

Meier unveils proposed design for Life Science Technology Building



By **Blaine P. Friedlander Jr.**

The new Life Science Technology Building -- a foundation for Cornell's pivotal role in scientific research of the future -- is one step closer to reality. Noted architect Richard Meier unveiled a proposed design for the building during a meeting Jan. 13 at the Biotechnology Building in front of faculty members and administrators.

"The building is introverted in its expression and extroverted as part of the campus continuum," said Meier '56, the principal in Richard Meier & Partners Architects of New York City and Los Angeles, and a Frank H.T. Rhodes Class of '56 University Professor at Cornell.

Architect Richard Meier discusses the design for Cornell's planned Life Science Technology Building, Jan. 13, in the Biotechnology Building. *Robert Barker/University Photography*

Fabricated of glass and white metal panels, the four-story rectangular building will rise from the space now

occupied by the portion of Alumni Fields closest to the Biotechnology Building and Lynah Rink.

"Meier's team has produced a design that responds extremely well to our programmatic needs, to the site characteristics and achieves needed flexibility for the future," said Kraig Adler, vice provost for life sciences.

Inside the proposed building, laboratories and office space are designed to be versatile for a variety of equipment. Offices will be located on the western side of the building, and the laboratory space will occupy the eastern side.

While the rectangular-linear building will make efficient use of laboratory and office space, its siting is consistent with the plan of the campus, Meier said. Considering that many Cornell buildings have orthogonal relationships -- rectangular buildings placed perpendicular to one other -- Meier explained that his design continues the trend. "We have to respect the organization of the campus," said Meier, a Pritzker Architecture Prize laureate.

Meier has created many ways for faculty members, students and researchers to interact inside the building. "The challenge has been where to discover public space inside and outside the building," he said. With designed dynamic space, the building "opens the possibility for things to happen there."

The basement of the building will contain laboratory space, Meier said, and there will be tunnels connecting it with the Biotechnology Building and the Plant Sciences Building. A new loading-dock area flanked by stairs will replace the current stairwell area between Lynah Rink and the Biotechnology Building.

Last spring, the Cornell Capital Funding and Priorities Committee increased and capped the project's budget at \$140 million, up from \$110 million, and set a completion goal of 2007. Provost Bidy Martin

subsequently challenged the project team to deliver the building in less time. In November 2002, New York State Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno (R-C, 43rd Dist.) announced the state would contribute \$25 million, through the Gen*NY*sis (Generating Employment Through New York Science) program, toward the building's construction.

Robert Stundtner, Cornell project director for science and technology project management, said that both the university administration's Capital Funding and Priorities Committee and the trustees' Building and Property Committee must approve the building's design. And the university must obtain approval from the City of Ithaca before construction can begin.

To meet the provost's schedule challenge, Stundtner said construction must begin in early 2005, with completion in early 2007.

January 15, 2004

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