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Ceremony marks pharmacy opening

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The Auburn University Harrison School of Pharmacy at the University of South Alabama's ribbon-cutting ceremony took place on Sept. 14, at the Health Services Building.

The University has been collaborating with Auburn University to install the new pharmacy school to meet Mobile's need for pharmaceutical care and to match USA's growing medical program.

"I thought it fit so well with the University's mission," said Dr. Patsy Covey. "With the health sciences, adding pharmacy to that is so important in so many ways."

Auburn University and the University of South Alabama have been working on this collaboration since last August.

"I think it's astounding to be able to conceive a program and be able to implement it in the time we have done this. We couldn't have done this without partnership with Auburn. We have students enrolled this semester. It would have been at least another year if we hadn't partnered with Auburn," said USA President Gordon Moulton.

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Marzieh K. Aught / Staff Photographer

Faculty members from University of South Alabama and Auburn University cut the ribbon to mark the new opening of the Auburn University Harrison School of Pharmacy at the University of South Alabama Sept. 14.

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"I think it's great that they're furthering the relationship between the two universities. I think eventually it will be a really strong program that will benefit not only Auburn but the University of South Alabama as well," said Mary Ann Birch, a student of the new pharmacy school.

Students of the pharmacy school at South Alabama will attend a class broadcast from an Auburn classroom. The new technology will allow them to interact with questions and being able to see their counterparts at AU.

"We've been able to give the same opportunities we have at Auburn to the students here. They can use the technology that they have here to join the lectures at Auburn. So it's one big class," said Matt Jenkins, the pharmacy student council president at Auburn University.

The inaugural class of the Harrison School of Pharmacy has a total of 150 students - 125 at Auburn and 24 at South Alabama.

"I think they might outshine their counterparts in Auburn. They're doing well academically. They may all have had some apprehension about the distance piece, but that seems to be working well for them too," said Dr. Lee Evans, dean of the Harrison School of Pharmacy at Auburn University.

Alabama has one of the highest demands for pharmaceutical workers in the country. There are approximately 32 positions available in Mobile, Ala. alone. The Harrison School of Pharmacy will also benefit the state's rising need for pharmacy workers.

The collaboration between the two schools can benefit students as well as both universities.

"I'm excited because it gives me an

opportunity to stay around the area I was raised and still be affiliated with Auburn," said Blake Salter, a pharmacy student.

Students who attend Harrison will graduate with a degree from Auburn University while still being able to study at South Alabama. The smaller class size at USA may benefit new students as well.

"It's nice having small classes. The studies are kind of intense so it's better to be in a class with 25 people instead of a class with 125 or more," said pharmacy student Gary Ray.

"We all felt like friends the first few weeks we were here," said Salter.

"It's like a small support team," added Birch.

The Harrison School for Pharmacy has promising opportunity for both universities as well as students who attend the classes. The school goal is to meet Alabama's rising need for pharmaceutical majors to fill positions. It is a beneficial addition to USA's health sciences program.

"It has paid off. The kind of things we can do collaboratively is pretty unending. It's really exciting. It really is," said Evans.



Marzieh K. Aught / Staff photographer

USA pharmacy students relax and discuss the pharmacy school and courses after the ribbon-cutting ceremony on Sept. 14. Students have a positive feeling the the pharmacy school will have a good outcome and are excited to be here.