Nursing mothers at Oswego State now have the option to breast-feed or pump in private inside the newly opened lactation rooms around campus.

Over the summer the process of designing and building the rooms began, but the idea to create them began to take form in the summer of 2015, with discussions about working mothers between Gwen Kay, Diana Boyer and Kristen Eichhorn, former senators of Oswego State’s Faculty Assembly.

The three sat down with Oswego States President Deborah Stanley to discuss the challenges working mothers face on campus and she was on board with the idea and creation of the lactation rooms, Eichhorn said.

“We did hear stories of the challenges working mothers had on our campus that included trying to find space that provided privacy,” Eichhorn said. “Mothers resorted to whatever resources they had.”

These resources included borrowing private offices, small closets, rest rooms or their cars.

Eichhorn partnered with Mitch Fields, associate vice president of Oswego State’s Facilities Services, Linda Paris, planning coordinator of Facilities Services and project manager of the lactation rooms, and Amy Plotner, assistant vice president of human resources.

“The rooms are intended to provide an inclusive space to support all mothers,” Eichhorn said.

Paris said it is a New York State law for nursing new mothers to have a place where they can pump that is clean and safe at work.

Oswego State took this a step further by providing dedicated spaces and instead of only one, there are 11 around campus in academic and residence buildings.

“This campus is on the cutting edge when it comes to so many lactation rooms for such a small area, and we are really trying to support...
our mothers, whether they are staff or faculty,” Paris said.

Students and visitors are also welcome to use the rooms.

The hope is as these become more publicized, and that they become more widely known then students will educate themselves on what it means to be a nursing mother and how quite frankly how difficult it is to balance work and being a mother, while providing breast milk for your child.”

**Linda Paris**
planning coordinator of Facilities Services, project manager of lactation rooms

Each room consists of two different styled chairs, so mothers have options, depending on what is more comfortable for them, at least two working surfaces, such as desks and a power outlet. Signage is also up so nursing mothers know where to find the rooms.

The sign posted outside the designated room in Onondaga Hall, however, was stolen, Paris said. Measures are being taken to make sure this does not happen again by reattaching the signs more firmly.

“The hope is as these become more publicized, and that they become more widely known then students will educate themselves on what it means to be a nursing mother and how quite frankly how difficult it is to balance work and being a mother, while providing breast milk for your child,” Paris said.

Selena Miller, an office assistant in Oswego State’s School of Education, is a nursing mother and utilizes the lactation rooms. Prior to their creation, Miller used restrooms or her boss’ office, which could be accessed by others.

While breast-feeding is a cost effective option, it requires a commitment in order to feed the child when their mother is not present. Some mothers have to pump two to three times during a work day, Paris said.

“I really appreciate the support of the college to provide these rooms to give me a clean, private, secure place to do that,” Miller said.

Paris is a nursing mother herself and utilizes the lactation rooms when she is around campus, and her office primarily, to pump.

The lactation rooms can be found in the following areas around campus: 121 Rich Hall, 35E Hewitt Union, 188 Shineman Center, 117 Sheldon Hall, 10 Lakeside Dining Hall, 305 Penfield Library, 235 Marano Campus Center, a room in Mackin Hall and the lower level of Funnelle, Onondaga and Seneca residence halls.

Wilber Hall, Scales Hall and Tyler Hall will have lactation rooms built during their renovations. The goal is to have a designated room in every building on campus, Paris said.