University seeks $93 million for construction, renovations

The Register - Guard - Eugene, Or.
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Date: Jul 18, 2008
Start Page: A.1
Text Word Count: 745

Note: Bonds, donations and other sources would pay for 10 academic and residential building projects

The University of Oregon wants to keep its construction momentum on a roll.

The UO will ask the governor to include $93 million in construction and campus renovations in the 2009-11 budget he sends to legislators later this year.

Members of the state Board of Higher Education recently approved a capital construction budget to be forwarded to Gov. Ted Kulongoski along with the operations budget.

The centerpiece of the UO's request is a $57.25 million project that would add a new building for international and world cultural perspectives programs, which would move out of Prince Lucien Campbell Hall, known on campus as PLC. About half of PLC would then be renovated.

The new building, almost 100,000 square feet, probably would be southeast of Chapman Hall, which is northeast of PLC across the Memorial Quadrangle. About 50,000 square feet in PLC would be renovated.

Other academic building projects on the UO's capital construction request would renovate or add on to Allen Hall, Chapman Hall, the Erb Memorial Union, the Museum of Natural and Cultural History, and the Chiles Center.

Student housing projects include exterior upgrades to the Earl complex and Barnhart Hall and mechanical and electrical upgrades in Earl and Carson Hall. In addition, the UO is seeking funds to add a technology business incubator to a new building in the Riverfront Research Park that was funded by the 2007 Legislature.

UO planning director Chris Ramey said the $93 million request is about average for the university, but it will continue a series of major projects that over less than a decade has substantially added to campus. Those include major additions and renovations now under way at the School of Music, College of Education and Robinson Theater and past work on the Lillis Business Complex, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Lorry Lokey Laboratories, Student Health Center and Living Learning Center.

Also, the university is in the planning stages of its $200 million basketball arena, a new integrated sciences building, an alumni center and the new multitenant building in the research park.

Of the $93 million in work, about $41 million would come from bonds that are paid off from the state general fund. Much of the rest would come from donations to be raised by the UO, or from other sources. For example, residence hall projects are funded through rents paid by students, and some projects also would rely on state programs for improving energy efficiency or making seismic improvements.

The PLC project is the first of two phases that eventually would add 145,300 square feet of space. The second phase would include an approximately 50,000-square-foot addition to PLC, plus renovation of the remaining part of the existing building.

The new 100,000-square-foot building would provide modern offices and work spaces as well as informal areas for students and professors to work on projects. Specialized labs, classrooms, a 500-seat lecture hall, a multimedia display, an international caf and a hearth are all envisioned in the conceptual plan.

Part of the idea behind the building is to bring people in related disciplines together to encourage collaboration and new perspectives. It's also to acknowledge that learning often takes place outside classrooms in informal settings where professors and students can talk and work together.

"A lot of study happens in classrooms, but a lot of it happens kind of outside the professor's door," Ramey said. "So not only are we bringing different disciplines together, but we're building environments that will allow them to interact in new ways."

The student union project would renovate a portion of the lower level where many student organizations, the
Multicultural Center and a computer lab are housed. Long considered dark and cramped, the area would be made more inviting by the 10,000-square-foot renovation.

The $15 million Allen Hall project includes a small, three-level addition to the south side of the building and renovation of about 20,000 square feet. It would create a new east-facing entrance, move the First Amendment Plaza to a more prominent spot and improve energy efficiency.

CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION PROPOSAL

PLC expansion and renovation, Phase 1: $57.25 million

Allen Hall expansion: $15 million
Chapman Hall/Honors College renovations: $6.5 million
Museum of Natural and Cultural History expansion: $4.75 million
Earl housing complex upgrades: $2.9 million
Student union renovation: $2.5 million
Technology business incubator: $1.5 million
Chiles Center renovation: $1 million
Barnhart Hall exterior upgrade: $900,000
Carson Hall electrical upgrade: $560,000

Abstract (Document Summary)

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