This fall, the university received very generous gifts from two important charitable foundations. In September, the University announced it received a $2 million grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. In October the university received a gift of $3 million from Delta Dental of Kansas and the Delta Dental of Kansas Foundation.

These gifts represent a significant expression of trust in key aspects of Wichita State University’s urban serving research mission. They also represent a commitment on the part of the university to continue to provide significant service to the people of Kansas.

**Shortage of Health Care Workers in Kansas**

The gift from Delta Dental of Kansas and the Delta Dental of Kansas Foundation will energize another significant workforce challenge of our urban serving mission: meeting the shortage of health care workers in Kansas. Kansas has no dental school. Kansas has 36.8 dentists per 100,000 residents, 33 percent below national targets.

The majority of Kansas counties (86 of 105), along with the cities of Topeka and Wichita, are designated as “Health Professions Shortage Areas” for dentistry by the federal government’s Health Resources and Services Administration.

A resolution in the Kansas Legislature noted that the burden of oral disease restricts activities in school, work and home, and often significantly diminishes the quality of life.

Linda Brantner, president and CEO of Delta Dental, announced the gift. She is also a WSU alumnus and a member of the National Advisory Council.

Initially, the program will begin at GraceMed Health Clinic in fall 2009 and will expand to a two-year program when the new facility is completed.

GraceMed is a community health center that provides medical and dental care on a sliding fee scale.

The WSU Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD) program is a graduate training program for dentists. It accepts dentists fresh from dental school who want additional clinical training in general dentistry.

As part of their training, dental residents will serve rural areas of Kansas as well as urban areas. The idea is to bring highly qualified dentists to Kansas, and to provide the specialized training required for them to become specialists in general dentistry.

**For you at WSU:** School of Art & Design Faculty Biennial Exhibition opens 7 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 24, Ulrich Museum.
trained dentists to the Wichita area, provide advanced training and encourage them to set up practice in underserved areas of the state. Services to be available through the facility include primary dental care, pediatric dentistry, implants and full mouth rehabilitation, orthodontics and advanced clinical techniques. In addition to training dentists, dental hygienists and assistants will be able to do their rotations at the facility. The Delta Dental funds constitute a lead gift for a new facility to house the AEGD program. The facility will be located on north Oliver Street, immediately south of the Eugene M. Hughes Metropolitan Complex.

**INTERNATIONAL SHORTAGE OF ENGINEERS, SCIENTISTS**

The Knight Foundation gift recognizes the key role that the WSU College of Engineering is playing in the training of qualified engineers for the technology focused manufacturing jobs of the future. The critical need for engineers to support the aviation industry in Wichita -- one of the key drivers of the Kansas economy -- is well known and has been the focus of discussions in the community and in the Kansas Legislature. The problem is part of an international shortage of highly trained engineers and scientists. Dean Zulma Toro-Ramos and the deans of the other two colleges of engineering in the state have been asked by the Board of Regents to redouble their efforts to address this critical workforce need in Kansas. As a national leader in engineering education, Dean Toro-Ramos understands that the long-term solution to the engineering shortage must include constructive programs that encourage students starting in middle school to become interested in science and engineering. To accomplish this, she partnered with Project Lead the Way, a national not-for-profit educational program that develops partnerships to give middle and high school students the preparation to be successful in science and engineering. The idea is to increase the number of engineering students in the pipeline. The Knight Foundation grant, facilitated by Program Director Anne Corriston, will help expand Project Lead the Way into 18 middle schools and increase the number of high schools from three to nine. It will provide the money to help schools buy necessary equipment and computer software. “The Knight Foundation gift will enable the Wichita State University College of Engineering to transform the lives of many youngsters in Sedgwick County, broaden participation in the engineering profession as well as build the 21st century workforce for the aerospace industry and beyond,” Toro-Ramos said, “in this way contributing to maintain the standard of living in the city of Wichita and the state of Kansas.”

These two projects are excellent examples of how WSU is building partnerships to meet its urban serving research mission to improve lives for the people of Kansas.

**FOR YOU AT WSU:** First day of Spring Semester classes, Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2009.

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**THE MILLIPEDE**

There’s an impressive and endearing new resident of the campus, the 20-foot bronze Millipede that has taken up residence near the Ulrich Museum. Sculptor Tom Otterness, who grew up in Wichita, said he was inspired in this work by his boyhood experiences exploring a creek bed near his eastside home. He thought his whimsical creature would look happy amidst the flowers on campus. Otterness, who lives and works in New York, has become one of America’s most respected public sculptors. His work is seen throughout the United States, Canada and Europe.

The Millipede is far from anatomically correct. It has only 46 feet, alternately shod in men’s and women’s shoes. The installation of the 7,000-pound sculpture was celebrated Oct. 29 on a gorgeous afternoon that included a performance by WSU dancers and speeches by Otterness, President Don Beggs, Ulrich Director Patricia McDonnell and others with important roles in bringing the sculpture to campus. The Millipede joins more than 70 other sculptures, adding to WSU’s reputation for having one of America’s best outdoor campus collections.

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Gary L. Miller