

TRANSFORMATION CONTINUES

The future of UC San Diego life sciences, vision research and outpatient care is on the horizon.

BY NICOLE MLYNARYK

THE UC SAN DIEGO CAMPUS CONTINUES TO evolve with the expansion of Health Sciences facilities in La Jolla and Hillcrest.

But these are more than just buildings — they're solutions to our problems, investments in our future and promises to our community. With each new structure, our academic medical center strengthens its tripartite mission of excellence in education, research and clinical care.

The projects are part of UC San Diego's first-ever Strategic Plan — a decision-making framework designed to create a student-focused, research-centered and service-oriented public university. Under the leadership of Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla, more than \$7 billion has been invested in new medical, research, education and housing facilities across San Diego.

The next three projects slated for completion are the Viterbi Family Vision Research Center, the Hillcrest Outpatient Pavilion and the Multidisciplinary Life Sciences Building.

See our previous issue at discoveries.ucsd.edu for a full visualization of past, current and planned development at UC San Diego Health Sciences.

Breaking Ground

UC San Diego's vision research and care is undergoing a significant and exciting

expansion to help patients with their eye care needs thanks to support from many generous supporters, including Darlene Shiley, Andrew J. Viterbi and Hanna and Mark Gleiberman.

In the spring of 2023, the campus broke ground on the Viterbi Family Vision Research Center, supported by a \$50 million gift from philanthropist Andrew J. Viterbi, PhD. The center will house experimental and computational laboratories, clinical trial operations and administrative spaces, all designed to advance research on various ophthalmological diseases. The five-story, 100,000-square-foot facility is located on the La Jolla Campus of UC San Diego Health, next to the Shiley Eye Institute, and is slated for completion in 2025.

The Shiley Eye Institute is also undergoing renovations thanks to a \$10 million gift from Darlene Shiley. As researchers move from the second floor of the institute into the new Viterbi Family Vision Research Center, it will free up additional clinical space to care for the rapidly growing number of patients who visit the Shiley Eye Institute each year.

The Viterbi Family Vision Research Center will also be home to the newly established Hanna and Mark Gleiberman Center for Glaucoma, which was funded by a \$20 million gift from the Gleibermans. Research on macular dystrophy, a retinal

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condition that can result in vision loss, will take place in the center as well, thanks to support from the Nixon Visions Foundation.

“With this investment, our leading-edge researchers will be empowered to conduct groundbreaking research to find new treatments and cures for vision loss and eye disease, significantly advancing health care around the world,” said Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla.

Once dispersed across multiple sites on campus, the UC San Diego ophthalmology community will now be united in one central location where scientists can easily translate their findings to the clinic.

“Our dream is the realization of the impossible,” said Robert N. Weinreb, MD, director of the Shiley Eye Institute. “We are going to cure blinding eye diseases.”

Topping Out

A celebratory Topping Out ceremony at UC San Diego Medical Center in Hillcrest marked the approximate halfway point for the construction of a new outpatient pavilion — part of the first phase of a comprehensive revitalization project for the medical campus. The June event provided an opportunity for faculty, staff and construction workers to sign the last steel beam before it was raised 100 feet in the air and placed in the structural frame of the building, forever part of its lifespan.

“This historic milestone is a visible representation of not only the progress made but also the number of people involved in expanding access to the region’s No. 1 health care provider,” said Patty Maysent, CEO of UC San Diego Health. “The new outpatient pavilion greatly increases our capacity to serve our community and provide life-saving, novel and compassionate care to patients and their loved ones.”

The 250,000-square-foot outpatient pavilion is anticipated to open in 2025 and will house specialty clinical programs, including oncology, neurosurgery, urology, otolaryngology and orthopedics, as well as ambulatory surgery operating rooms, gastroenterology procedure rooms, advanced imaging, infusion and radiation oncology. The new space will also allow Moores Cancer Center at UC San Diego Health to greatly increase access to cancer care for patients throughout the region.



The first phase of construction for the overall project also includes a new parking structure to provide approximately 1,850 spaces for employees, patients and visitors, plus related road and utility infrastructure.

The project is part of the UC San Diego Long Range Development Plan, encompassing approximately 60 acres and the redevelopment of the more than 50-year-old Hillcrest campus. The \$3 billion revitalization project is expected to continue over approximately 15 years.

Paving the Way

A new Multidisciplinary Life Sciences Building will soon take shape in the Health Sciences West district, next to the Skaggs Pharmaceutical Sciences Building. The 180,000-square-foot laboratory facility will help meet the growing need for campus research space and also encourage collaboration between faculty in Health Sciences and the School of Biological Sciences. The facility will support researchers from a variety of life sciences fields, with an additional emphasis on neurobiology — one of the strongest scientific connections between the two programs.

The building will also house multiple classrooms, integrating the undergraduate student population into this region of campus. The plans include space for both wet lab and computational lab instruction to equip undergraduate students with the necessary skills to work in the modern life sciences industry.

“The Multidisciplinary Life Sciences Building is a unique project that exemplifies the collaborative and boundary-breaking spirit of UC San Diego,” said Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences John M. Carethers. “We’re excited to unite multiple programs and student populations through this multipurpose space and, through that unity, inspire a new wave of life sciences discoveries.”

Construction on the project is anticipated to begin in late 2024 and conclude in 2027. ●

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