



STEM Fundraising Campaign Enhances the Sciences

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STEM FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN ENHANCES THE SCIENCES

Twenty students stare intently through hood glass at the artificial odors they are synthesizing. The low hum of fume hood fans fills the room—yet the chemical odors do not, in spite of the smelly substances students are mixing. The hoods are doing their job, and students' noses reap the benefits.

Cleaner air is just one of many advantages the recent Science and Technology Center renovations have given science students and faculty. Funded by a two-phase campaign that began in 2008 and recently met its goal of \$27 million, the renovated spaces also offer larger modern laboratories and workspaces.

“The new laboratories are better suited to the increased class sizes that we have been enjoying as a result of growing interest in STEM,” says Brittany De Ruyter ('10), a lab instructor at Dordt. “We were bursting at the seams before the renovation, and now we can accommodate more students in our high-demand courses without compromising learning objectives.”

The larger, safer labs also offer opportunities for collaboration between students and for instructors to engage students individually.

“This is already enhancing the mentor-



JAMIN VERVELDE ('99)

Additions to the Science and Technology Center include a computational chemistry lab, a new greenhouse, and a high-bay workspace.

apprentice relationship that we strive for with our students,” says Chemistry Professor Dr. Carl Fictorie.

Project-based learning spaces and new equipment are also making it possible for students to engage in a wider range of research and design projects. For example, Dordt students have used the qPCR machine to do research for Entegro, a local probiotics company. Another improvement biology students are excited about is the addition of a cadaver lab, where students can study human anatomy on an actual body.

The new spaces and equipment allow more students to do independent lab work.

“I have my own space under the fume hood, so I can work more independently and don't have to spend my time waiting to use chemicals under a hood,” says Abbey Bos, a junior chemistry major.

Dordt seniors, who have seen the Science and Technology Center transform from

its partially renovated state in 2014 to its current glory, are particularly appreciative of the benefits offered by the improvements.

“There is a world of difference in the working environment created by the new updates,” says Alex Werkhoven, a senior agriculture major. “The renovations have created a more inviting environment—the brighter walls, floors, and improved lighting really make it an enjoyable space to work in.”

“We definitely have a generous and committed donor constituency that believes in our mission and vision,” says Vice President for Advancement John Baas, who coordinated the fundraising for the renovation. “They want to make an impact in the lives of our students and, through them, in God's kingdom. That is a tremendous encouragement to those of us who serve here.”

LYDIA MARCUS ('17)

FINDING A HOME

After moving back into the labs, the chemistry faculty and staff found that they had excess glassware and related equipment. Chemistry Professor Dr. Carl Fictorie offered the unneeded supplies to school science teachers at an in-service day in August, but only a handful of things disappeared. So, Admissions Counselor Nathan Spaans ('17) suggested that Dordt chemistry graduate Braden Homan ('17) might be interested in the lab supplies. Homan teaches high school science at Rehoboth Christian School in New Mexico.

“A few texts and phone calls later, the equipment had a new home,” says Fictorie.