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ROXBURY

Roxbury Community College to use \$20.7m in state bonds for life sciences center, other renovations

Posted by Matt Rocheleau April 4, 2012 04:43 PM

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(Roxbury Community College)

A draft rendering of planned renovations to an existing building at Roxbury Community College.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

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Roxbury Community College announced Wednesday it will receive \$20.7 million in state bonds to help fund major renovation and modernization projects, including the construction of a \$16-million life sciences center within the campus' existing buildings.

The state's capital asset management division, which will provide the funding, will officially launch a study process on Thursday to review the campus' facilities and its capital asset priority list and to introduce a project designer, officials said.

The top priority is moving forward with plans to renovate about 24,000 square feet of space in existing buildings that will house the Life Sciences Institute, a project that college leaders have been discussing for the past several years.

The college said the proposed institute will allow for further expansion of its established life sciences curriculum, including through partnerships with hospitals and biotech companies. The school said it hopes to graduate more students who are better-trained, including in specialty fields, to excel in the life sciences workforce.

"The life science industry has seen a marked increase in its use of workers with foreign visas, due to the lack of a trained local labor pool," said a statement from college president Terrence Gomes. Having to rely on workers from other countries will restrict the region's future growth long term. We see our Life Sciences Institute as vital to local industry, to the students we serve and to our institution."

The \$20.7 million will be allocated as part of a 2008 bill that provides \$2.2 billion in state bonds doled out over 10 years to finance infrastructure improvements at the state's 29 higher education institutions, officials said.

Carole Cornelison, commissioner of the state's Division of Capital Asset Management said the college's plan is in step with the Governor Deval Patrick's push to match training and education to job needs.

"We are working hard to build these types of projects at public higher education facilities, and the new Life Sciences Institute is yet another example of the administration's commitment to that goal," Cornelison said in a statement.

The school has not yet determined a timetable for the renovation projects

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Campus officials said that through support from private donors, the college has already raised about \$2 million toward the projected cost of the Life Science Institute, a college spokeswoman said. The school plans to continue fundraising and hopes to raise at least another \$1 million more.

“By continuing to raise funds for this worthy initiative, we will be able to use more of the DCAM funding for other badly-needed renovations on our campus,” the college’s president said in statement.

“The Life Sciences Institute (LSI) will support local and national strategic priorities as it increases the output of well-educated and specially-trained individuals,” added Gomes. “Massachusetts will continue to be competitive on a national scale by focusing more resources on creating a skilled workforce.”

To see more draft renderings of the planned renovations, click [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

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