



Expectations Emerge for New PSS Building

New construction is often commonplace on university campus. Whether it is student housing, classrooms, stadiums or sidewalks, each new project brings a level of anticipation and excitement as those that pass by eagerly wait for its completion.

For some construction projects, it is easy to see the benefits it will bring. For others, the benefits are less evident but no less exciting. In these cases, looking at projects similar in nature can provide the clarity that is missing from the piles of two by fours and bricks.

Such may be the case with the new expansion and renovation of the Plant and Soil Sciences Department at Texas Tech University and made possible by a large gift from Bayer CropScience and gifts from individual donors. To understand what this construction will mean to students, faculty and the college, we can look back at a few short years ago at the construction of the Animal and Food Science building.

During the 2004 renovation and expansion project,

Dean Michael Galyean, Ph.D., was a Horn professor and Thornton Distinguished Chair in beef cattle nutrition and management in Texas Tech University's Department of Animal and Food Sciences. He explains that the department was spread out over four different buildings before the renovation.

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time."*

"The basic ability to teach students and the information that is conveyed probably hasn't changed all that much," Galyean said. "It's just really made a huge difference in the laboratory and application side of things."

Bailey Joe Pennington, Undergraduate Research Assistant in the Animal and Food Sciences Department said the upgraded technology has stimulated and enhanced his learning in ways he never thought were possible.

"Having more of a 'hands-on' experience with my education has definitely altered the way I view the industry," Pennington said. "Before, I had a very

simplistic view of everything, but now, I see just how intricate it really is.”

Galyean said the expansion of the AFS department has unified everyone. Conversations occur among faculty regarding teaching techniques, and these discussions lead to enhanced student learning.

“Animal and Food Sciences is the fastest growing and largest department in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, and an increase in enrollment is partly due to the facility itself,” Galyean said. “It has given the department a sense of confidence that having a great facility really does make a difference when recruiting new undergraduate and graduate students to Texas Tech.”

Pennington said as a student, he appreciates spending his days surrounded by people he recognizes from within his major. Pennington said there is a recognizable camaraderie among his classmates as a direct result of the constant interaction, and he has developed close rapports with his professors as a result of interacting with them daily.

Cramped quarters, dingy desktops, and dated microscopes are all characteristics of the Plant and Soil Science (PSS) building. Built in 1974, the building is lacking modern technological implements.

“A new building for our department has been needed for a long, long time,” Christi Chadwell, Communications and Recruiting Coordinator in the Plant and Soil Science department said.

Since 1998, Bayer CropScience has donated \$27.6 million to Texas Tech’s Plant and Soil Science department. Recently, Bayer has gifted an additional \$19.3 million, said Mike Gilbert, vice president for Global Breeding and Trait Development. These funds are intended to support the growth and expansion of the PSS department.

“The Bayer contributions have been leveraged over the years with matching funds from the TRIP program and/or Regents professorship matching funds,” said Gilbert, “With these matches, the total Bayer impact is \$54.85 million.”

Gilbert said that Texas Tech has outstanding scientists working in the area of Plant Science with leading professors in areas of genetics, fiber research, polymer chemistry and plant biotechnology. He explained that Bayer and Texas Tech have developed excellent joint collaborations in abiotic and drought stress screening and development, and have had significant achievements in the research collaboration.

Richard Zartman, Ph.D., Chairman of the Plant and Soil Science Department said having his faculty spread across campus is an inconvenience with direct impact on the student to teacher relationships within the department.

“I have faculty members in six different buildings on campus,” Zartman said. “To get a couple more faculty members in our building, or adjacent to our building, will really help that a lot.”

Zartman said the Plant and Soil Science (PSS) department is the number one research department in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR). The diversity of the programs in the department is what makes it unique.

“As our department grows,” Chadwell said, “different research areas come into

existence and in the building we have, we aren’t able to house that growth and development so we’ve extended to different buildings on campus and all over Lubbock.”

The new PSS building will attach to the Goddard and Plant Sciences buildings on the west side and create a U shape. There will be a Spanish style courtyard area built between the buildings for students and faculty to enjoy.

“We expect that same kind of positive effect for Plant and Soil Science, especially for recruiting and alumni support,” Galyean said. 

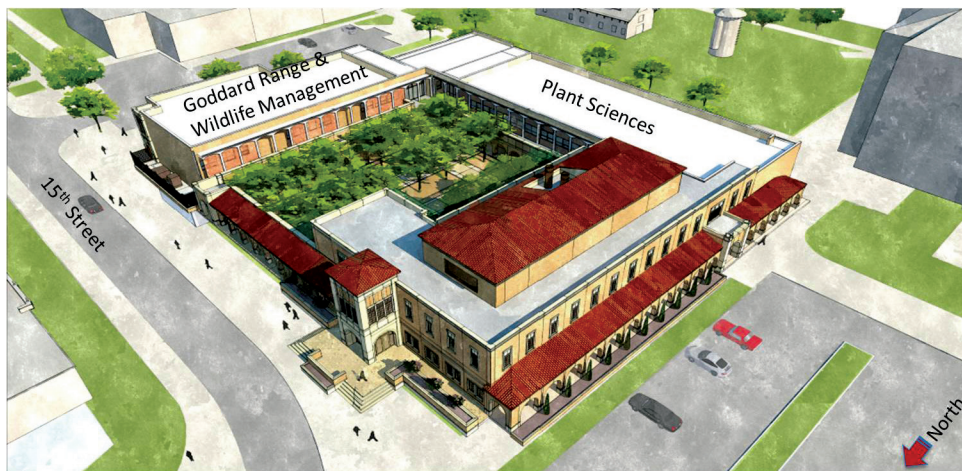


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