July 2006

August 2006
NCAT Digital Sandbox events welcome campus community to state-of-the-art facility

On Friday, January 26, 2007, the NCAT hosted the first in a series of ‘Digital Sandbox’ events for the campus community. At this first sandbox, visitors were able to tour the new facility, hear about some of the kinds of digital media projects that will be created there, and ask questions.

At each of the Digital Sandbox events, we will feature a particular media type: Flash animation, digital video, electronic music, and more. Visitors will be able to view projects done by St. Lawrence faculty and try out the hardware and software tools that are used to create such projects. NCAT staff will be available to answer questions.

NCAT will host a Digital Sandbox most Friday afternoons throughout the Spring semester from 3-5pm.

Clockwise from top: Greg Matejcik shows Kerry Grant around the main lab; Juli and Lily Pomainville try out one of the high-end Macs in the e-classroom; Karen Foster, Molly Hall ‘10, and Michael Farley are caught by the camera on their way in the front door; Eric Williams-Bergen and Greg Matejcik goof off in the main lab.