

University launches cannabis program

By Brianna Wallen
News Editor

Flipping through the latest course catalog, students might be surprised to see cannabis courses alongside the lineup of core classes.

In partnership with Green Flower, a California-based company, the university is rolling out certificate programs that dive into the science, ethics and business of the cannabis industry.

“Students can enroll and take an online self-paced class, and they have different areas they can focus in,” Senior Director of the Office of Workforce and Lifelong Learning Amy Feest said.

The program not only gives students industry-recognized credentials but opens doors for them to step into one of the fastest-growing industries.

With the rapid growth of the legal cannabis industry nationwide, the university is helping prepare students for careers in this evolving field through three nine-week targeted courses.

The three courses include: cannabis cultivation specialist, cannabis retail specialist and cannabis extractor and product development.

According to Feest, in just six months since its launch, 25 to 30 students have already completed

the program and earned their certification.

Recognizing a growing need for well-trained professionals, this course is designed to give students a head start.

“You could go to an employer, and the credential actually shows all the outcomes of what you learned in the training,” Feest said, “to show the employer that you’re not just walking in knowing nothing. You’ve already understood the foundation of the industry.”

By developing a deeper understanding of both the scientific principles and ethical considerations surrounding cannabis, students not only gain a competitive edge but also play a role in reshaping the conversation around the industry.

Although recreational cannabis has been legal in the state since 2021, stigma and misconceptions about the drug still persist.

Feest said that expanding education is the key to challenging those stereotypes.

“I think by becoming more educated, you can speak with more knowledge and help to break down some of those barriers,” Feest said.

Other students noted that the programs have the potential to bring about a new generation of business owners who prioritize safety and

responsibility in the cannabis industry.

Sociology major Amayia Roach, a senior, said that expanding these courses could help take dangerous products off the market while also creating more job opportunities.

“This program helps people know how to properly grow weed without putting any harmful chemicals and drugs in it,” Roach said.

Roach added that increasing recognition of these certificates can provide consumers with a sense of comfort and confidence while purchasing products.

“You know that the person who you’re getting marijuana from knows what they’re doing and won’t put you in the hospital,” Roach said.

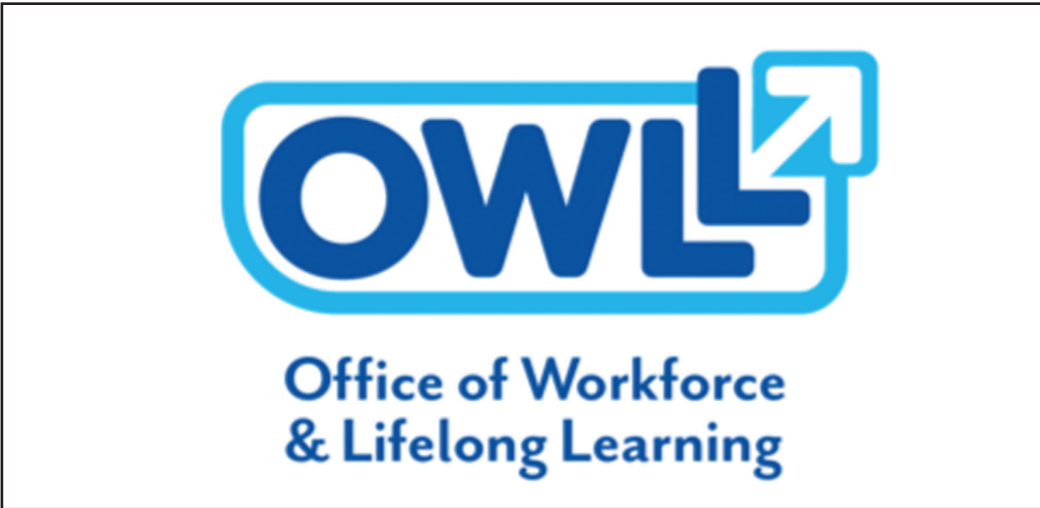
While the cannabis certificates provide valuable training, Feest emphasized that they are more effective when complimenting a student’s degree.

“Your degree is really the foundation that will open doors for you,” Feest said. “But, the more you can set yourself apart from other students who are also out there getting degrees, the better you are going to be in the job market.”

For those who are interested, classes begin every month.



Senior Director of the Office of Workforce and Lifelong Learning Amy Feest in her office on the second floor of Buley Library on Aug. 3.



The Office of Workforce and Lifelong Learning offers cannabis courses.

Campus construction replaces pipes after 25 years

By Solé Scott
Editor-in-Chief

The construction is still underway on campus, yet seems to grow into a larger project than expected.

Eric Lessne, the associate VP for capital budgeting and facilities operations, has worked at the university since 1998, originally on the board of regents.

“A couple of years ago we had found some leaks in our high temperature water lines that run under our campus that run the heat for our entire campus,” Lessne said.

The students and faculty who constanly see fences blocking the dirt and equipment outside of Farnham Hall and Connecticut Hall have expressed their concerns and negative reactions.

Specifically, students are complaining both in person and on social media about construction and wondering when it will be completed.

One of their main concerns is that this project has been in progress since the summer of 2024.

Most students are confused about what the purpose is as well, since the university did not specify.



A pile of dirt and materials in the construction site in front of Connecticut Hall on Sept. 3.

The university is replacing irreparable pipes that have not been replaced in 25 years.

The pipes needed to be fixed immediately, or else the university ran the risk of structural damage, flooding and other worse conditions.

The first to be dug up was Dorm Drive, near West Campus Residence Complex and Hickerson Hall.

“The project was supposed to be what you

see now, and all that at one time, and I decided that the campus can’t take that,” Lessne said. “I can’t do that to the students.”

The construction area outside of Farnham Hall was first priority because there was steam coming out of the manhole.

“Well, that was a sure-fire sign that we had a broken pipe,” Lessne said.

Nursing major Paul-Andra Betancourt, a freshman, shared her feelings with all the

construction going on every day.

“It’s annoying,” Betancourt said. “Like, they had all summer to fix it, so I don’t know what they are doing.”

The construction is currently in its final phase and is expected to be completed in October or November of this year.

However, the landscaping to spruce up our campus again will be completed in the spring.

The estimated cost for

the construction is \$7.5 million.

This construction is not the biggest the university has seen.

In 2004, West Campus Residence Complex and the West Campus Residence Complex Garage were built simultaneously, along with renovations to Buley Library and the Adanti Student Center.

There will be more construction projects in the near future, including the old school of business

and the renovation of Chase Hall.

“The space committee right now is being reconfigured by Dr. Wanjagi, and once that is in place, then things like this will start to get all worked out,” Lessne said.

Once the Chief of Bonds sell happens, Chase Hall will be the first residence hall to be renovated completely.

“That job is already designed. It was designed a year and a half ago, almost two years ago, and it’s ready to go out to bid,” Lessne said. “That should be our next major construction project.”

Communication disorders major Ailene Brito, a senior, is another student who has an issue with the construction.

“I believe that this construction has been taking a very long time,” Brito said. “I’ve seen this since I was in freshman year, and now I’m a senior, and it has made the campus look unappealing.”

Brito also expressed frustrations with the construction, as the alternative routes add more time to her already lengthy commute.

“It has increased my time to walk to classes because of the multiple holes they are digging,” Brito said.



Gates blocking off the construction site in front of the School of Business on Sept. 3.



Construction site blocking off the walkway to Connecticut Hall and detouring students near the Connecticut Hall parking lot on Sept. 3.