



Ground broken for largest classroom building at Mesa College

By **CARLOS RICO**, The Daily Transcript
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The largest classroom building to be constructed on the San Diego Mesa College campus broke ground Wednesday, as construction is now officially under way on a new math and science facility.

The \$117 million project -- the Math and Science Complex -- will be four-stories tall measuring 206,000 square feet with classrooms, computer and teaching labs, and support spaces for faculty and staff.

The building will be the new home for transfer and certificate programs in biology, chemistry, physical sciences, mathematics and the Accelerated College Program.

"This new facility is designed not for teaching, but for learning," said Saeid Eidgahy, dean of the School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. "We want learning to take place not only in the classrooms and laboratories, but outside as well."

The architectural firm **Delawie Wilkes Rodrigues Barker** designed the project, which will be built to meet LEED Silver certification from the U.S. Green Council with sustainable and energy efficient amenities.

The construction project is being headed by construction manager **McCarthy Building Cos.** with **RBF Consulting, Hope Engineering** and **Exp.** handling the civil, structural and electrical/mechanical engineering duties. **Wimmer Yamada and Caughey** is the landscape architect on the project.

Eidgahy said there will be student project areas in and around the new complex along with specialty teaching spaces like a greenhouse, an astronomy observation center and several outdoor gardens with global microclimate themes including a South African garden, an Australian garden and a San Diego native plant garden.

Eidgahy explained the new building was needed because of necessity. The current facilities are more than 50 years old.

"The campus was designed to hold 5,000 to 6,000 students," Eidgahy said. "We have 13,000 students alone in the school of math and natural sciences."

Linoleum flooring, a natural material made from linseed oil, will be installed throughout the building.

All windows mounted will have high-performance glass that allows sunlight to filter into the building, but reduces the amount of ultraviolet light and solar heat entering the complex.

In addition, all wood surfaces in the building will be made up of caramelized bamboo, a 100-percent sustainable resource because it does not require replanting after harvesting, according to the school.

Completion of the facility is expected by July 2013.

The project is funded by Proposition N, a \$870 million construction bond measure passed by San Diego voters in 2006, to improve and build new classrooms and facilities at all of the San Diego Community College District campuses. **Gafcon Inc.** is the program manager for all of the Proposition N projects.



A rendering of Mesa College's Math & Science Complex designed by Delawie Wilkes Rodrigues Barker.