

OU science complex to open in December

BY SALLY TATO

STAFF WRITER

Crews are wrapping up work on Oakland University's \$43 million science and engineering complex this fall with construction slated for completion in December.

The state-funded building will come under OU ownership in January, at which time furniture and laboratory equipment can be moved in, said Susan Aldrich, assistant vice president, capital planning and design.

"People will do the move at the end of the winter and hopefully all the furniture and lab equipment will be coming into place," Aldrich said. "The complex is linked to an indoor bridge and Hannah Hall and is scheduled to open for classes next spring. Christian Company crews began construction in December 1994."

The nine-story building, which includes about a dozen classrooms, as well as teaching and research labs, will be utilized by the College of Arts and Sciences' chemistry, biology, physics and mathematical sciences departments, and the School of Engineering and Computer Science. The school of Health Sciences will move into renovated space in

Hannah Hall.

Michael Polis, dean of the School of Engineering and Computer Science is anticipating the move.

"We're certainly looking forward to it."

Polis said. "Right now we've got people sort of crammed into all sorts of corners. It will give us room to expand the things that we are doing."

Among the research projects currently being conducted are: vehicle simulation and control; optical techniques for non-destructive evaluation; and verification of software programs, Polis said.

"These are the kinds of projects that will be continued in larger facilities in the new building. Right now we're really cramping people in every square inch," he continued.

In addition to the science complex, OU is also working on a preliminary design process for a \$3.6 million animal care laboratory. Originally intended to be built in conjunction with the science complex, university officials eliminated it from the plan when funding became an issue, Aldrich said.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recently awarded OU a \$1 million grant to help defray the costs of the facility which

will be attached to the science complex via a bridge. OU will fund the remaining cost.

The lab will allow researchers to continue existing research that currently takes place in several rooms in Dodge Hall.

"The NIH grant will help solidify Oakland University's position as an institution with both excellent scientists and excellent facilities for conducting biomedical research," said Donald McCrimmon, director of grants, contracts and sponsored research at OU.

"Oakland is a remarkable institution, considering the amount of the biomedical research we do in the absence of a medical school," he continued.

Research slated for the new facilities includes the structure and function of the eye; vascularization of the heart; studies in the development of cancer; and the functioning of the immune system. Animals to be used in the new facility research labs will include: rabbits, guinea pigs, rats and occasionally dogs, McCrimmon said.

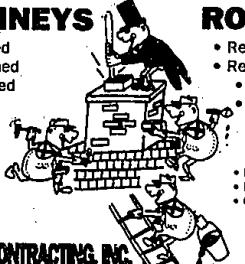
Construction on the facility is expected to begin in the spring with an opening date slated for the following spring of 1998. When the facility opens, OU expects to gain full accreditation.

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