

## Bruno announces \$25M for Cornell's life science building

By David Brand

"The Gen\*NY\*sis program had its genesis at Cornell," New York Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno (R-C, 43rd Dist.) proclaimed on campus last Friday. Because of this, he announced, "it is only right" that the state's biotechnology economic development program should award \$25 million toward the construction of Cornell's proposed Life Science Technology Building.

It will be the largest award made by the \$225 million Gen\*NY\*sis (Generating Employment Through New York Science) program initiated by the state Senate two years ago and approved in the 2002-03 state budget.

Making the award announcement at the Nov. 1 meeting of the Cornell Board of Trustees in the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Bruno was enthusiastically cheered and applauded by a large audience of trustees, administrators, academics and staff. "Thanks for being so gracious and kind and doing all the great things you do," said Bruno. "And I commit to you on behalf of my colleagues and of Gov. [George] Pataki that we will continue to partner with you and we will be there with you as you move forward with all the great things you are doing."

The new Cornell facility, to be designed by noted architect Richard Meier, Cornell Class of '56, and to be located on the west end of Robison Alumni Fields, is estimated to have a construction cost of \$110 million and will be the largest single building project in the university's history.

At an impromptu press conference following his appearance at the trustee meeting, Bruno said the new facility is expected to create "1,000 jobs over next number of years and funds of \$200 million" from the federal government. "So this is a great day for Cornell," he said.

Cornell President Hunter Rawlings welcomed Bruno's award announcement, saying, "This is a banner day for Cornell and New York state."

In addition to providing funding for the Life Science Technology Building, money from the Gen\*NY\*sis program also has been invested in major biotechnology research initiatives at Syracuse University and Binghamton University on the SUNY Binghamton campus. Bruno told the Cornell trustees that the idea for the research funding program came during talks with President Rawlings.

"We were visiting Cornell and talking about what is the future here in New York state, in the country and the world as relates to all that goes on in our lives -- the quality of our lives," Bruno commented.



**New York Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, center, speaks to the media in the Johnson Museum lobby following his Nov. 1 announcement to the Cornell Board of Trustees of a \$25 million Gen\*NY\*sis grant from the state. Bruno is flanked, from left, by state Sens. James Lack, James Seward and Randy Kuhl. Robert Barker/University Photography**

"Hunter and others were pointing out that the future is truly in the life sciences. That's what it's all about. We stayed in constant touch and developed what became for us the Gen\*NY\*sis program."

Later, at the press conference, Bruno added, "It was appropriate that Cornell, who helped us really originate the whole program and helped us understand the importance of research in biomed, biotech and life sciences, should get the largest grant."

The Life Science Technology Building is just one of the university's new and improved facilities that will come under the banner of the New Life Sciences Initiative (NLSI), announced by Rawlings and Provost Bidy Martin in May of this year. With investments of about \$500 million, it will be the largest single scientific effort in the history of Cornell. A total building program, estimated to cost more than \$350 million, also will include the \$62.5 million Dufeld Hall nanotechnology project, which is being constructed on the Cornell Engineering Quad; two transgenic mouse facilities (\$6 million and \$25 million); a lab complex in Baker, Olin and Clark halls (\$75 million); lab renovations (\$20 million); equipment and core facilities (\$3 million); and the proposed U.S. Department of Agriculture/Agricultural Research Service Nutritional Genomics Lab (\$50 million).

The Life Science Technology Building will serve as the hub for many of these facilities engaged in functional and comparative genomics, as well as other interdisciplinary, technology-driven activities, including computational biology, biomedical engineering, nanobiotechnology and biophysics.

The new life sciences facility will include state-of-the-art communication technology to provide links to businesses and other universities, medical schools and research laboratories statewide. Among the most innovative aspects of the new building will be the first incubator on the Cornell campus for startup companies in the life sciences. The building will bring together researchers and students in a diverse range of disciplines, including physical sciences, engineering and computational sciences, not only to conduct research, but also to apply their research to problem-solving in the areas of human medicine, veterinary science, sustainable agriculture and environmental remediation.

Bruno was accompanied to the board of trustees' meeting by New York State Senate members John R. (Randy) Kuhl Jr. (R-C, 52nd Dist.), James L. Seward (R-C, 50th Dist.) and James J. Lack (R-C, 2nd Dist.). He also brought with him a statement from Gov. George Pataki, who said, "This historic new investment to construct a Life Science Technology Building at Cornell University is going to have a powerful economic impact, creating new jobs and further strengthening Cornell's role as a leader in biotechnology research."

Rawlings added to these comments by noting, "With this new facility, Cornell's world-renowned strengths in the physical, chemical, biological and computational sciences will join forces to advance our path-breaking research and instruction in ways that will bring a tremendous benefit to this region and to all of New York state."

Bruno contributed to the clear feeling of celebration in the air when he reminisced to the trustees about his early days in Glens Falls, N.Y., as a close friend of Harold Tanner, the retiring chairman of the Cornell Board of Trustees. Indeed, he said, his wife was a classmate of Tanner's. "You know," he said with a straight face, "I can remember like it was yesterday, Harold saying to me, 'Joe why don't we some day do a center for comparative genomics at Cornell?'" The applause and laughter was loud and long.

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