

## In The Spotlight: Wolf Hall Renovation

April 2003 -- After four years of planning, moving, and construction, the students and employees of the Department of Biological Sciences are home again. The \$26 million renovation of Wolf Hall was completed at the end of 2002, and faculty and staff working in temporary locations around campus moved back in when they returned from the holiday break in January 2003. This monumental three-phase project was more than just tearing down and erecting walls: new mechanical, electrical, plumbing, telephone, data, and life safety systems were installed. The new design also incorporates several ties to the past as a number of historical pieces were kept in place, such as the lanterns outside of the main entrance (which have been refurbished) and the marble in the foyer.



Several historical pieces, like these original lanterns, were kept part of the new design

Phase I of the project, which started in June 2000 and lasted for a year, involved constructing a three-story addition onto the south side of the building. This new portion consists of nine labs, seven of which are used by Biological Sciences and the other two by the Department of Psychology. [Dr. Melinda Duncan](#), who now occupies one of these labs, explains that, "this modern facility is pleasant to work in, it's much more efficiently arranged compared to our previous lab." She attributes this efficiency to having separate, centrally located rooms for equipment used by researchers throughout the department, whereas previously this equipment would have to take up space in labs. Dr. Duncan also adds that "their physical appeal make for a great environment to recruit additional faculty."



Inside one of the seven Biological Sciences laboratories completed during Phase I

Lasting from June 2001 to March 2002, Phase II of the renovation consisted of work in the central and rear portions of the building and the first floor theater area. Modern equipment rooms devoted to bioimaging and bioinformatics, histology laboratories, sites for specialized equipment necessary for genomics, metabolomics, and proteomics research, and additional labs were the focus of this portion of the project. When asked about the updated bioimaging facilities, [Dr. Kirk Czymmek](#), who directs the department's [Core Microscopy Facility](#) and the Bioimaging Facility at the [Delaware Biotechnology Institute](#), echoed Dr. Duncan's remarks about increased efficiency: "We consolidated other light microscope equipment with our confocal microscope so that there's now a central location for all the major imaging needs of the department." Dr. Czymmek says users can expect more reliability and longevity with the instruments in the facility, thanks to improved environmental controls. He also points out that having additional space in the facility aids in training and assisting graduate students with acquiring their data.



Jennifer Remington Taube and Dr. Melinda Duncan work in a lab completed in Phase I

The third and final phase of the renovation took place in the front of the building, and mostly involved the construction of faculty offices along with a few labs. The rear portions of many of these new offices run along the front wall of Wolf, providing a wonderful view of [The Green](#). "It's all really nice," remarks



[Dr. David Smith](#) about his new office. "The size, the furniture, the view of The Green are all nice, but what's most important is that we're all back together in Wolf Hall again." The third floor seminar room received a technological update, now providing seminar speakers with an integrated projection system that displays video from a laptop computer, videocassette, DVD, or cable television, all of which are controlled at the speaker's podium.



A member of the construction crew works on the exterior of Wolf during Phase II

Also part of the third phase was the creation of the Biology Education Resource Center on the second floor. [Dr. Deborah Allen](#) says the construction of the center "reflects the department's commitment to supporting research on teaching and learning in biology." It is a place where ethnographic research can be conducted, curriculum projects are planned and tested, and data is stored and shared. Dr. Steve Fifield explains that it also, "provides physical space to connect people who are interested in Science Education: from higher education faculty, to future K-12 teachers, to graduate students." Currently the center is the home of the Science Semester project, which is directed by Drs. Fifield and Allen, and funded by the National Science Foundation. The project integrates three science courses and a science education methods course to allow future elementary teachers to learn science, and about teaching it, using a variety of inquiry-based approaches.



Dr. Deborah Allen and Dr. Steve Fifield in the Biology Education Resource Center

Coordinating this massive project for Biological Sciences were Sherrie Kingston, Frank Cummings, and [Dr. Mary C. Farach-Carson](#). According to Kingston, one of the most difficult parts of this project was moving everyone in and out of the building during the various phases. "Renovating the building while having it occupied was a feat in and of itself," she said. "We had a total of five separate large departmental moves in and out of [temporary] space." In the end, however, Dr. Farach-Carson believes this experience was well worth the effort. "Not having forgotten how it used to look, I feel proud to be part of the Biological Sciences department every time I walk into the new Wolf Hall," she affirms. "Hats off to Frank and Sherrie, and all the rest involved in this renovation."



The future third floor Biodiversity Laboratory towards the end of Phase III construction

For information about the history of the building, see the Wolf Hall page in *Breaking Ground: Designing the University of Delaware Mall, 1914 - 1954*.