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## Mellon Foundation grant supports Townes Center initiatives

Furman University

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## FULIR program's growth spawns potential for new facility

**C.S. Lewis wrote** that a liberal arts education “liberates” people by helping them develop their independent reasoning skills and fulfill their responsibilities as citizens. Participants in the Furman University Learning in Retirement program — volunteers, teachers and students — couldn't agree more. Through liberal learning we gain intellectual stimulation, lifelong growth and inspiration from a society of like-minded friends.

FULIR, which is affiliated with Elderhostel, began at Furman in 1993 as a service to the Greenville community, offering seven courses for 62 members. Through the visionary leadership of Sarah Fletcher, FULIR has grown to 70 courses and 565 adult students who examine a wide range of topics, from Napoleon's leadership style to German conversation to current novelists, mountain trail hiking, Shakespeare, computer savvy (or just survival), water exercise and writing a memoir.

Some of the program's instructors are current and former Furman professors, and they teach for free. Learning is entirely self-directed, and the friendships built through the program continue through a variety of in- and after-class activities on campus and throughout the Upstate. FULIR exemplifies the best of learning: students who want to learn and teachers who love to teach.

To date, FULIR has operated within available campus facilities and on the edges of Furman's traditional undergraduate program. Now it seeks a home of its own, with provision for the specialized needs of adult learners: accessibility, designs for a variety of learning and teaching styles, appropriate labs for the sciences and computer training, and studios for the arts.



Furman has offered a site next to the Younts Conference Center near the south entrance of campus, and plans have been drafted. The task is to raise \$5.3 million for the building, including a maintenance endowment equal to 30 percent of the cost of the facility.

Gifts are being sought from all sources and at all levels, including two principal gifts to name the facility. Pledges may be paid over a five-year period.

The liberal arts are alive and well in every FULIR class — proof that learning has no age limit. To learn more about FULIR and its future, e-mail [sarah.fletcher@furman.edu](mailto:sarah.fletcher@furman.edu) or call her at (864) 294-2997.

— **BILL GREENE**  
*President, FULIR*

## Mellon Foundation grant supports Townes Center initiatives

The **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** has awarded Furman a \$200,000 grant that will go toward making the university's new science complex more environmentally sustainable.

The grant will support planning and programs related to the implementation of sustainability initiatives for the Charles H. Townes Center for Science. The \$60 million complex, now under construction, will have such sustainability features as a solar aquatic treatment facility and chilled beams (energy systems that combine radiant cooling and ventilation).

“This grant will ensure that the science complex will be among the most environmentally friendly buildings on campus,” says Thomas Kazee, Furman's acting president. “The complex will be a living model of sustainability processes and systems, and it has been designed to achieve LEED [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design] certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.”

The Townes Center for Science, which is scheduled to be completed by the fall of 2008, is named for a 1935 Furman graduate and Nobel

laureate who serves on the university's board of trustees. It will feature two new buildings and a renovated Plyler Hall, the existing science building.

While housing the biology, chemistry, earth and environmental sciences, and physics departments, the complex will also include the mathematics and computer science departments in Richard W. Riley Hall.

The Mellon Foundation, based in New York, is a private philanthropic institution with assets of approximately \$5 billion.