



4-2015

MS-174: Science Center Papers

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MS-174: Science Center Papers

Description

This collection contains documents both formal (memoranda, minutes, reports) and informal (notes, emails) on the conception, design, and progress of the Science Center, along with blueprints, schematics, and other visual representations. It constitutes a first-generation view of the process by which the college created one of its most significant academic centers and pieces of architecture.

Keywords

Gettysburg College, Science Center

Disciplines

Higher Education | Science and Mathematics Education

Guide to the Science Center Papers



Gettysburg College, Musselman Library
Special Collections & College Archives

Processed by Devin McKinney
April 2015

MS – 174: The Science Center Papers

(2 cubic feet, 2 boxes, 1 cylinder)

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Inclusive dates: 1994 – 2002

Bulk dates: 1996 – 1999

Collection size

The collection consists of 2 boxes containing 21 folders, and 1 cylinder containing 3 architectural drawings.

Provenance

Donated by Prof. John Commito, January 23, 2015.

Historical note

In February 1998, the report of a specially-appointed Commission on the Future charged with assessing demands for the growth of Gettysburg College declared that “additional space for the sciences is of the highest priority.” The need for an up-to-date research and teaching facility had been discussed informally for years; studies had been undertaken and architectural bids solicited beginning in 1994. The Science Center was the result of nearly a decade’s discussion, study, design, fundraising, and labor.

Expanded facilities were seen as essential for keeping pace with such rapidly evolving disciplines as environmental studies, neuroscience, health and exercise science, and molecular biology. Additionally, the scientific departments were sorely in need of elbow room. Environmental Studies, recently established as a major, was confined to a single office in Masters Hall and closet-size research lab in McCreary Hall. The Health and Exercises Science lab space was situated in a corner of a locker room. The new complex would enable expansion, restore space previously relinquished by the Biology Department, and relocate the Chemistry Department from Breidenbaugh Hall, where it had been since 1928.

The west side of campus was chosen as the site, and the design contract awarded to Ballinger Architecture of Philadelphia. Conceptually, the new space would appear to grow out of and complement McCreary Hall, “creating a seamless transition from one building to the next.” Among the design goals were facilities to enhance faculty research and encourage faculty-student collaboration; transparent construction and “open-visible” dimensions; and infrastructure supporting future development. Construction would also include renovations to McCreary and Masters Halls.

The cost was initially capped at \$25 million, with a steering committee working to secure foundation funding, matching grants, and private donations. Among the

instrumental groups were the college's Board of Trustees and its Academic Affairs Committee, the latter of which coordinated faculty input on design and physical requirements. Daniel DeNicola, provost; Rhonda Good, assistant provost for the sciences; and Jennie Mingolelli, vice president for finance and administration, were particularly important individuals in the realization of the plans.

On October 21, 2000, ground was broken for what DeNicola called "the most expensive and complex project" the college had ever undertaken. Over the next year and a half were built 86,000 square feet of new facilities, including 28 teaching and research labs; seven "smart," multimedia-ready classrooms; a computer lab; a 2,300-square-foot greenhouse; 76 miles of cat6 cable; 50 miles of fiber optic cable; 5,000 wall jacks; and 10 wireless access points. Among the center's cutting-edge features were laboratories for Geographical Information Systems (GIS), laser spectroscopy, nuclear magnetic resonance, and animal research; a particle accelerator; and a maintenance floor with systems for water treatment, waste management, temperature regulation, and air filtration.

Classes were first held in the Science Center on September 2, 2002, and the Board of Trustees dedicated the building on October 18, during Homecoming Weekend.

Scope and content note

This collection contains documents both formal (memoranda, minutes, reports) and informal (notes, emails) on the conception, design, and progress of the Science Center, along with blueprints, schematics, and other visual representations. It constitutes a first-generation view of the process by which the college created one of its most significant academic centers and pieces of architecture. As such, it is of key value to any study of the college's history, particularly in the pre- and post-millennial period.

There is little information about donations and other funding sources, presumably because of the confidential details of most such transactions. But the material is useful for insight into the art and science of architecture, design, and engineering. The memos and minutes illustrate the daunting intricacy of the project, and the difficulty faced by individuals and committees in attempting to meet shared goals and divergent demands.

Special Collections possesses several resources that usefully augment the Science Center Papers. These include MS-175: Papers of the Environmental Studies Department; RG 2.0.13: Office of the President: Gordon A. Haaland (1990-2004), particularly Boxes 26 and 32; RG 2.0.13: Commission on the Future, 1996-1998, particularly Box 4; and Prof. Michael Birkner's interview, found in our Oral History collection, with Prof. John Committo, former chair of the Environmental Studies Department.

Box 1

- 1-01. General Papers, 1994-95
- 1-02. General Papers, Jan-Feb 1996
- 1-03. General Papers, March 1996
- 1-04. General Papers, Apr-Nov 1996
- 1-05. Space Program Appendices, Volume Two, April 1996
(Note: Volumes One and Two of the Space Program study are located in RG 2.0.13, Office of the President: Gordon A. Haaland, Box 32.)
- 1-06. Olin Foundation, 1996
- 1-07. Shepley Bulfinch proposal, May 7, 1996
- 1-08. Equipment inventories, 1997
- 1-09. Product advertisements
- 1-10. The Commission on the Future, 1997-98
- 1-11. Meetings, 1998
- 1-12. Request for proposals, October 26, 1998
- 1-13. Ballinger Proposal, 11/10/98
- 1-14. General Papers, 1999-2001
- 1-15. Articles on environmental design
- 1-16. College literature and invitations, 2001-02
- 1-17. *Gettysburg Times* articles, 1998-2002

Box 2

- 2-01. Design – Early stages
- 2-02. Miscellaneous architectural drawings and documents

2-03. Ballinger Architecture presentation books (1)

- Workshop #1 – January 6-7, 1999
- Workshop #3 – February 3-4, 1999 (annotated)

2-04. Ballinger Architecture presentation books (2)

- Meeting #4 – February 17, 1999 (annotated)
- Meeting #5 – March 3, 1999 (annotated)
- Group Meeting – April 14, 1999 (annotated)
- Group Meeting – May 12, 1999

2-05. Ballinger Architecture presentation books (3)

- Faculty Presentation – October 5, 1999
- Faculty/Board Presentation – February 3, 2000 (4 copies)

Box 3 (cylinder)

Ballinger architectural drawings

- 1st floor
- 2nd floor
- 3rd floor