Landmark teachers spruce up for opening

By SUSAN ELLIS
PUTNEY — The guidance counselor mowed the lawn; nearby an English teacher pruned a young sugar maple, and across campus the college president swabbed the stairs to the cafeteria.

Landmark College, the nation's first college for dyslexics, is getting ready to welcome its inaugural class of students late this month. On Thursday, faculty and staff decided to help the maintenance crews put finishing touches on the renovated campus.

The college — an extension of Landmark School in Frides Crossmg, Mass. — purchased most of the former Windham College buildings in 1983 for $231,000. This past year Landmark spent more than $2.5 million to renovate, rehabilitate and refurnish five campus buildings, abandoned in 1978 when Windham College went bankrupt, according to Landmark's dean, Robert Skeele.

Crews have now fixed leaky roofs, installed new heating, sewage and electrical systems, and scraped every last inch of peeling white paint off the college's four main buildings and walkway — all made of brick. According to one school official, the old Windham College buildings were modeled after a college campus in New Mexico where the white paint helped cool the brick buildings by reflecting the sun's heat.

In order to comply with current state fire and safety regulations, the college also had to replace each existing dormitory window with a double hung variety at a cost of $600 per window, Landmark President James Olivier explained Thursday as he continued to swab the stairway.

Thursday's clean-up campaign was a relaxing break in an intensive two-week schedule of teacher training and orientation for the college's 25 faculty members and counselors who arrived on campus Tuesday. Dr. Charles Drake, the founder of Landmark School, and other seasoned Landmark instructors led the new college faculty through the first three days.

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