



WHAT WORKS - A KECK/PKAL CONSULTANT REPORT

PLANNING AN ADDITION TO YOUR FACILITY

Recommendations:

Begin with a “preprogramming phase” during which departments come together under the direction of a faculty “shepherd.”

Departmental autonomy is important and initial discussions should be held in separate departments, but the traditional of autonomy should not get in the way of facility development. Therefore, all departments concerned should be brought together as soon as possible. A knowledgeable member of the faculty should be appointed as a “shepherd” to facilitate discussions between departments. The shepherd must be given release time from other duties to be effective, since the task will be arduous.

Following extensive departmental collaboration, a report should be presented to the executive and planning committees. The report should serve as basis for discussions of the overarching principles that will guide the facilities programming process. These principles could include integrating teaching and research, increasing interdisciplinary learning opportunities, and enhancing collaborative research efforts.

Organize a task force to take charge of the facility “programming process.”

A task force should be organized and charged with producing a report that spells out the needs for a new spaces. Trends that will shape science in the future should be acknowledged and addressed. The report should also define goals that will influence the design of the facility, including:

- ♦ reforming science education to emphasize student-centered learning
- ♦ enhancing the use of technology in classrooms and labs
- ♦ greater reliance on instrumentation
- ♦ increasing the number of interdisciplinary approaches to scientific research
- ♦ incorporating new disciplines in science, such as bioinformatics.

Further, the task force should provide a good starting point for the necessary departmental discussions to formulate an agreed on curricular plan of sufficient specificity. For example, in biology there might be a perceived need in the department to strengthen molecular biology as well as a desire to keep the curriculum attractive for the predominantly pre-healthcare professional students who study at the university. The biology department could express these issues to the task force and the task force could incorporate their requests into the overall facility design. The task force can also decide that interactive modes of teaching and learning in the classroom must be accommodated in the new facility. The task force can take departmental goals and convert them into plans of action for the future.

BACKGROUND

This private university in the south is ready to begin the planning process for renovating and constructing an addition to the existing bioscience facility. Several planning stages must be passed through before construction can begin, but the consultant team agreed the university is ready to begin the process.



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Follow the facility-programming phase with a “feasibility study” phase.

Before an architect can proceed with the design phase, the university needs to decide the location of the addition, the department to be housed there, and the renovations needed for the existing facilities. Given the complexity resulting from both an addition and renovations, the completion of a feasibility study should follow the planning phase.

The feasibility study would include the following information:

- ◆ a facility audit to determine the condition of existing utilities, including mechanical, electric, plumbing and equipment
- ◆ a utilization study to determine the degree to which the existing science facilities are utilized
- ◆ recommendations as to the best location for program elements within the renovated facility as well as the new facility
- ◆ several siting alternatives for the addition that are coordinated with the university’s master plan
- ◆ an implementation plan that describes the proposed phasing of the project, relocations and renovations should be carefully orchestrated to minimize the amount of “down time” for program elements.

Lastly, begin the “siting phase” for facility construction.

The desire of the university to have the new facility serve as “an academic center for all the bioscience students on campus” argues for a site near to other buildings housing those units.

Connecting the new building to existing structures would provide a major presence for the biosciences in a central location in a building complex that would house several departments. Facilities that would help make this complex a vibrant “academic center for the biosciences” include:

- ◆ a learning/mentoring center open days and evenings
- ◆ space (perhaps an atrium for informal academic and social gatherings, enhanced by a coffee shop
- ◆ lecture halls and classrooms opening onto the common space, thereby drawing many students to the facility; (the assignment of these halls and classrooms part of the time to nonscience courses could enhance the use of this space as a university-wide meeting ground
- ◆ an exhibition space for posters and other materials which displays the scientific work of students and faculty. ■