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Regents Approve Design of New Ross School Building

The new 270,000-square-foot facility will provide an action-based learning environment with state-of-the-art classrooms and technology.

ANN ARBOR, Mich.—The University of Michigan Board of Regents today approved the schematic design of a major new building to house the Stephen M. Ross School of Business.

The building will be tailor-made to support the Ross School's unique action-based learning curriculum and provide an environment that will nurture a cohesive community of faculty and students.

“Our new facility will help us maintain our high standing and create an optimal environment for our distinct, team-based learning that bridges theory and practice,” said Ross School Dean Robert J. Dolan. “Classrooms, offices and other spaces will be arranged in a setting conducive to a great deal of collaboration inside the school. Technology designed into the building will foster interaction with firms and organizations around the world.”

Dolan noted that more than 80 members of the business school community served on a “community creation committee” convened to share ideas about a building design that meets current and future needs of the school.

The 270,000-square-foot structure, designed by New York City architects Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates, will stand six stories tall at its L-shaped center and three stories high around its perimeter along Tappan and Hill streets. Its exterior will be constructed of terra cotta walls with a sandstone base. Glass walls at the top stories of the building will provide panoramic views of the U-M campus.

The new facility will give the Ross School an architectural presence befitting its position as one of the nation's top business schools, Dolan said. Its main entrance, which will be located at the corner of Tappan and Monroe streets, will provide a gateway to the business school campus in the form of a glassed-in “winter quad”—a bright, airy and highly visible community space containing an informal lounge, study areas and a café.

Classrooms and study areas—all equipped with integrated presentation technology and network access—will support interactive learning, team projects and discussions. U-shaped classrooms with tiered seating, flat-floor classrooms and group-study breakout areas will be grouped together to facilitate many styles of teaching and learning, and allow for a seamless transition from formal classwork to team interaction during a single class session.

New faculty offices will be large enough to facilitate meetings with students and be clustered into suites of several offices to encourage natural mingling among colleagues. Other components consist of an auditorium, colloquium spaces and areas for outside visitors (recruiters, alumni and special guests) and a clustered “one-stop shopping” location for student services (admissions, financial aid, academic services and career development).

“This new facility will change the face of the Stephen M. Ross School of Business,” said U-M President Mary Sue Coleman. “More importantly, it will transform the climate of teaching and research for our students and faculty. The vision of alumnus Stephen Ross and Dean Robert Dolan guarantees a spectacular future for business education at Michigan.”

In order to make way for the new structure, Davidson Hall, Paton Accounting Center, Assembly Hall and an electrical switching station will be demolished. Demolition is expected to begin in spring 2006, with construction slated to start in fall 2006. The opening of the new building is scheduled for fall 2008.

It is estimated that the new building will cost \$145 million. A lead gift for the building was secured in September 2004 as real estate developer and alumnus Stephen Ross donated \$100 million to the school. Seventy-five million dollars of the gift will be directed for costs associated with construction and \$25 million will go into the business school's endowment. The remaining \$70 million for the project will come from additional fund raising, business school funds and other private sources.

Upon announcing the Ross gift—the largest gift ever to a U.S. business school and the largest donation to the U-M in its 188-year history—the school was renamed in his honor. A 1962 graduate of the Michigan business school, Ross is founder, chairman and CEO of The Related Companies, a fully integrated real estate firm headquartered in New York City.

Ross also co-chairs the University's \$2.5-billion The Michigan Difference campaign and currently serves on Coleman's Advisory Group and the Director's Cabinet in the University's Department of Intercollegiate Athletics. He recently provided the \$5 million lead gift for the new Stephen M. Ross Academic Center located on U-M's athletic campus and has previously given \$1 million to the business school for an endowed professorship; \$50,000 to the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts for the Henry Pearce Endowed Scholarship; and scholarship support for student-athletes.

Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates has designed a variety of award-winning buildings around the world, including facilities for colleges (Wharton, Stanford, Oxford), corporate headquarters (Procter & Gamble, Nestle, Gannett), government offices (The World Bank), retail buildings (Bloomingdale's), museums, airports, hotels, hospitals and more.

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Web links:

Kohn Pedersen Fox: <http://www.kpf.com/>

Stephen Ross gift: <http://www.bus.umich.edu/RossB-SchoolGift/>