

Gov. Christie Breaks Ground for \$28.6 Million Expansion of Stockton's Unified Science Center

President Herman Saatkamp Says New Facility Will Prepare Science and Math Majors for Growing Job Market in New Jersey

For Immediate Release; with link to photos on [flickr](#)

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Galloway Township, NJ - Gov. Chris Christie joined President Herman Saatkamp, Secretary of Higher Education Rochelle Hendricks, Student Senate President Carl Archut Jr. and Stockton's Board of Trustees in breaking ground today for a \$28.62 million expansion that will nearly double the size of the Unified Science Center at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

Gov. Christie noted that his administration had prioritized investing in higher education, and said a total of \$1.2 billion will be used for public colleges.

He said it was "very unfortunate that the state had waited 25 years to contribute" funding for higher education construction, but added: "The most important thing is we're actually doing things...to be able to give (students) a world-class education."

Gov. Christie said there are "176 different projects happening at 46 colleges in New Jersey," and this infusion of capital "will help stabilize tuition and fees."

The governor noted that New Jersey has the third highest percentage of residents in the nation with degrees from four-year colleges, which helps attract industry.

He called Stockton's new building "an investment in our young men and women" and in the state's economy.

Gov. Christie said he knew Stockton would staff the facility with "top-notch faculty" and ensure that students get an excellent education "to help our state to create a lasting legacy."

"Now let's go move some dirt around," the governor said, referring to the traditional groundbreaking ceremony using shovels.

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The 54,000-square-foot expansion project, referred to as the Unified Science Center² (“Unified Science Center Squared”) to acknowledge its emphasis on science and math, will be supported by \$21.465 million in funding from the Building Our Future Bond Act approved by voters in 2012. The bond act requires that the college pay 25 percent, or \$7.155 million of the total \$28.62 million cost.

The three-story expansion will include labs for teaching and research, a greenhouse, computer labs, faculty offices and a vivarium.

President Herman Saatkamp said that when he arrived at Stockton in 2003, science faculty told him that “one of the college’s most pressing needs was a state-of-the-art science building.”

“Our labs at that time were outdated and lacked the technology one would expect, especially given that Stockton produces a high number of math and science undergraduate degree recipients - nearly 24 percent among our eight sister institutions,” President Saatkamp said, in reference to New Jersey’s public colleges and universities.

He said he had promised to build a new science facility as part of the college’s master plan and noted: “Look how far we’ve come in just one academic year. Last fall, we celebrated the opening of phase 1 of the Unified Science Center, and today, thanks largely to Gov. Christie, Secretary Hendricks, the Legislature and the overwhelming support of the citizens of New Jersey, we are able to break ground on Unified Science Center².”

“This new facility, which includes 54,000 square feet of 32 labs, seven classrooms, 40 faculty offices, a greenhouse and a vivarium, along with the 66,000-square-foot Unified Science Center, which includes 28 laboratories, eight classrooms and faculty offices, provides our students and faculty with a state-of-the-art facility,” President Saatkamp said.

“Most importantly, it will better prepare our students for exciting careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and help meet the growing demand of industries in the region and throughout the state seeking highly educated and skilled graduates.”

Secretary of Higher Education Hendricks said, “I am inspired by the new building for the Unified Science Center. It will establish Stockton as a center of excellence for science education. Whether they study Physics, Environmental Science, Marine Science, or Anatomy and Physiology, students at Stockton receive a world-class preparation for the high-demand science fields that are so important to the state and national economy.”

She thanked Gov. Christie for being “a bold man of action” who invested in higher education and college construction projects after 25 years of inaction by the state.

Curtis Bashaw, chair of the Stockton Board of Trustees, welcomed the audience and joked about the new facility eventually becoming “the United Science Center ‘Cubed’ - I’m thinking ahead,” he said.

He credited President Saatkamp’s foresight in developing a master plan: “Stockton is a different place than it was 10 years ago.”

“This new facility, like the Unified Science Center behind me, will continue Stockton’s transformation of the educational experience our students receive, better prepare them for successful careers in STEM and further position Stockton as one of the region’s premier institutions for the sciences and mathematics,” said Bashaw.

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President Saatkamp thanked alumni, students, faculty and staff for being there and introduced speaker Carl Archut Jr., president of the Student Senate, saying: “At Stockton, our students remain the central focus of what we do and why we exist.”

Archut thanked the governor, the secretary of Higher Education, President Saatkamp and other officials for investing in facilities for students.

“During my college search, the Campus Center was just completed and Unified Science Center 1 had just had its own groundbreaking ceremony,” said Archut, a native of Paulsboro, NJ. “During my academic journey, I have witnessed immense growth through additions of buildings, programs and initiatives. All of them with a clearly defined purpose: to ensure students would maximize their learning potential, while maintaining the best college experience possible.”

He added, “By enhancing our school, students will one day be able to contribute to society—bringing the skills they learn in this building into their various communities. Your investment in Stockton is invaluable.”

Archut introduced the governor, who thanked him and said, “Notice that after Carl’s remarks, the sun came out.”

U.S. Rep. Frank LoBiondo, R-2nd, Ambassador William J. Hughes, former congressman and ambassador to Panama, former U.S. Rep. Patrick Kennedy, Richard Dovey, president of the Atlantic County Utilities Authority and a Stockton alumnus, Keith Davis, chair of the Atlantic County Republican Committee, Mayor Don Purdy of Galloway Township, Howard Kyle, chief of staff for Atlantic County government and Dr. Edward H. Salmon, chair of the Stockton Aviation Research and Technology Park board, joined members of the college Foundation Board, and college officials including Dr. Harvey Kesselman, provost and executive vice president, Faculty Senate President Rodger Jackson and Dean Dennis Weiss of the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics at the ceremony.

Members of the public toured the Unified Science Center, a \$39.5 million, three-story facility which opened in September 2013.

The building’s second phase will include energy-efficient systems in line with the college’s commitment to sustainability and green initiatives. The new facility is expected to open in spring 2017.

Part of the college’s master plan, today’s groundbreaking is the latest step in Stockton’s growth, both on and off the main Galloway campus.

An \$18 million new classroom building is slated to receive \$13.5 million in funding from the bond issue and the college’s 25 percent share is \$4.5 million. It will house 24 classrooms, 20 offices and teaching space.

In the past year, Stockton opened new instructional sites in Manahawkin, Ocean County, in Woodbine, Cape May County and in Hammonton, in western Atlantic County. Stockton also has an instructional site in Atlantic City at the Carnegie Center.

The 154,000-square-foot Campus Center, which opened to 2011, was awarded LEED® Gold certification by the U.S. Green Building Council and verified by the Green Building Certification Institute. LEED, which stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is the

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nation’s preeminent program for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings.

Additional Stockton projects receiving bond funding include:

- \$6.4 million for an energy management project to modernize equipment and infrastructure, including upgrades to the college's heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems;
- \$6.4 million to upgrade research and teaching equipment, including upgrading equipment used by faculty in the biological and chemical sciences disciplines, as well as the environmental and marine sciences. The growth in this field will more than double the number of courses taught by faculty and will allow them to provide state-of-the-art laboratories and classrooms;
- \$4.2 million to renovate the Arts and Sciences building, including exterior repairs and improvements in energy efficiency;
- \$1.195 million to upgrade educational technology, including upgrading equipment used by faculty in lectures in electronic classrooms and computer labs; development of virtualized computer labs to support student-owned mobile devices such as tablets; and desktop computers;
- \$775,000 in funding from the bond issue for a total \$1.5 million educational technology infrastructure project to improve high-speed voice, video and data fiber structure, high-capacity internet access, and upgrades to the core high-speed 10G network and wireless infrastructures on campus.



From the left, Carl Archut Jr, Student Senate President, the Honorable Rochelle Hendricks, Secretary of Higher Education, Governor Chris Christie, President Herman Saatkamp, and Curtis Bashaw, Chair of the Board of Trustees, break ground at the site where the Unified Science Center addition will be built.

Photo: Susan Allen/ The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey