

PRELIMINARY STEPS FOR FACILITY RENOVATION

Recommendations

Develop a plan for future improvements.

The college should conduct a substantial evaluation of the existing science building to aid in the development of a plan for future improvements. The evaluation should include an analysis of science programs and their curricular and spatial needs. It should also include an engineering analysis to assess the mechanical systems, as well as fire code and disabled access concerns. Through this analysis, the college will be able to determine if the existing footprint of the building is sufficient to house the current science programs and those anticipated in the next decade.

Allow curricular developments to govern facility development.

Faculty must, both departmentally and as a division, review their curricular needs and determine where they want to be in the future. This is an opportunity for the science curriculum to define the facility, rather than the reverse. Not all departments will answer these questions in the same way, but it is critical that these questions be addressed so the facility can adequately serve and enhance the educational experience. Ultimately, departments should document the kinds of spaces they need to teach effectively.

Encourage the administration to reassure faculty.

The administration must reassure the faculty that they are committed to a rational planning process, even if they cannot commit to construction at this point. The faculty and the administration need to commit to an efficient planning process while working toward a common goal. Faculty are putting tremendous energy into the project and they do not want their efforts overlooked. All parties need to remain optimistic while simultaneously preparing for setbacks and disappointment. Further, the administration must establish a timetable concerning when the construction phase will begin. This demonstrates to faculty that the administration is serious about facility renovation.

Use the planning process to determine if and how space can be shared.

Faculty should meet to discuss which facilities can be shared and which are department-specific. A mock schedule for the year should be used to identify under-utilized spaces and over-burdened spaces. The college should consider whether some science classes might be taught in rooms outside the science facility, as well as the option to hold non-science classes in the science facility. ■

BACKGROUND

This small, midwestern liberal arts college wishes to renovate their current science facility, but they need assistance in planning for new spaces. The college wishes to renovate the science hall that houses the biology, chemistry, math, computer science and physics departments.