

# Joint Capital Outlay Committee

## Ferris State University

March 12, 2008

### Center for Collaborative Health Education:

David L. Eisler, President

Representative Hood and members of the Joint Capital Outlay Committee, thank you for taking time from your very busy legislative schedule to hear from Ferris State University. It is an honor to appear before you today and to offer my thoughts on our proposal, an innovative Center for Collaborative Health Education. This project has been the top priority for our University since 1999, is the only truly unique academic program presented to your committee, and has been a goal for our optometric efforts since the program was created at Ferris State University in 1975. Each of you has a significant interest in higher education and in Ferris State University, as we enroll many students from your districts at our University -

Rep. Cheeks	33 students	Rep. Bennett	248 students
Rep. Hood	66 students	Sen. Brown	259 students
Rep. Lahti	71 students	Rep. Caul	341 students
Sen. Scott	90 students	Sen. Jelinek	442 students
Sen. Clarke-Coleman	95 students	Sen. Cherry	492 students
Rep. Proos	109 students	Rep. Sak	641 students
Sen. Pappageorge	121 students	Sen. Cropsey	957 students
Sen. Switalski	157 students	Sen. Hardiman	1499 students
Rep. Gonzales	189 students	Rep. Booher	2114 students
Rep. Shaffer	205 students	Sen. McManus	2781 students

Together your constituents constitute over 70% of the students who attend Ferris State University and on their behalf I wish to extend my thanks to you. It feels especially comforting to be speaking before a group who represents such a large portion of our student body and nearly every one of our employees.

Optometry is the fourth largest independently licensed health profession, after medicine, osteopathy and dentistry. Optometry is a four-year, first professional program that builds upon the undergraduate education students receive at the bachelors level. Students graduating from the Michigan College of Optometry program at Ferris State University receive the degree, Doctor of Optometry.

The Michigan College of Optometry was created in response to a documented need for optometrists in the State of Michigan and is one of only 16 in the United States. The first class was admitted in 1975 and housed in Pennock Hall, a six-story building erected as a residence hall on the Ferris campus in 1968.

This project creates an appropriate facility to accommodate the needs of the Michigan College of Optometry and the Center for Collaborative Healthcare Education at Ferris State University. Since the founding of the college, the scope of optometric practice has advanced to include the diagnosis and treatment of eye disease, training in the use of pharmaceuticals, fitting of soft and extended wear contact lenses, pre- and post-operative care of surgical patients and much more. From the viewpoint of educating optometrists for today's health care market, the college has long ago outgrown its original, out-dated home in Pennock Hall.

## **The Proposal**

The proposed construction is a new facility at Ferris State University in Big Rapids to include academic, laboratory and clinical spaces in support of the teaching, research and patient care missions of the Michigan College of Optometry. New construction is estimated to comprise approximately 91,000 gross square feet. The proposed construction creates a modern health-care facility offering state-of-the-art eye and vision care, and supporting collaborative study in health education.

This project has been the top building priority of Ferris State University since 1999. In 2003 this was presented as a \$40 million request. With continued inflation in building costs that would now represent a project in excess of \$48 million. The current request of \$26.9 million represents a 45% reduction in cost from the original proposal.

The University has funded and completed the programming phase of this project and can provide complete information on the building, its programming, sizes and number of spaces. It is anticipated that construction on this facility would commence in 2009 with completion projected for 2010. As a result Ferris State University is ready to immediately begin this project upon recommendation of the Legislature and approval by the Governor. The projected annual operating cost is \$637,000 for the entire 91,000 GSF.

## The Project

### Center for Collaborative Health Care –

The Michigan College of Optometry has received national recognition for its work in interdisciplinary health care. At Ferris State University the Michigan College of Optometry, College of Pharmacy and College of Allied Health Sciences developed the award winning Interprofessional Diabetic Clinic. This clinic won the 2004 United States Secretary of Health and Human Services Secretary's Award for Innovation in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. This is the highest award of the Department and is personally presented by the Cabinet Secretary. Ferris State University's project was selected over submissions from leading research colleges and universities throughout the country. This innovative, collaborative approach addresses the vision problems, dietary needs and medication compliance of rural diabetes patients.

The proposed new facility creates dedicated physical spaces for the continuation of this work in the multi-disciplinary **Center for Collaborative Health Care Education**. The Center for Collaborative Health Education advances public health by promoting interprofessional education and collaboration among Ferris State University faculty and students. With active student participation, the Center for Collaborative Health Education supports the Institute of Medicine's directive to increase the level of interprofessional practice with the intent of improving health care. The proposed Center addresses the didactic and experiential education needs in an interprofessional manner and facilitates the development of proposals for establishment of collaborative practice models in the underserved communities of the State.

These innovative approaches bring together the efforts of over 1,200 students enrolled in the health care colleges at the University. They will collaborate together on initiatives such as the Interprofessional Diabetes Wellness program and other initiatives of the Center for Collaborative Health Education. The new building helps facilitate the College of Optometry in developing increased training arrangements with the Colleges of Allied Health and Pharmacy. There are currently several programs with both colleges that include working with pharmacy, medical records, and nursing students. One example of this cooperation is the course for injectible medications and suturing that is taught with instructors from the College of Allied Health. Another example is the pharmacology coursework and biochemistry instruction taught by College of Pharmacy faculty. A third example is the interaction with the College of Education and Human Services on reading disabilities.

### Eye and Vision Care Clinic –

The **Eye and Vision Care Clinic** offers optometric/medical eye care and clinical training for optometry students, interns, and residents. Currently this facility has 80-90 patient encounters per day. This resulted in 19,454 patient encounters last year. It is anticipated that these patient numbers will increase by at least 10,000 per year (30- 40 per day) with a ground floor, redesigned clinic.

- The clinic includes an optical and contact lens dispensary where student interns will receive practical hands-on training in the fitting of optical devices.
- The clinic includes twenty-six eye lanes, which are split between primary care services, contact lenses services, pediatric/binocular vision services, medical/surgical services, and low vision rehabilitation services.
- The clinic has a waiting area, administration/billing office, optical dispensary and fabrication area, common testing rooms and special testing rooms for specific vision equipment.
- The clinic houses the only fully equipped low-vision clinic in western Michigan. With an aging population, this is an enormous resource and will only see increased use with each passing year.
- Clinical examination rooms help facilitate the continued efforts of faculty in clinical research in the eye care field.

### **Center for Lifelong Learning and Competency -**

The **Center for Lifelong Learning and Competency** will be created in this facility to support eye care professionals. Using distance technology, web-based support, continuing education efforts, and conference sessions, this Center will help optometrists receive information and education on the latest developments in the field and stay current in this rapidly evolving profession. In doing so, it assures the continued competency and the highest standard of preparation and support for optometrists practicing in Michigan. The Center will help ensure that quality eye care continues to be delivered to the citizens of the state of Michigan long after an optometrist graduates from the college. A number of educational and professional efforts benefit greatly from these increased and more sophisticated distance learning capabilities.

### **Classrooms, laboratories, offices, and computer facilities -**

**Laboratory spaces** are a critical component in the education of optometrists and a serious weakness in the current facility. The new facility includes seven laboratories for hands-on instruction in contact lens, ophthalmic optics, basic science (2), vision science, ophthalmic procedures, and test & procedure demonstration. These include six wet/dry laboratories, facilities that are not existent in the current facility. It also helps address a serious shortage of state-of-the-art laboratory spaces across the campus.

**Classrooms, computer facilities, distance education facilities,** and a mid-sized auditorium are included in the building and available to all students on the Ferris State University campus. The new facility is situated in proximity to the existing buildings housing the College of Pharmacy and College of Allied Health Sciences, thus establishing an educational synergy in the health sciences at Ferris State University and addressing aged facilities and overcrowding in these areas. The auditorium, classrooms, laboratories and clinical areas of this facility will be available for use by the Colleges of Allied Health and Pharmacy for the instruction of their students. These other health care facilities, while not converted dormitories, date from the late 1960's and early 1970's. They do not have the same problems with classroom size or shape or clinic access, but suffer from

significant overcrowding and age. The new facilities are especially well-suited for their use as they are designed specifically for the instruction of health care students.

**This project will serve 1200 students, over 19,500 patient visits and 1200 optometrists throughout Michigan.**

## **The Benefits**

**MCO students benefit patients throughout Michigan.** In Big Rapids they train at a full service optometric facility which conducts in excess of 19,400 patient visits annually. The clinic offers primary care services, contact lenses services, pediatric/binocular vision services, medical/surgical services, and low vision rehabilitation services and includes an optical fabrication and contact lens dispensary.

Prior to graduation, students attending the Michigan College of Optometry typically experience in excess of 1500 patient examinations—an extraordinary number of patient contacts and an exceptional educational opportunity. To gain a wide range and depth of experiences in the optometric profession student interns are placed at affiliated external clinic sites throughout Michigan and across the country. Examples of these affiliated external sites include the following—

- Health Management Organizations, including the Henry Ford Medical Center, the largest southeast Michigan HMO. Student interns provide eye care services at the Henry Ford Medical Center locations in Westland, West Bloomfield, and Livonia. Additionally the college affiliates with an inner city HMO, The Wellness Plan of Detroit, Michigan, a combined staff and Independent Practice Associations (IPA) model, with approximately 80,000 subscribers.
- Veterans Affairs Medical Centers/Out-Patient Clinics, located in Grand Rapids, Battle Creek, Detroit, Saginaw, and Fort Wayne, Indiana.
- The Department of Corrections Duane L. Waters Hospital at the State Prison of Southern Michigan. College clinical professors and fourth year student interns provide in-patient and out-patient care for approximately 7,500 residents housed at the State Prison of Southern Michigan's maximum, medium and minimum security complexes and the outlying satellite facilities, which depend upon the Hospital for health care services. An ocular prosthetics program, initiated with cooperation and consultation from the College's Contact Lens Service, is now a regular and viable part of the clinic services available.
- University-based optometric and medical practice sites - The Clinical Center, Neuro-ophthalmology clinic, located on the campus of Michigan State University
- Military Medical facilities at Grand Forks Air Force Base (AFB), North Dakota, Eglin AFB, Florida, Fort Wainwright Army Base, Fairbanks, Alaska and National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland.
- Co-management consultation centers for patients with acute and chronic eye disease conditions - Balian Eye Center of Rochester, Andersen Eye Associates, Saginaw, Gabriele Eye Institute, and South Bend Clinic, South Bend, Indiana.

- Private practice affiliations - Garrett Eye Center of Iron Mountain, Grand Rapids Ophthalmology of Grand Rapids, Shelby Eye Care Associates of Shelby Township, Eaton Rapids Optometrists of Eaton Rapids, Walton and Becker Optometry, Oxford, and Lakeshore Eyecare, Norton Shores.
- Specialty service sites - Saginaw Valley Special Needs Vision Clinic, Saginaw, Kresge Eye Institute, Detroit, Henry Ford Visual Rehabilitation and Research Center, The Sinai Hospital of Detroit's Vision Rehabilitation Institute, and other optometric practices where low vision rehabilitative services are provided.

**MCO faculty and students conduct research that improves eyecare and education.** They provide eyecare to those who would otherwise not receive it. These include research studies in diabetes, glaucoma, low vision, contact lenses and optometric instruments. Beyond its immediate clinic service area, the College participates in a number of programs for low-income families and needy children. This provides much-needed eye care to those who would otherwise not receive it. These affiliations include the Cherry Street Clinic in Grand Rapids, a community based clinic for low or limited income patients. The College has conducted a series of clinics for migrant field workers. The College has created a community-based eye clinic in Baldwin. Faculty and students annually make medical mission trips to Dominica, Africa and other underserved countries.

- Research by Ferris State University doctors has demonstrated a direct connection between eyecare problems and the need for developmental education by college students. Beginning in the fall of 2002, the College has screened 317 students placed on academic probation by their colleges. 194 of these students (61%) failed the vision screening. These findings have significant implications for the success of at-risk students across the state.
- The University has a pediatrics clinic caring for children's eye problems. This helps ensure that children receive a complete eye exam before entering school. Statistics show that as many as 40% of children with poor school performance have eye problems that can be corrected if discovered early in their development and maturation. The College participates in project InfantSEE—a program sponsored by the American Optometric Association and Johnson & Johnson to provide every infant an eye assessment in the first year of life to pick up factors contributing to amblyopia or lazy eye.
- Through a partnership with the College of Education and Human Services, reading specialists regularly co-manage the treatment of reading disabilities with doctors in the pediatrics clinic.

Faculty of the Michigan College of Optometry are local, state, and national leaders in the optometric profession. Our dean, Dr. Kevin Alexander, is president of the American Optometric Association, representing 35,000 members throughout the country. Dr. Mark Swan, Chief of pediatrics and binocular vision services for the Michigan College of Optometry, is president of the Michigan Optometric Association. Dr. Swan is also Chief of Optometry at St. Mary's Mercy Medical Center in Grand Rapids. I am pleased to be joined today by Dr. Swan.

**MCO graduates are an important economic factor throughout Michigan.** Based on a recent economic survey conducted by the American Optometric Association, the average

optometric practice has gross revenues of approximately \$500,000. Most MCO graduates stay in Michigan, with an annual economic impact on Michigan's economy of over one-third of a billion dollars. That figure does not include revenues generated by pharmaceuticals prescribed by optometrists.

It is important to note that unlike pharmacists, some physicians, and most other healthcare professionals, the majority of optometrists create and operate small businesses. In their practices they hire five or more other individuals, creating additional employment opportunities across the State of Michigan. Optometrists become important members of their local business communities helping to create additional economic development through the State.

**The need and importance of this proposal is recognized throughout Michigan.** This building project is an important legislative priority for the Michigan Optometric Association, representing over 1200 doctors of optometry in Michigan. The Optometric Profession is very committed to supporting a new facility for the Michigan College of Optometry. **Every member of the college** has made a financial contribution to this building. To date, over \$1,250,000 has been pledged in support of operating and matching funds for the new facility. The Dow Foundation has awarded an additional \$1,000,000 gift toward this facility.

## The Rationale

**The Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University is the only College of Optometry in Michigan -**

- As the only College of Optometry in Michigan and one of sixteen in the country, it provides and supports access to high quality eye care throughout the state. The Michigan College of Optometry has been responsible for all training of the majority of optometrists in the state.
- The Michigan College of Optometry is a major provider of health care education in Michigan.
- The College serves a wide patient base in one of the poorest areas of the state. The service area includes residents of Lake, Mecosta, Osceola, and Montcalm counties. We care for many Medicaid and indigent patients in surrounding counties.

**Inadequate and out-dated facilities** – The College is currently housed in a residence hall, built in 1967 and converted in 1977. Because Pennock Hall was built as a residence hall, the width of the building does not accommodate a full-sized classroom or laboratory. This means that each of the classrooms or laboratory spaces in the current facility is quite narrow and extraordinarily long. There is no way to move walls and reconfigure to make the space more useful, and structural columns run throughout the classrooms and laboratories, further restricting the space. The laboratories are in disrepair with poor lighting, and no plumbing. Wet labs are needed for required courses in anatomy, physiology, and microbiology. Simply put, this a very poor place for faculty to teach and for students to learn. Faculty, staff, and students succeed despite this facility, rather than benefiting from what is possible with modern state-of-the-art facilities.

As a working health care facility, one of the critical components is the patientcare clinic. The current clinic is on the fifth and sixth floors. It is served by two very old, small, cramped elevators, which have been operated long-past their useful life. To effectively work with patients who need eye care, a ground floor clinic is necessary to provide access for the elderly, visually impaired and disabled.

The original building was not designed with air conditioning and was retrofitted during its conversion from a dormitory to a health care facility. As a result it has extraordinarily poor heating, ventilation, and air conditioning. The components for the system are out-of-date, the manufacturers are out-of-business, and parts are not available. The system works ineffectively and breaks frequently. When this happens, parts for repairs must be fabricated by the University's physical plant.

**Building size limits admissions to program.** Admission to the optometry program is very competitive; seven students apply for every position available. It is impossible to expand the program further without this new facility. With the new facility admissions will be expanded to fifty students annually and the structure is designed to handle 75 students per year. Ultimately the number of optometrists prepared for the State of Michigan could be doubled. This would help address a growing critical shortage of practitioners.

According to the American Optometric Association, optometrists perform approximately 60% of all eye examinations in the country. There has been an enormous amount of attrition of optometrist numbers as many of the World War II generation retire and leave the profession. These positions are now being filled by our graduates, and the need for more graduates will only increase.

As our population continues to age and live longer, they will experience more eye and vision problems—such as glaucoma, cataracts, macular degeneration, etc., the need for optometrists will continue to grow with the increase in the aging population. Additionally, people working into their 60's, 70's, and 80's will require good eyesight to continue their careers.

Optometry is a program with 100% placement. Graduates are recruited by independently practicing Doctors of Optometry, Veterans Administration Medical Centers, Health Management Organizations, Group practices, Ophthalmology practices and corporate settings. Many employers contribute to our established scholarships and provide substantial support for students and future employees. Students who have signed a commitment to the military have their education paid for by the Government and enter the Army with the rank of Captain.

**This project will serve –**

- **Over 1200 students**
- **Over 19,500 patient visits, and**
- **Over 1200 optometrists throughout Michigan.**

In order to effectively continue its significant contribution to the health and welfare of the State of Michigan, the Michigan College of Optometry needs a facility conducive to modern clinical training and clinical care. Students being educated for the health professions should be trained in an environment that, as much as possible, is similar to that in which they will function after graduation. They should be exposed to a wide variety of patients, utilize state-of-the-art equipment, and learn to work with support personnel and other health providers in this era of managed care. Patients treated by our students deserve a facility that will allow us to provide them state-of-the-art care.

I want to thank you for again for providing Dr. Swan and me this opportunity to present these materials. On behalf of our students, our faculty, and the patients they will serve, thank you for your consideration of this request.