LSUHSC School of Dentistry

Preclinical Labs Renovation Campaign

Advances in technology double every two years—dental education *must* keep pace.

The world we live in is moving at a dizzying pace. It's been estimated that every two years, the advances in technology double. It is critical for educational institutions to keep pace.

In contrast, like many dental schools, the LSU School of Dentistry has not adequately kept abreast in technological advances. For instance, many of our teaching facilities haven't been upgraded since the school was built in 1970.

On a positive note, we have made significant progress in some areas: a $3.2 million teaching auditoriums renovation, firm plans for a $342 thousand student wet labs renovation and plans for a new clinic building.

However, another area deserves immediate attention—our four teaching laboratories. The two preclinical bench-top laboratories and two simulation laboratories are in urgent need of a complete upgrade. Although the bench-top labs received cosmetic upgrades 15 years ago, much of the infrastructure has never been replaced. These labs are extremely important as it is where our students perfect their clinical skills prior to treating patients.

A Necessary Upgrade

The two preclinical bench-top labs have the 40-year-old original equipment and asbestos cabinets from when the labs were first installed. The current work stations lack simulation units and computer capabilities.

The two simulation labs have 15-year-old antiquated simulators for training and each lab only accommodates 30 to 32 workstations. Therefore, classes must be divided into two groups to accommodate an entire class. In addition, no audio/visual communication exists between the two labs and they are at opposite ends of the building. This is not an efficient teaching environment.

Modernizing the labs will reshape the educational program for students by integrating the latest in technology, while expanding the labs' teaching capacities. The four poorly designed laboratories will be integrated into two new laboratories, and each lab will accommodate 80 versus the current 60 workstations.

In one lab, bench-top workstations and patient simulators will be combined—a recommended best practice in dental education. In addition, this new lab will be versatile enough to function as an advanced learning lab for faculty and practicing dental professionals. The second lab will include state-of-the-art bench-top workstations only.

The renovations will be completed in two phases.

Phase I addresses the renovation of the laboratory which will house both the bench-tops and simulators. Ideally, this phase will be completed by the 2011-2012 academic school year. Each of the 80 newly installed workstations will have its own mannequin, operatory equipment, bench-top and a flat-screen monitor linked to a central computer, allowing students to view live demonstrations given by instructors. No more crowding or leaning over someone's shoulder to see; every student will have a front seat.

Phase II relates to the second laboratory which will house 80 bench-top workstations only, each with state-of-the-art cabinetry, connections for central vacuum, air and water, and an audio/visual console to project slides, demonstrations and serve as a station for presentations.

In both configurations, all units will be linked to a central instructor's computer—again to accelerate student learning.

Recognition Opportunities

Efforts are underway to seek public and private funds which will be essential to accomplish the lab modernization renovation. Naming opportunities will be available for those who contribute at levels from $15,000 and up. It is hoped that commitments can be fulfilled over a 3- to 5-year period.

Before

The current work stations in the preclinical laboratory reveal antiquated equipment in disrepair and do not provide an optimum learning environment.

After

View of a comparable dental school laboratory reveals an ideal educational setting, complete with state-of-the-art computerized A/V equipment and updated lighting, cabinetry and utility tools. Individual monitors and digital connectivity at each station eliminates the overcrowding necessary for each student to get a clear view of a procedure.

Naming Opportunities

Preclinical Laboratory Room	$ 500,000
Wet Laboratory	100,000
Instructor Station	50,000
Student Work Station	15,000

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