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Cutting edge technology and instruction at the heart of new Science Building at San Diego City College

New facility includes planetarium, rooftop observatory and state-of-the-art laboratories

SAN DIEGO – More than 100 faculty, staff, guests, and district and community dignitaries turned out February 19 to celebrate the formal grand opening of San Diego City College’s newest instructional facility – a $57.4 million Science Building project that caps more than two decades of dreaming and planning. Funded by the San Diego Community College District’s $1.555 billion Propositions S and N construction bond program, the 98,000 square foot, four-story Science Building houses the Life Sciences and Physical Sciences programs, including Agriculture, Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Geographic Information Systems, Geography, Geology, Physical Science, and Physics. The building features multiple state-of-the-art laboratories, science lecture rooms, teaching gardens, a rooftop observation deck and an 80-seat planetarium.

“After two years of construction and nearly 260,000 person hours, the hopes and dreams of so many faculty and students have become a reality,” said Lynn Ceresino Neault, Interim President for San Diego City College. “Thanks to the taxpayers of San Diego, City College will be able to nearly double the enrollment in the sciences, furthering the completion of degrees for our transfers and students.”

Chancellor Constance Carroll declared the day a “celebration of bold actions.”

The ceremonial ribbon-cutting was conducted by (from left to right) Trustee Peter Zschiesche, Board President Rich Grosch, City College Interim President Lynn Neault, Chancellor Constance Carroll, Interim Mayor Todd Gloria, Vice Chancellor Facilities Management Christopher Manis, and Associated Students Government officer Katie Lonthair.
“Our board was bold in deciding to put two bond measures within a four year period before the voters; the voters were bold and generous in approving those measures,” she said, adding that the importance of science education was strongly emphasized with the bond propositions. “The STEM disciplines, known as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, are the entryway to most of the new jobs in this era that we have entered. Our region is full of industries that rely upon STEM education.”

Rich Grosch, President of the District’s Board of Trustees praised not only the investment into education, but also into San Diego’s economy and local workforce.

“We wanted to make sure that small and historically underutilized local businesses were given a chance to benefit from this construction,” said Grosch, noting that the bond program will have generated in excess of 10,000 prevailing-wage jobs in 2014.

Todd Gloria, Interim Mayor for the City of San Diego, expressed appreciation for the boost to the workforce provided by the $1.555 billion bond program. “That is a lot of jobs in this economy and there are a lot of people who got a paycheck because of the leadership of this board.”

Gloria, whose council district encompasses San Diego City College, praised the design of the new facility as a “wonderful addition” to the East Village. “This is a beautiful building, and we don’t do ugly in District 3. So thank you for not doing ugly when it comes to a public building. You are setting a good example here; you are also setting a good example with sustainability,” he said. “We can be global leaders for environmental sustainability and you are leading the way.”

“The Science Building starts a new era for science here at City College,” said Shane Haggard, an Adjunct Professor of Chemistry, and a former San Diego City College student. “The cutting edge technology and instruction this building provides will teach our students and give them the edge they deserve and need as they go on to their careers.”

“On the very first day of classes, I heard one of the students who walked into the planetarium say ‘It’s great to see City College get the upgrade it deserved’. The faculty put in countless hours trying to figure out what would be best for our students and we have provided it. We hope, we tried, we certainly did.”

Dr. Lisa Will, Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy
Excitement over the new facility was a common theme among students at the grand opening.

“The new “S” building means so much to all of our students. This is giving us new state-of-the-art equipment that we can all use in the classroom. It is increasing the classes we had already and also giving us a new, diverse set of classes that we can all use,” exclaimed Katie Lonthair, an officer with the campus’ associated students organization.

“This is also spreading the word to students that are not in the science classes, giving them an opportunity to explore new classes they didn’t think they could use before,” she added.

Designed by architects Harley Ellis Devereaux, the Science Building is on track to obtain a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification from the United States Green Building Council (USGBC). It will be one of 11 LEED-certified projects for City College, and one of more than 40 across the District. It includes a variety of sustainable features:

- The exterior is comprised of a fiber cement panel ‘rainscreen’ system which provides a waterproof membrane behind open joints. The gap allows for the circulation of air across the vapor barrier.
- Sunshade devices are used on the south elevation to reduce solar heat gain and glare.
- Light shelves harvest daylight which reduces energy demands from artificial lighting, and helps to reduce eyestrain and increase productivity.
- All windows utilize ‘high performance’ glass that allows sunlight to filter into the building, but reduces the amount of UV light and solar heat entering the building.
- All walls and roof areas are highly insulated, helping to conserve energy resources and making the building more comfortable by maintaining a healthy and uniform temperature.
- The landscape materials will include native and drought tolerant plants.

Additional project partners include:
- Structural Engineer – Stedman & Dyson Structural Engineers
- Civil Engineer – Bureau Veritas N.A., Inc.
- Fire Alarm & Security – Xnth Technology Design
- Fire Protection – Protection Design & Consulting
- Landscape Architect – Spurlock Poirier Landscape Architects
- Inspector of Record – Chris Thompson
The $1.555 billion Propositions S and N construction bond program is providing new state-of-the-art teaching and learning facilities, major renovations and campuswide infrastructure projects at City, Mesa and Miramar Colleges and six Continuing Education campuses throughout San Diego. For more information, please visit http://public.sdccdprops-n.com/Pages/Home.aspx For high-resolution photographs or renderings, please contact Ursula Kroemer at (760) 705-6919 or ukroemer@gafcon.com.