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Tulane University plans business school expansion

Shannon, Robin; Managing Editor. **New Orleans CityBusiness** (Mar 7, 2016).

Abstract

The expansion will allow for additional flexible classroom space, 20 new faculty offices, expanded breakout rooms for collaborative learning, a new financial analysis lab, a larger and more modern Career Management Center and incubator space for student startups within a new home for the Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

Full Text

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Tulane University is hoping to begin construction within the next two months on a roughly \$35 million expansion for the A.B. Freeman School of Business to accommodate growing enrollment.

The university is currently reviewing bids for the project, designed by renowned architects Pelli Clarke Pelli of Connecticut. It includes renovation of about 40,000 square feet of space in the existing 75,000-square-foot Goldring/Woldenberg Hall and construction of a new 45,000-square-foot addition to be built on the vacant space in front of the existing building.

School dean Ira Solomon said it expects to award the project by the end of March. Construction would begin by late April or early May, with completion by January 2018. He said much of the funding for the project has come from donors.

Solomon said the business school is one of the largest of Tulane's nine schools and is among the fastest-growing business schools of any size in the country. Enrollment has increased from around 1,350 undergraduate students in 2011 to more than 2,000 enrolled in 2015.

"The growth is a boon for the university, but it poses a lot of challenges when it comes to space for accommodating the various elements of the school," Solomon said. "The business education process is much different today than it was when the original school was built."

Solomon said in the past, much of the education was done within the classroom, but advances in technology and learning methods have created a more team-oriented curriculum where instruction is being done in outside labs

and other collaborative areas.

"All of our breakout rooms have become constantly overbooked with students forming queues waiting to get in to work on projects," Solomon said. "The expansion will not only create new classroom space, but it will also allow us to grow some of those other learning spaces."

The new four-story addition, which has been about three years in the making, will convert the current two-building Freeman school footprint into a more unified structure called the Goldring/Woldenberg Business complex. The expansion will allow for additional flexible classroom space, 20 new faculty offices, expanded breakout rooms for collaborative learning, a new financial analysis lab, a larger and more modern Career Management Center and incubator space for student startups within a new home for the Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

Solomon said the addition was designed with an undulating glass facade as part of an effort to preserve the live oaks along McAlister Place in front of the new building. The design will be certified Gold through the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design initiative.

The complex will also feature a three-story atrium and a newly designed student gateway that, according to Solomon, will emphasize Freeman's global reach and serve as a gathering space and entrance to the Monroe Quad.

"The plan is to include a coffee shop there where students can meet," Solomon said. "We are also designing areas where students can meet with potential employers to plot their career path. This is really putting us in a position to better educate the next generation of business students."

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Details

Subject	Students; Green buildings; Business schools; Learning; Expansion; Design; Business education; Collaboration; Classrooms
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Title	Tulane University plans business school expansion
Author	Shannon, Robin; Managing Editor
Publication title	New Orleans CityBusiness
Publication year	2016
Publication date	Mar 7, 2016
Section	News
Publisher	The Dolan Company
Place of publication	Metairie
Country of publication	United States
Publication subject	Business And Economics--Small Business
ISSN	02794527
Source type	Trade Journals
Language of publication	English
Document type	News
ProQuest document ID	1772388479
Document URL	http://search.proquest.com/docview/1772388479?accountid=458
Copyright	(Copyright 2016 Dolan Media Newswires. All Rights Reserved)
Last updated	2016-03-14
Database	ProQuest Central

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