UNIVERSITY of HAWAI'I SYSTEM

Board of Regents <bor@hawaii.edu>

Testimony for BOR meeting item VIII A.2.d Approval of DesignBuild Construction Contract for the Snyder Replacement Building

Marguerite Butler <mbutler808@gmail.com> Thu, Aug 20, 2015 at 9:03 AM
To: Board of Regents <bor@hawaii.edu>

Enclosed please find my testimony. Aloha,
Marguerite

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Testimony on item VIII A.2.d. Approval of Design-Build Construction Contract for the Snyder Replacement Building
August 20, 2015

Dear Regents,

My name is Marguerite Butler and I am an Associate Professor from the Biology Department. Historically, Biology has always occupied a portion of Snyder Hall. Imagine our surprise when we learned two nights ago (perusing the Board of Regents agenda and materials) that there is a proposal for one of our buildings that we did not know about. A new Snyder Hall will be built at the edge of campus where the entire department of Microbiology will be relocated with the rest of the building planned for "surge" space. The old Snyder will be repurposed to house the English department, which will allow the renovation and movement of other sectors of campus.

Our chancellor was gracious enough to squeeze us in for an emergency meeting today, for which we are grateful. However, we are troubled that consultation fell through the cracks and we note for the record that we respectfully request a seat at the table when it comes to planning and design space affecting our programs.

The Biology faculty shoulders the primary responsibility for the planning and execution of the Biology academic program. There is no programmatic success without adequate facilities.

Our Programmatic Success and Background

As background, life sciences in the College of Natural Sciences has been tremendously successful. The Biology department is responsible for approximately 1200 of UHM's 1400 life science majors and 100 graduate students. We oversee the academic programs of approximately 10% of the Manoa campus. Our enrollment has more than doubled over the past 10 years, a net gain of 800 students. The success of Biology is important to the success of Manoa. Biology contains just 20 faculty, but we have historically been able to maintain such a large program with the collaboration of our close colleagues in related departments: Microbiology and Botany.

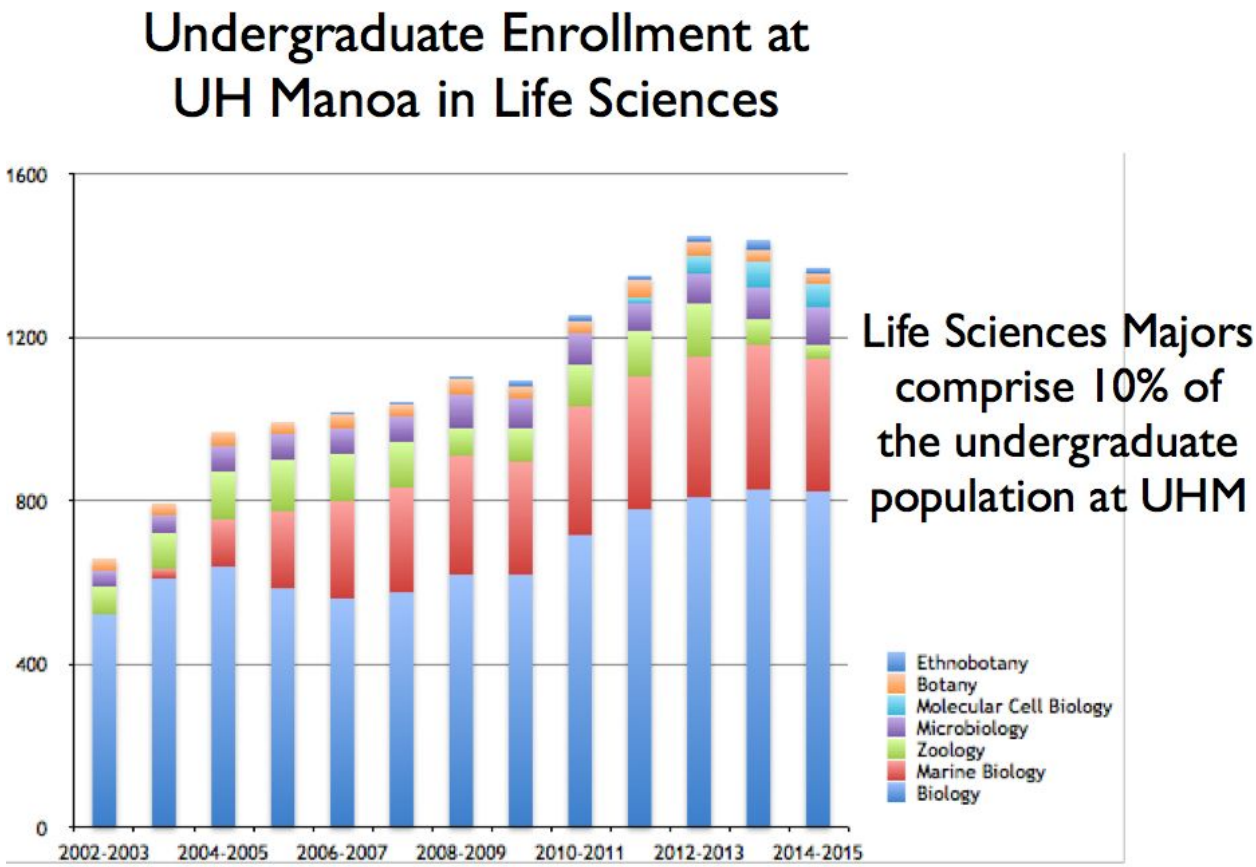
Faculty in Biology also conduct significant research on biodiversity, sustainability, genetics, biotechnology, evolution, ecology, and myriad other disciplines both in Hawaii and the Pacific and globally.

Biology is currently housed in Edmondson and has historically occupied parts of Snyder with future plans for expansion. In 2012 Biology was asked to evacuate Snyder in preparation for a renovation that never happened. Our needs remain unmet.

Microbiology, a separate department, is wholly housed in Snyder. We are separate departments. Microbiology has been informed of the the Snyder relocation in piecemeal fashion

over the summer as the plan evolved, but not properly consulted on the complete plan and its potential implications for their programs. No one in Biology had any knowledge of the plan until August 19, which is especially troubling as Biology led the planning for the previous renovation plan.

Indeed, an important aspect of functionality of our academic programs is physical proximity -- the Snyder and Edmondson buildings, which are adjoined, have comprised a makeshift “Life Sciences Complex”, along with St. John (Botany) and Gilmore (PEPS) in close proximity across the street.



Our Concerns

While faculty understand that there are other concerns beyond ours, it is important that programmatic concerns are adequately addressed:

1. **Separation of related programs works against the goal of unifying Biology/Zoology, Microbiology, and Botany for improved academic outcomes** (shared curriculum, planning, shared student experience -- both undergraduate and graduate programs, and research interaction).

a. Biology will be split between two distant buildings, and even further away from Botany.
b. It is ironic, however, that a rationale for the plan is a geographic unification of academic programs that would scatter the life sciences.

2. The plan does not accommodate needed research and teaching space for Biology.

- Our current building (Edmondson) is too small.
- RESEARCH:
  - In the renovation of Edmondson, 50% of the building was converted to teaching laboratories, which left 30% of Biology faculty housed in other buildings at a distance from Edmondson, dealing with "temporary" and frequently inadequate research space. These faculty will not be able to move back to the Snyder-Edmondson complex. Furthermore, there is no space for many graduate students and postdocs.
  - The previous Snyder renovation plan (terminated in March 2015) allotted 1.5 floors of Snyder to Biology. Biology was actively involved in the design of this portion so as to ensure it would meet our faculty and research needs.
  - We need space for much-needed departmental growth.

- TEACHING:
  - We lost all lecture classrooms in the renovation of Edmondson.
  - Teaching laboratories in Snyder Hall are still needed for courses in both Microbiology and Biology and are not accounted for in the plan.

- SPECIALIZED SPACE NEEDS:
- Edmondson has a shared-use lab design with no space for specialized needs of our current faculty: (these were planned for Snyder):
  - Shared neurophysiology space
  - Animal housing space for non-mouse vertebrates
  - Salt water facilities for marine organisms
  - Facilities for aquatic organisms (fresh water)
  - Dark rooms
  - Autoclave facilities for sterilization
  - Student computer laboratory

- The Marine Option Program, which serves undergraduates at the system level and is part of Biology, has been asked to vacate Dean Hall just as our space is shrinking.

While these problems are not insurmountable if we are given space in the new Snyder, there are significant challenges in transporting animals across campus for research and teaching, and will certainly lead to duplication of multiple facilities

- Other departments in CNS have dilapidated facilities for their programs as well -- St. Johns (Botany), Bilger (Chemistry). CNS cannot afford to lose Snyder as academic space for its scientific programs

3. Impacts on Student Learning and Outcomes

- All undergraduate life sciences majors are required to participate in directed research, which occurs in our research labs. Being 20 minutes away from their other classes will have negative impacts on their ability to conduct research.

- Travel time between the periphery of campus and the Mall will be a significant impact to our 1400 life science majors, a problem that must receive serious consideration.

- The Makai side of The Mall has always served as a STEM corridor, with close proximity to the Math, Chemistry, and Physics departments, which provide courses which our students enroll in. Moving Microbiology (and potentially Biology) to the periphery of campus will have detrimental effects on interdisciplinary interaction (e.g., the Math-Biology program).

Faculty Participation to Ensure Success

In short, it is critical that previous space commitments to Biology are honored. Our program will die without it. The operations and needs of Life Sciences are complex. However, *we hope that you can see that Life Sciences is vital to the success of UH Manoa and we need to ensure that these academic programs succeed.*

While we support any effort to renovate Snyder, we ask that any plans for the reassignment of space and relocation of departments involve thorough consultation of the College of Natural Sciences Life Sciences departments. *Please make approval of this plan contingent on such meaningful consultation.*

Faculty participation in the planning and design of space is critical for the success of our academic programs.

Sincerely,
Marguerite Butler, Associate Professor, Department of Biology