

September 17, 2001

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For immediate release

U-M Regents to review new biomedical science research building plans

Facility will be a model for cross-disciplinary research

ANN ARBOR, Mich. – The University of Michigan’s commitment to leadership in biomedical research will take another step forward Thursday (Sept. 20) when the Regents are asked to approve the schematic design for a new \$220 million Biomedical Science Research Building (BSRB) for the U-M Medical School.

In a related action item, the Regents also will be asked to approve the issuance of the project for bids and awarding construction contracts for the building site’s utilities relocation and excavation with a budget of \$9.2 million. At their May 2000 meeting, the Regents had named Polshek Partnership Architects of New York, NY, as the building’s architect.

The approximately 470,000 gross-square-foot BSRB will house U-M Medical School faculty and scientists in a flexible environment whose architectural integrity fosters project collaboration and intellectual innovation. For example, space is being planned around scientific themes rather than the traditional department model so that faculty working on similar projects will be encouraged by proximity to collaborate and innovate.

“The Medical School recognizes that scientific collaboration and innovation are essential to making significant advances in biomedical research,” says Allen Lichter, M.D., dean of the U-M medical school. “The building’s unique design will foster even greater multidisciplinary collaborations and create conditions for accelerated visionary research and training that we hope will profoundly impact science and clinical care.”

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According to Lichter, programmatic themes likely to be located in the BSRB will include:

- Geriatrics and biogerontology – Cellular and molecular biology of aging and late life diseases
- Immunology – Basic, translational and clinical investigations of how the immune system defends against viruses, bacteria and other pathogens
- Cardiovascular science – Genetics, developmental biology and design of treatment strategies for the heart and its blood vessels
- Cellular and molecular therapeutics – The integration of the disciplines of genetics, biochemistry, microbiology, immunobiology and cell biology at the cellular and molecular levels for a better understanding of health and disease
- Organogenesis – Unraveling the basic mechanisms by which organs and tissues are formed and maintained in order to correct acquired and genetic human diseases
- Neuroscience – Understanding the fundamental biology of brain cells, functions of the brain, and the impact of genetic variations, for improved treatments of brain disorders

Both its focus on collaborative, multidisciplinary research and its location on the medical campus will make the BSRB an important hub in the University's development of a Life Sciences Initiative.

"This important building will markedly enhance the quantity and quality of research space for the Medical School and will facilitate close working relationships with faculty in multiple schools based in and interacting with the Life Sciences Institute," says Gilbert S. Omenn, M.D., Ph.D., executive vice president for medical affairs.

The U-M Life Sciences Initiative is a campus-wide effort to coordinate and expand research and teaching in such rapidly expanding fields as genomics, chemical and structural biology, cognitive neuroscience, biomedical engineering, biocomplexity and bioinformatics, as well as other areas of study that are influenced by the life sciences.

"This building will be a state-of-the-art facility for our Medical School faculty that will provide an appealing and appropriate entry to our Medical Campus," says Robert Kasdin, U-M executive vice president and chief financial officer.

In the six-level building, approximately 263,000 net square feet will be designed for wet research laboratories, laboratory support spaces, principal investigator offices, interaction spaces and conference/auditorium facilities. Building occupation is scheduled for early 2005. Relocation of utilities and site excavation is scheduled to begin this fall.

"Care has been taken with the building design to fit into the neighborhood skyline," says Kasdin. "The below-ground-level auditorium adds a sculptural design element in front of the building, while landscaping and benches will enhance the comfortable environment for students, faculty and staff."

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The site is located across Huron Street from the U-M's new Palmer Drive Development, and is bordered by Glen Avenue to the west, Ann Street to the north and Zina Pitcher Place to the east. The existing Neurosciences Building at the west end of the site will be demolished.

Parking for faculty and staff will be provided in the Palmer Drive parking structure, currently under construction, and a soon-to-be-built expansion of the Catherine Street parking structure. Funding for the project will be provided from the U-M Health System, primarily with Medical School sources.

Additional construction details about the Biomedical Science Research Building can be found at www.plantext.bf.umich.edu.

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