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University of Dayton

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## NEWS RELEASE

### **\$22 MILLION UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON RENOVATION, ADDITION WILL GIVE SCIENCES A UNIFIED HOME AND NEW CONNECTIONS**

DAYTON, Ohio — It's a natural connection. Faculty and students in the natural sciences and mathematics at the University of Dayton were finding more and more opportunities to collaborate, but the physical separations between departments were not conducive to working together.

They also needed more lab and classroom space, and room to gather and talk.

And there was that big, empty space between Sherman and Wohlleben halls, the 1950s-era homes for the mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry, geology and chemical engineering departments.

A \$22 million addition to and renovation of the two buildings will connect them and provide close to 55,000 square feet for new laboratories, classrooms, offices and gathering spaces. With groundbreaking slated for April 19, the University of Dayton Science Center, totaling 240,000 square feet, will be complete in time for classes in fall 2003.

"We are in the midst of an era of explosive discovery throughout the scientific world," said Paul J. Morman, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. "Scientists are poised on the brink of discovery with grand accomplishments. Worldwide, scientists no longer make discoveries in their own cloistered disciplines. They are using the talents and tools from all fields in science and mathematics."

When the project is completed, the buildings will be connected "physically, functionally and symbolically," Morman said, providing students with an educational experience that will foster all the skills they will need after graduation.

The University now has the largest science enrollment in its history, with close to 740 students majoring in science and mathematics. But the science center will serve all UD undergraduates through science requirements like the integrated natural science sequence, a three-course, two-lab series required of all liberal arts majors as part of UD's general education structure. Undergraduates can choose between an emphasis on chemistry and biology in the

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human environment track and geology and biology in the dynamic earth track.

The science center project follows a \$9 million renovation of infrastructure and other facilities within the two buildings, completed in 1998.

In conjunction with Edge and Tinney Architects Inc., the plans were developed by Hellmuth, Obata and Kassabaum, one of the world's largest architectural firms. Previous HOK projects range from a science complex at Georgia Tech to Jacobs Field in Cleveland, from King Saud University to the National Air and Space Museum, from regional campuses for Sun Microsystems to a biology building at Berkeley.

Two striking features of the science center will be most visible from the outside — a multi-story atrium entrance and courtyard on the south side and a curved-wall auditorium overlooking Kennedy Union Plaza. New space will also be added on the Stewart Street side of Wohlleben, giving the science complex a new presence facing the Dayton community.

All in all, the addition will contain a shared instrumentation lab, nuclear magnetic resonance lab, a microbiology and genetics lab, an anatomy and physiology lab, two organic chemistry labs, four classrooms, one team classroom and spaces for spontaneous student and faculty interaction. The auditorium will seat about 130, and the Kennedy Union Plaza entryway will have display space to put the spotlight on science.

All of the labs, classrooms and offices, as well as the atrium gathering area and the auditorium, will be networked for plug-in computer access and provide wireless capabilities. Classrooms will have the latest in audio and visual capabilities.

"For chemistry, the new science center is all about students," said Gary W. Morrow, associate professor and chair of the chemistry department. "Each year more than 1,200 science and engineering students pass through chemistry lab courses. Because of this, the chemistry department decided early on to focus its science center planning and design efforts around the general and organic chemistry teaching laboratories — facilities that were exhausted by years of heavy service. We will be providing a state-of-the-art chemistry laboratory experience that will be both technologically innovative and scientifically sophisticated."

Paul Eloie, professor and chair of the mathematics department, emphasizes the planned state-of-the-art classrooms for his department "that can truly revolutionize mathematics education." He said faculty are looking forward to building on the technology initiatives they've developed using computer labs and the Ryan C. Harris Learning Teaching Center.

Giving students gathering spaces wasn't a high priority when Sherman and Wohlleben halls were built. "Currently, there is no interaction space in either building," said J. Michael O'Hare, professor and chair of the physics department. "Generally, students enter these buildings for classes and then leave, weaving their way through the formidable congestion that

exists when classes change. I believe the connector will offer attractive space that will invite the students to spend more time in the buildings, extending their learning opportunities beyond what occurs in the classroom."

For Peter Powers, assistant professor of physics, chance encounters and conversations "stimulate new ideas for my research and teaching. When I describe my research to others outside of my field, I find that they commonly ask questions that help me to look at my research in a new light and to think about applications of my research that had not occurred to me. It is my hope that the increased interactions brought on by the new science center will foster more of these informal meetings and conversations."

Powers has already combined forces with colleagues in the sciences to "tackle new and interesting problems." He and Howard Knachel, chemistry professor, co-advised an undergraduate on a "buckyball" experiment. The student fabricated the soccer-ball shaped carbon molecules in Knachel's lab and then performed laser-based diagnostics in Powers' lab. Powers consulted mathematician Don Jurick for help with differential equations in a theoretical problem he was working on with a graduate student, and found Shirley Wright, associate professor of biology, when he needed microscopy facilities.

Renovations in the existing buildings will include 10,695 square feet in Sherman Hall and 3,590 square feet in Wohleben Hall for offices and other spaces affected by the addition.

Classes will continue in the buildings as the project proceeds through the 2002-2003 academic year, but the construction schedule will, as much as possible, be sensitive to noise- and debris-producing work during class hours, say UD officials.

The project is funded, in part, by gifts to the Call to Lead campaign, an image- and fund-raising campaign for the University that started in 1996 and is slated to wrap up in June. More than \$146 million of the \$150 million goal has been pledged.

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