Setting the Stage

Please see pages 10-11.
Moving in

Students and faculty work together to settle into the new science center

Home at last!

After years of planning, and following some 18 months of building the building, now, faculty and students have started the move into the new science center, the final step before the building’s debut with the start of classes.

And they couldn’t be happier. “It’ll be great to work in the new lab,” said Elz Schrader, a chemistry major from Muskegon, Mich.

“Our science center is being constructed through the Legacies: A Vision of Hope fund-raising campaign. The $530,000 square-foot new construction is opening this fall, and renovation of the existing (and attached) Peule Science Center will take place during the 2003-04 school year. The project’s total cost: $46 million—a hefty cost with which the college still was able to finance the project (see the raised story at right).”

The new building will be the science center. The central atrium, which spans all three stories, is 48 feet high. The main east-north hallways are longer than a football field. In tandem with connecting corridors, they lead to a newly overwhelming assortment of research and teaching laboratories, study areas, classrooms, and departmental and individual offices.

When the Peule renovation is complete, the new buildings together will house the departments of biology, chemistry, geology, and environmental sciences, nursing and psychology. For the time being, psychology is remaining in an office across two blocked-away, with the others squeezed into the new building until Peule is done.

The move is particularly sweet for students, some, given the daunting upswing, as it represents the first time the department has had purpose-built quarters in its 25-plus years. The building had previously served in campus dormitories.

“We just couldn’t do things in the housing that we’ll be able to do in the new skills lab,” said Debra Sietsma, associate professor of nursing and chairperson of the department. “So our students’ experience will be more real, more true to life, and that can only improve learning.”

Professor Sietsma especially rakes that the department will be able to move more closely to other departments on campus. “We’re very excited about that,” she said. “It’s the way it’s been put together.”

The building has been designed with such connections in mind. Instead of departmental identity, the organization is based on general research focus. For example, molecular biologists and analytical chemists are near one another.

“The faculty are intentional about moving in a new direction—and that’s inter-disciplinary and collaborative.” said Debra Gentile, who does for the natural sciences. “The building will catalyze that because that’s the way it’s been put together.”

Dr. Gentile believes that connections that cannot yet even be imagined will result to the advantage of the students—of whom Hope faculty conduct their work. “This building will work collaboratively with the facility to produce an overview of excellence,” he said. It’s going to catapult us further than any of us can expect at this point.”

In the short term, the building’s domes are still setting into their new space. The move began on July 18, and is continuing even in the final weeks of summer.

The Peule community will celebrate the new building with an open house during Homecoming Weekend. On Friday, Oct. 17 from 4 to 6 p.m., the college’s third annual Undergraduate Research Celebration will take place at the science center. The event will feature student poster presentations concerning joint student-faculty collaborative research projects and self-guided tours of the building.

The building will also be open on Saturday, Oct. 18 from 9 a.m. to noon for self-guided tours and continued display of the posters.

Funding remains crucial need

Even though the new science center will open with the start of classes, fund-raising for the building is not complete and remains a priority.

The building is funded by the Legacies: A Vision of Hope campaign, which includes both the new building and the renovation of the existing Peule Science Center. A $530,000 grant from the college’s fund raises $46 million, which is one of the efforts to raise $105 million by June 30. In December, the science center project, the major components are: finishing the Devoe Building; increasing the endowment; and general campus improvements, including the construction of the Martha Miller Center for communication, modern and classical languages, and general campus improvements. For more information about the campaign, please visit the college online at www.hope.edu or call (616) 395-7200. To make a pledge to the campaign, please call (616) 395-7275.