



University of Rochester Dedicates Goergen Hall

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May 16, 2007. A five-story facility that pairs biomedical engineering and optics in an environment of teaching laboratories, high-tech demonstration areas, and gathering spaces for collaboration will officially open May 17 as the Robert B. Goergen Hall for Biomedical Engineering and Optics on the University of Rochester's River Campus.

Goergen Hall, named for its prime benefactor, University trustee, and alumnus, forms a welcoming quadrangle with nearby engineering and science buildings and is designed specifically to be eco-friendly and energy-smart.

"It is my hope that these laboratories, classrooms, and common spaces will continue to foster groundbreaking research, education, and collaboration across disciplines for many generations to come," said Robert B. Goergen, entrepreneur and philanthropist who gave \$10 million toward the building's construction. He earned a bachelor's degree with honors in physics from Rochester in 1960, has served on the Board of Trustees since 1982, and as chair from 1991 to 2003.

The \$37.7 million, 101,000-square-foot building is positioned on the edge of the River Campus closest to the University of Rochester Medical Center. The Department of Biomedical Engineering, with many of its faculty based in the School of Medicine and Dentistry, is the only academic department grounded in two schools of the University: the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering, and the School of Medicine.

"Goergen Hall brings together the best known optics program in the country with one of our fastest growing departments to promote collaboration and discoveries," said Joel Seligman, president of the University of Rochester. "Its very design grew from faculty and students imagining a superior learning space where people truly interact."

Medical Center CEO Bradford C. Berk, M.D., Ph.D., sees the facility as a bridge that connects River Campus scientists with their Medical Center counterparts. "Goergen Hall—and the collaboration it symbolizes—will be the first of many opportunities for campuswide scientific alliances in the years to come. To a large extent, tomorrow's medical breakthroughs will be forged through biomedical engineering."

"Our faculty in biomedical engineering and in optics epitomize our strengths in science and engineering, and they will make full use of the rich opportunities for partnership offered by this marvelous new building," said Peter Lennie, the Robert L. and Mary L. Sproull Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering.

The co-mingling of optics and biomedical engineering will create tighter bonds between the two. "Optics and medicine made Rochester famous in the last century and are natural partners for biomedical applications in the decades ahead," said Wayne Knox, professor and director of The Institute of Optics.

Founded in 1929 as the first optics education program in the United States with a grant from Eastman Kodak Company and Bausch & Lomb, The Institute of Optics has awarded more than 2,400 degrees in optics—about half of all U.S. degrees in that field. The Wilmot Building, the home of the institute since 1977, will keep its optics classrooms, labs, and offices, and now connects to Goergen Hall.

Richard Waugh, professor and chair of the Department of Biomedical Engineering, values both the School of Medicine culture of competing for grants and the "entrepreneurial attitude" of engineers. "Our department brings those two cultures together and is intrinsically interdisciplinary," said Waugh, a biophysicist. "Optics and medical applications have enormous potential, and our proximity to the Medical Center is essential."

Biomedical engineering was started in 1997 as an interdepartmental program at Rochester, and then grew to departmental status in 2000. Goergen Hall will be its first home. As the newest building for the College since 1987, Goergen Hall's facade of brick with limestone relates well to the original campus architecture.

The building and its mission are compatible with the initiatives Goergen helped conceive and implement through his leadership roles. His focus in the College has enhanced campus life with a refurbished sports and recreation complex and emphasized excellence in teaching undergraduates.

After achieving success as a management consultant and corporate executive, Goergen became an entrepreneur, establishing companies and developing others into top performers. He holds an M.B.A. from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

Within Goergen Hall, two other University graduates who have made significant impact in the field of optics are recognized. The center

iece Munnerlyn Atrium is named in honor of Charles R. Munnerlyn, who earned his doctoral degree from The Institute of Optics in 1969 and is one of the founders of laser vision correction. A University trustee, Munnerlyn changed the world's concept of vision testing when he designed the first digital device for automatically determining refractive errors in the human eye.

Sloan Auditorium, the 150-seat main lecture hall with extensive video, audio, and networking capabilities, is named for Thomas R. Sloan, who received his bachelor's and master's degrees in optics at Rochester in 1965 and 1967, respectively. The former chairman of Essilor Laboratories, the largest optical laboratory network in the United States, Sloan spent his career in optics for vision correction. In recent years, he has helped launch health-related startup companies.

The building's design by architects Perkins+Will of Boston gives biomedical engineering and optics dedicated spaces yet keeps Goergen Hall airy and light-filled with its many walls of glass. University Architect Paul Tankel was instrumental in making Goergen Hall the first campus building that adheres to many of the standards set by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program of the U.S. Green Building Council.

During construction, for example, approximately 70 percent of the building's waste was recycled. More than 85 percent of the regularly occupied spaces have natural light and so reduce the need for artificial lighting; outdoors, a bioretention basin controls runoff and adds green space at the entrance.

Dedication events on May 17 will include a symposium with faculty researchers, guest speakers, a ribbon-cutting ceremony, and tours with interactive demonstrations.

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