Trustees approve operating plans for new research tower, heart hospital

University committed to stimulate, expand Ohio's position in biomedical technology, cardiovascular care

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The Ohio State University Board of Trustees today (7/12) took the next step in positioning the university and the state at the forefront of biomedical technology and multidisciplinary heart care with its approval of operating plans for two prominent construction projects on the health sciences campus. The university now will proceed with developing construction plans for the Biomedical Research Tower and the Richard M. Ross Heart Hospital.

Completing these projects, integral to the university’s Academic Plan for becoming a top public research institution, represents a major university commitment to stimulate and expand Ohio’s position as a leader in biomedical research and world-class cardiovascular care, according to Edward H. Jennings, Ohio State interim president.

“These facilities will greatly advance our academic mission and international reputation while bringing enormous value in health care, advanced technology and economic growth to the state of Ohio and its citizens,” he said.
Dr. Fred Sanfilippo, senior vice president for health sciences and dean of OSU's College of Medicine and Public Health, agreed. "We are in an era where the interface of basic biomedical research and patient care is providing the earliest possible diagnosis and most advanced treatment of human diseases and health disorders. The Biomedical Research Tower and Ross Heart Hospital will ensure that people of central Ohio and beyond will have prime and timely access to this research and the cutting-edge care it makes possible."

**Biomedical Research Tower Will Push Hi-Tech Agenda**

The Biomedical Research Tower, to be located off West 12th Avenue adjacent to The Ohio State University Medical Center, will be a magnet for scientists involved in groundbreaking research and education. The 10-story tower includes laboratories for researchers in a variety of disciplines as well as core laboratories for central research functions.

Projected to open in 2006, the tower nearly doubles the amount of biomedical research space on campus and provides a centralized facility for educating OSU students, according to Dr. Caroline Whitacre, associate vice president for health sciences research and vice dean for research at The Ohio State University College of Medicine and Public Health.

"Scientists working in the Biomedical Research Tower will focus much of their efforts on understanding the cellular and molecular biology of disease, and the development of gene-based therapies, which will ultimately lead to improved medical therapeutics," Whitacre said.

Core labs will be designated for studies in proteomics, genomics, imaging microbial and cellular interactions, biomedical informatics, cell signalling, microscopy, histology and cytometry. Approximately 1,000 people, including researchers, technologists and clerical support staff, will be working in the tower.

Whitacre said design of the tower will facilitate group interactions between researchers and will allow ready collaboration with clinicians at OSU Medical Center, including those in University Hospitals and the Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solve Research Institute.
"We not only hope to spin off successful technology to foster growth of new business ventures within the state, but also to apply what we learn for the benefit of our own patients," she said. "This transfer of knowledge from the laboratory to the bedside is very important to our success and vital to our mission as an academic medical center."

Research conducted in the Biomedical Research Tower also will benefit the university by attracting additional extramural financial support, patents and licensing opportunities.

It's estimated the Biomedical Research Tower will result in $3.7 billion being spent in Ohio on research-related initiatives in the initial 10-year period after it opens. In addition, it's expected to lead to the creation of nearly 17,000 new jobs.

Funding of the $151 million tower cost comes largely from private donations, bonds and OSU funds.