Trafton Addition, Renovation Plans Underway

New $54M addition to be complete in 2008; renovations to follow in 2010.

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This fall marks an anticipated ground-breaking on a long-awaited project — one that will end up costing about $54 million giving Minnesota State a 70,000-square-foot addition to the Trafton Science Center and a

SULKA AND MODERNI The new 70,000 sq.-foot addition of Trafton, shown from the southern side, is the top priority of the entire MnSCU system in the building projects category.

TRAFTON Addition to house chemistry department; renovated area will house electrical, civil engineering

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newly renovated version of the existing building.

Trafton is the largest building on campus that houses classrooms.

The funding for a project like this comes from taxpayers. This year is a bonding year in legislature, and the Trafton renovation and addition project was the top priority in the entire Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system in the building projects category.

Currently, the bonding bill, which will determine the funding for the project, is in a conference committee. A conference committee is one that the Senate bill and the House bill must reconcile because the two that were passed differed. After the bill is reconciled, the building plans can proceed.

An estimated 72,000 square feet will undergo renovation, according to a statement released March 3, 2005 on the MSU Web site by President Richard Davenport.

John Frey, the Dean of the College of Science, Engineering and Technology, said he is hopeful that once the bill is passed, the project will stay intact and he is confident the project will receive necessary funding.

“The design work for the project is being done right now, and it’s on schedule,” Frey said.

The addition will be completed on the south end of the east side of Trafton. It will house the chemistry department as well as additional classrooms.

The renovated area, the existing chemistry space in Trafton North, South and Center, will be for the electrical and civil engineering departments.

The project is divided into two periods once the design phase is completed. The first will consist of constructing the addition, scheduled for completion in 2008. The second includes the renovation, scheduled for completion in 2010.

The project will bring a number of changes to the building, including an updated heating, ventilating and air-conditioning system, asbestos abatement, a new patio in the plaza area, remodeled labs, new lab furniture and more. Frey said everything has been progressing well thus far.

“Things have been going rather smoothly with the architects, and we’ve had good satisfaction with the design so far,” Frey said.

He added that faculty had a significant impact on what changes would be made.

“We had the faculty determine both their needs and their students’ needs. The people have worked well together with the architect,” Frey said. Frey also said that student opinions were asked as well, but faculty was the focus since they know their disciplines so well.

Gregg Mueg, chairperson of the biological sciences department, said he and his colleague, John Thoemke, were on a committee that has been active in the progress of the project since it began.

“We had the faculty create kind of a wish list. Well, that wish list would have cost over $100 million, so it was our job to cut it down once we know what the faculty wanted,” Mueg said. He added that a sprinkler system was also going to be installed throughout the building, and that the department’s animal facility was going to be relocated. Mueg said one of the labs for molecular biology was going to be located in the new addition as well.

“We’ve met with the architects and determined what we’d like to have from the beginning,” Mueg said.

According to Davenport’s statement on the MSU Web site, “State and national data show that the U.S. is not educating enough scientists and engineers to meet future demands based on retirement and new innovation. The Trafton project will help to improve that effort, in the region, the state and the nation” as well as additional classrooms.