A $40 MILLION RENOVATION WILL HELP MODERNIZE Mc C ARTHY HALL

When the building that would eventually become McCarthy Hall was first envisioned, Cal State Fullerton was not much more than a few temporary classrooms surrounded by orange groves. Now, with 110 permanent buildings, over 4,100 full- and part-time faculty and staff, an enrollment of over 40,000 students, and 110 degree programs, CSUF is one of the largest, most diverse, and most innovative universities in the California State University system.

Started in late 1959 and completed in 1963, the Science Building was truly a marvel of its time. Its six floors were nearly an acre each, and with a full basement, the structure boasted around 300,000 square feet of classroom, office, lab, and multipurpose space. This made it the largest building in the state college system at the time, and purportedly one of the largest in the nation, as well as the biggest structure in the Fullerton area. All for a price tag of just over $5.7 million, which was a relatively modest budget even back then.

Designed by the State Division of Architecture, the façade represented a major departure from the “prison-style architecture” that had dominated state college buildings in the previous decades. With continuous six-story windows on two sides and hexagon-shaped grillwork on the other two, the building quickly became an icon. Its motif was incorporated into the designs of other campus buildings over the next two decades, and it also set a precedent for buildings in the state university system.

BUILT TO GROW WITH THE CSUF COMMUNITY

While the architects were focused on creating something that would stand up and stand out, Miles McCarthy, who had been hired as one of the first five permanent professors and was the dean of science, math, and engineering at the time, spent the better part of 1960 in his shared temporary office creating plans for what would go inside.
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN:
How Space Matters to Learning

Few, if any, have had a greater impact on the growth of Cal State Fullerton than Miles McCarthy. The first head of science and mathematics at CSUF, Professor McCarthy had a vision that transformed CSUF from a small regional college to a nationally recognized university that attracts top talent from across the globe.

Every day, we see Professor McCarthy’s vision in action as faculty and students conduct original research in biology, physics, geology, chemistry, biochemistry, and mathematics. We also see it in the impact our alumni make in our community and on the world as they go on to distinguished careers in their chosen fields.

Now, with a $40 million renovation budget approved for McCarthy Hall by the state of California and the university, we enter a new period of transformation as we look to build on Professor McCarthy’s legacy. This is the time to dream and partner with the large and growing network of alumni, donors, companies, and community members so we can create an inspirational space that showcases our mathematics and science programs.

Building a space that gives our faculty and students access to the most advanced resources and best teaching practices is vital to our mission. With your support, we can continue to grow our leadership and learning spaces. Miles McCarthy’s vision created an ideal building and we hope to continue and renew his legacy with the renovation work we are undertaking.

Marie Johnson, Ph.D., Dean, College of Natural Sciences & Mathematics

“Miles had a definite vision for what the school would become, and that helped shape what went into the Science Building,” says Lawrence de Graaf, who was also one of the first professors at CSUF, and shared an office with McCarthy in those early days. “I often saw him with blueprints sprawled out on his desk, laying out the plumbing, electrical, and other equipment needed for the biology, chemistry, and physics labs.”

A lot of factors went into designing the building’s functionality, says de Graaf, because the plan called for it to house just about everything the faculty and students needed at first, with departments and services outside the sciences moving out as other buildings were built. The school’s library was in the basement for a time, and the building was also home to a theater, an art gallery, the student affairs center, and student government offices, among other things. Partial walls and cubicles divided many of the rooms, and faculty often shared offices.

The budget didn’t stretch as far as McCarthy would have liked, however – as any CSUF student or alum knows, the school ran out of funding to add escalators past the fourth floor, and only one of the proposed second-floor walkways connecting to other academic buildings was ever built.

EXPANDING ON MILES MCCARTHY’S VISION

When Professor McCarthy joined the CSUF faculty, he brought a strong background in scientific research with him. And during much of his time at CSUF, he remained active in research as well, working on several federally funded projects. “At the time, most of the other schools in the state university system were geared toward preparing people to become teachers,” says de Graaf. “Professor McCarthy’s focus on research laid an important foundation for CSUF that wasn’t true of other state colleges, helping to turn CSUF into a true liberal arts college and attracting more professors and students interested in research opportunities.”

In addition to helping design the building that now bears his name, McCarthy oversaw much of the initial hiring for the school. “Whether it was developing a pre-med program or finding ways to involve students in research opportunities, Miles McCarthy left a huge imprint on CSUF, and on the sciences here in particular,” says biology professor and former colleague Steve Murray.

In 1984, the Science Building was renamed McCarthy Hall, and over the years, it has seen numerous transformations. “Keeping up with advances in science and technology, and making sure our students have access to state-of-the-art equipment and facilities has always been a priority, but can sometime be challenging,” says Murray. “But we are excited about this renovation, which will give our students the kind of modern lab and classroom space they need to excel in cutting-edge scientific research, and to prepare them to be leaders in their fields.”

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THE CASE FOR INVOLVEMENT

College clubs provide students with opportunities to make friends and socialize around shared academic interests, hobbies, or intended professions. They facilitate networking with peers, faculty, and alumni, and enable students to gain exposure to potential research, career, or advanced degree paths.

“Student development research shows that students with strong support systems are more likely to persist and obtain degrees than those who do not have such support,” explains Colleen McDonough, assistant dean for student affairs in the College of Natural Sciences & Mathematics, and advisor to the NSM Inter-Club Council (ICC), and advisor to Beta Psi Omega, a biology service fraternity. “Included in these support systems are faculty and staff advisors who often advise not only the student clubs, but also become mentors and advisors to individual students.”

The NSM-ICC connects students to these opportunities in both NSM and the greater CSUF campus, allocating student funds for conference travel and hosting events throughout the academic year. “Conference travel funds, which go to 100+ plus students each year, are particularly important because undergraduate research is such an integral part of the NSM student experience,” says McDonough.

“The event budget allows our 18 clubs and organizations to host social and academic gatherings pertinent to their academic and professional pursuits.”

The NSM-ICC also hosts events to showcase clubs and encourage involvement. In October, its Fall Festivities, a Harry Potter–themed carnival where clubs and research groups hosted tables with activities to attract members, drew one of the biggest turnouts to date.

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ALUMNI PROFILE

Dr. Calvin Lowe (BA ’86): A HERO FOR SICK KIDS

Every day, parents across Southern California put their children in Dr. Calvin Lowe’s hands. Having worked at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles for more than 20 years, he currently serves as the Medical Director of the Children’s Emergency Transport Team, as well as a Clinical Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. He’s appeared on Larry King and BBC radio, and has been published in numerous medical journals.

When he isn’t saving kids’ lives, Dr. Lowe participates in triathlons, is active in his church, and can often be found rooting for the Titans whenever they’re on TV, and sometimes even at games. “I’m a very proud alumni, and I look forward to being more active in the alumni community.”

Dr. Calvin Lowe meets Cal State Fullerton students at the “Think Like Einstein” event.

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CLUBS BECOME SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

Britt Rhodimer, NSM-ICC chair and a senior majoring in ecology and evolutionary biology, has experienced the benefits of club involvement firsthand and tries to engage others through her role with the ICC.

Having just transferred to CSUF in fall 2017, Rhodimer has already been referred by a peer club member for jobs on campus and hired thanks to the same peer’s helpful resume feedback.

“Another club member was kind enough to provide me with a list of available environmental science jobs when I was starting to doubt my prospects,” she says. “And a third taught me skills I needed to excel in a molecular biology lab, including how to read and analyze complex research papers and use various lab equipment.”

Students participate in the Harry Potter-themed Fall Festivities carnival.
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- Ronald Godshalt
- Dr. Rafael A. Gonzalez - 12
- Thomas J. Hanbury - 72
- Dr. Carol E. Harrison
- Dr. Sam Higgin
- Dr. Stanley S. Hillman - 70
- Jennifer A. Hontzas and Dr. Robert F. Hontzas - 90
- Dr. Misty Patranran, assistant professor of geological sciences, has been published in Perfor – The Journal of Life and Environmental Science. Geologist alumnus Gabriel-Philip Santos (MS ‘18) and former postdoctoral scholar Jorge Valez-Juarez are also co-authors.

As a geosciences undergraduate, Isaac Magalhaes (BS ‘17) identified and studied the prehistoric Titanotaria orangensis, a 6-million- to 7-million-year-old tuskless walrus discovered in Orange County. His research with palaeontologist James Parham, associate professor of geological sciences, has been published in PeerJ – the Cenozoic project. They collected fossil data on marine invertebrates and digitalized collections for use by scientists and the public. Graduate student Crystal Cortez and undergraduates like Jolene Ditmar, Crystal Cortez and undergraduates like Jolene Ditmar supported the researchers, identifying, cataloging, and photographing Orange County specimens up to 66 million years old.

Three young Cal State Fullerton paleoecologists participated in the International Research Experiences for Undergraduates program, funded by the National Science Foundation, last summer. Alumna Parts Pijaum (BS ‘17) studied how to modulate mechanical power using light at the Institut Néel in Grenoble, France. Denyz Melchor investigated primordial black holes at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. And Monika Tadrous studied living cells in complex environmental conditions at the Univerisite Grenoble Alpes in France.

As a geological sciences undergraduate, Isaac Magalhaes (BS ’17) identified and studied the prehistoric Titanotaria orangensis, a 6–7 million-year-old tuskless walrus discovered in Orange County. His research with paleontologist James Parham, associate professor of geological sciences, has been published in PeerJ—The Journal of Life and Environmental Science. Geology alumnus Gabriel-Philip Santos (MS ’18) and former postdoctoral scholar Jorge Velez-Juarez are also co-authors.

Research into mara’s unique food filtration system—and its potential applications in filtration system design—by graduate student Raj Divi and his research advisor Misty Paig-Tran, assistant professor of biological sciences, was recently published in the peer-reviewed scientific journal Science Advances.
SUPPORT STUDENTS THROUGH THE DEAN’S CIRCLE

With an annual gift of $1,000 or more, join the NSM Dean’s Circle. Your generous contribution comes with opportunities to mentor students, attend special events, and receive Cal State Fullerton Titan Insider Membership, and you’ll earn recognition on the NSM website and in this newsletter’s Donor Honor Roll.

To become a member, contact Loida De Leon, development associate, at 657.278.3422 or lodeleon@fullerton.edu.