Project Description

The University of Alaska's Life Sciences Classroom and Lab Facility will replace cramped and antiquated research and teaching space at UAF. The need for space is so great that some graduate and staff scientists are currently housed in a fleet of nine temporary ATCO units.

The proposed 98,000 square-foot building (approx. 40,000 SF teaching space and 57,700 SF research space) will:

- integrate teaching and research in biological, wildlife and biomedical sciences;
- improve the university’s competitive research position;
- strengthen Alaska’s economy;
- improve undergraduate and graduate training for necessary careers in the biological sciences;
- and support research relevant to Alaskans and the nation.

Life Sciences faculty and students are productive and well-respected internationally for their research and quality of education. However, current classroom and laboratory facilities are inadequate for modern learning, research and collaboration. The project has been on the Board of Regents’ request list for each of the last 10 budget cycles.

Research Needs

- Current lack of space and outdated facilities weakens the university’s ability to attract top students, faculty and researchers. This in turn hampers faculty in securing research grants for projects important to Alaskans.
- This single project has great impact on the entire UA System as well as the state of Alaska:
  - UAF researchers secure 90 percent of all UA System research grants; many research projects are collaborative between UAF and UAA and many are of great importance to Alaskans.
  - Potential discoveries related to obesity, diabetes, SIDS, avian flu, food safety and nutrition, wildlife and climate change, treating heart attack and traumatic brain injury, and preventing suicide and substance abuse are a few examples of the hundreds of research projects currently under way.
- The facility will be located next to the State of Alaska Virology Lab, to facilitate collaboration/partnership opportunities in state health and environmental safety.
- Investment in Life Sciences research provides a high return; every $1 in state funds leverages an average of $6 in federal research funding.
- UA research supports good jobs in Alaska communities, with an annual payroll of $92 million split 50-50 between UA and the private sector.
- The new Life Sciences building will open additional research space and facilities, including a new research greenhouse, for other important programs on UAF’s West Ridge, such as ecology and climate change research.
Teaching Needs

✓ Biology is UAF's largest undergraduate major and supports the largest graduate student program.

✓ Many graduating seniors have engaged in undergraduate research thanks to the guidance of quality research faculty—directly linking research with teaching.

✓ The United States lags other countries in science and math. Alaska must invest in its own people to secure a solid economic future.

✓ A strong Life Sciences program is the foundation for preparing Alaska students for high-demand science careers in human, wildlife and environmental biology, as well as advanced degrees in animal and human health.

✓ UAF biology and wildlife graduates work for, and bring local knowledge to, in-state hospitals and the health-care industry, environmental consulting firms, and local, state and federal agencies including schools, the state Department of Fish and Game, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service.

✓ Life Sciences programs are dispersed across campus; a single location is critical to ensure proper student mentoring, integration and collaboration across disciplines.

Project construction benefits

In addition to long-term economic benefits of research, the state’s $88 million investment in the facility (matched by $20 million in non-state funding) will provide short-term benefits:

- Approximately $170 million in direct and indirect economic output during construction
- About 370 workers employed over the construction period will earn estimated $80 million payroll