**Major Gift Given to Purdue For Discovery Learning Center**

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Purdue University will announce today that it has received an anonymous gift of $2.5 million that will help pay for construction of a new $10 million building for its Discovery Learning Center.

The university will this morning break ground on the building, which is one of ten research centers in Discovery Park. Jerry Semler, chairman of the board of American United Mutual Insurance Holding Co. and his wife Rosie, will also make a contribution to be matched 2-for-1 by Lilly Endowment to create a directorship for the Discovery Learning Center.

Source: Inside INDiana Business

**Press Release**

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. - Purdue officials on Thursday (Sept. 21) will announce that an anonymous gift of $2.5 million will help fund a new $10 million building to house the Discovery Learning Center, one of 10 interdisciplinary research centers in the university's Discovery Park.

Officials also will announce that Jerry and Rosie Semler, co-chairs of the Indianapolis Campaign for Purdue, will make a contribution to be matched 2-for-1 by Lilly Endowment to create a directorship for the Discovery Learning Center. The gift is one of the six Lilly Endowment directorship matches for Discovery Park centers.

The groundbreaking ceremony will take place at 10:30 a.m. at the site of the planned building, at Intramural and Nimitz drives. The facility is expected to be completed in 2008.

"The Discovery Learning Center has the potential to transform the way we teach and learn the scientific disciplines," said Purdue President Martin C. Jischke. "Projects that have started there have synthesized technological advancements from disciplines throughout the campus to build new teaching and learning methods that will be used for generations. The Semler gift for the directorship and the Lilly match will help us attract and retain the high-caliber administration required to keep these projects going into the future."

Jerry Semler is chairman of the board of American United Mutual Insurance Holding Company, parent of OneAmerica Financial Partners Inc. He previously was chairman, president and chief executive officer of American United Life Insurance Company.

An Indiana native, Semler received his bachelor's degree in industrial economics from the Purdue College of Science in 1958. He later graduated from the Stanford University Business Executive Program.

He met Rosie Semler when they were both Purdue students. She graduated in 1959 with a bachelor's degree in social sciences, and they joined the John Purdue Club shortly after graduating. Six of their seven children also graduated from Purdue.
She has received honors including the Jefferson Award, the Spooner Award for Outstanding Volunteer at the Indianapolis Children's Museum, as well as the YWCA Volunteer Award. She has previously served on the board of directors for the Indianapolis Retirement Home, Jameson Camp, Right to Life, St. Vincent's Foundation and the YWCA.


Under Semler’s leadership, the Indianapolis-based American United Life Insurance Co. has grown into an enterprise that has more than $14 billion in assets and almost 2,000 employees. OneAmerica's nationwide network of companies offers a variety of products to serve the financial needs of its policyholders and other clients, including retirement plan products and services, individual life insurance and annuities, long-term care solutions, and group insurance.

Semler has been active as a leader throughout the state. He either serves or has served on the board of directors or trustees or on the council of numerous civic organizations, professional or industry associations and educational activities. In 2004 he was named Business Leader of the Year by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce.

The faculty in the Discovery Learning Center focus on designing innovative educational programs, developing new learning-related technologies, and enhancing understanding of the science of learning, especially as it relates to science, technology, engineering and math.

Operational since March 2003, the center already has more than $25 million in external funding developed through partnerships across campus, with other universities and with private companies. Projects within the 20,000-square foot-facility will explore novel technologies designed to enhance learning at all levels. Researchers will be able to reconfigure learning labs, adjust breakout rooms, vary seating arrangements and alter acoustics or lighting. They also will have an opportunity to build and test high-end visualization and perceptualization projects that include a variety of immersive environments and augmented realities.

Four learning labs, a project demonstration room, a science teaching lab and a small "black box" theater-style setting are being designed for the new facility. The Discovery Learning Center also will include adaptable open office space that will allow for greater flexibility in meeting the needs of each project from inception to completion.

Susan Bulkeley Butler, of Phoenix, a retired consulting executive and 1965 alumna of the Krannert School of Management, donated a deferred $3 million gift along with $650,000 cash for an endowed chair in the Center for Leadership Excellence to promote research and programs devoted to the development of women leaders. Butler now also serves as a Purdue trustee.

A deferred gift of $2 million from Purdue Provost Sally Mason and her husband, Kenneth Mason, will support and maintain future center programs.

"While we await the new building, we want to celebrate the hard work of the faculty in projects that are already in progress," Sally Mason said. "They truly show the interdisciplinary nature that is Discovery Park."

The center taps the expertise of more than 500 faculty representing 12 schools and colleges and 45 academic departments at Purdue, plus those from other universities, business and industry, teachers, and professional organizations.

The following efforts are under way:

• The Discovery Learning Center was recently chosen by Biocrossroads as the managing partner for a statewide initiative to improve K-12 science, technology, engineering and mathematics education. The proposed education resource center will be managed by Purdue in partnership with Indiana University, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Ball State University and Marian College.
• A visiting scientist program began this fall with funding from a three-year, $1.6 million National Science Foundation grant. Purdue graduate students in science, technology and engineering are paired with sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade science and math teachers in the Frankfort, Lafayette and Tippocanoe County school corporations.

• Another NSF-funded program is the Center for Authentic Science Practice in Education. Chemistry professor Gabriella Weaver is the principal architect of this project, which is designed to provide Purdue freshmen and sophomores with research experience to increase their interest in science-related careers.

• Physics professor Nicholas Giordano leads Purdue’s efforts to develop the next generation of leaders in nanoscale science and engineering through the first U.S. Center for Learning and Teaching in Nanoscale Science and Engineering. Other institutions involved include Northwestern University, University of Michigan, University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Argonne National Laboratory, Alabama A&M University, Fisk University, Hampton University, Morehouse College, and University of Texas at El Paso. The center holds workshops for high school science teachers from Indiana and five other states to promote teaching and learning through the design of nanoscale materials and applications.

• More than $10 million in grant funds from the NSF support two programs aimed at increasing the interest and participation of underrepresented students in science, technology, engineering and math majors and eventual careers in the professoriate by preparing them for graduate school.

• A $2 million grant from the Lilly Endowment funds several internship opportunities. One of them, the Undergraduate Research Internship Program, launched this fall, pairs approximately 50 students per semester to work with faculty on interdisciplinary research. Another program, Interns for Indiana, connects student interns with Indiana startup companies.

Many students in the Interns for Indiana program have been hired full-time, part-time or as a consultant by the company with which they interned, and some students started companies of their own. In the past year, companies have tapped more than 60,000 hours of student expertise.

"This program not only helps students in the short run, but also helps companies attract these students when they graduate and keeps them employed in the state," said Beverly Davenport Sypher, interim director of the Discovery Learning Center and an associate provost and professor of communication. She said her vision for the Discovery Learning Center is to advance research that revolutionizes learning for K-12 students, college students, employees and adults throughout their life.

"We have an opportunity to make a difference in what and how students learn at all ages," Sypher said. "And we can cover a wide range of areas by tapping into resources of Purdue faculty and other Discovery Park resources. It's a very deep mine of expertise."

The gift announcement is part of a two-week celebration leading up to Purdue’s Saturday (Sept. 23) Homecoming. Events focus on ways Purdue is improving education and helping the state of Indiana as part of the university's strategic plan and $1.6 billion fund raising campaign, which so far has garnered $1.426 billion.

Discovery Park is Purdue's $300 million interdisciplinary research hub that brings the university’s scientists, researchers, engineers and management experts together in projects to make basic discoveries available to advance the Indiana economy and solve societal problems by inventing new products and processes.

Discovery Park is located on State Street on the west edge of campus and involves about 850 faculty as members. The park has been a factor in forming 10 startup companies and leading to at least 40 patent filings.

Source: Purdue University