Food Science Laboratory Remodel Supports Growing Dietetics Program

WARRENSBURG, MO (May 20, 2014) – Providing a state-of-the-art learning environment that will prepare Dietetics students for a growing career field, the University of Central Missouri is planning to remodel its Food Science Laboratory. UCM’s Board of Governors on May 9 approved a recommendation to spend up to approximately $443,000 on the project using funds made possible by the McClain Center for Nutrition, Health and Wellness Endowment within the UCM Foundation.

The Food Science Laboratory is located in Room 246 of the Grinstead Building, and is currently being used to support approximately 130 students who are majoring in the nationally accredited Dietetics program, as well as a number of students seeking a Foods minor within the university’s Department of Nutrition and Kinesiology. Department Chair Mike Godard said it also will serve students in the Hotel and Restaurant Administration program in the Harmon College of Business and Professional Studies and the Family and Consumer Sciences program in the College of Education who take several courses in the department that utilize the laboratory.

Godard noted that the remodel will significantly upgrade the lab that that was last updated in the 1990s. The learning facility was created in 1959 when the Grinstead Building first opened, and initially was used in the Family and Consumer Sciences program.

“The classroom was originally used for a food demonstration course where each student had to ‘get under the mirror’ and present. The cupboards are still the original 1959 cupboards and the counter tops were replaced in the late 1980s or early 1990s,” Godard said. “Some of the appliances have been replaced over the years as things break down but not much has changed.”

The renovation project will vastly update the lab to enhance the learning environment for students while also giving them the opportunity to experience the types of facilities they may encounter in the professional arena.

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“We will be adding more working area for our students along with new equipment that will facilitate better learning experiences for students in Food Preparation and Experimental Foods courses,” Godard said. “We will have all commercial quality equipment and resources for our students to be trained and prepared for these working environments. This will not only serve our students more effectively with the educational aspect of the program but also will increase our research capacity for this program and result in more faculty-student research collaborations.”

Nouveau Construction & Technology Services LP will handle the “floor-up” construction work and installation of equipment through the Educational and Institutional Purchasing Cooperative, and Gould Evans, which has a history of involvement with the university on design projects, will serve as the architect of record. In addition to the construction cost and design services, the project also will entail the installation of a ventilation hood, life safety/fire suppression equipment, abatement and air monitoring, furniture, as well as data/phone capabilities. Now that the board has approved the project, Godard said work on the lab should begin in late May with the facility ready to use by the fall 2014 semester.

Godard noted that the dietetics program has increased in the number of degree-seeking students by 30 percent over the past three years. The program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics.

Dietetics is a high-tech science that prepares students for careers as registered dieticians, dietetic technicians, registered and dietary managers.

Funding for the renovation was made possible by an estate gift from Regina Myers McClain, a 1935 UCM graduate who devoted most of her life to teaching. Her gift also has funded scholarships, a distinguished professorship and renovation of the Morrow-Garrison Gymnasium. The UCM Foundation is the university’s official nonprofit area raising private support to make a college degree more affordable, accessible and beneficial to students.

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