

UMD officially opens new research facility By Thomas Gibbs



On Thursday, April 5, UMass Dartmouth Chancellor Jean MacCormack, along with UMass president Jack Wilson, Board of Trustees Chairman Stephen Tocco, and Provost Anthony Garro, hosted the official opening of a brand new 22,000 square foot research building on the UMass Dartmouth Campus.

The research building, named the National Botulinum Research Center will dedicate half of its space to focus on the detection, treatment, and cure for Botulism; a severe type of poisoning due to contaminated food caused by Botulinum organelles. The study of this disease can also lead to potential research in the fields of molecular biology, cell biology, and bioengineering.

The facility will also be a host to other forms of research including new ways to treat injuries. This research has spawned ideas such as a bandage that would heal a wound while protecting it, and learning how some bio-polymers within cranberries can decrease cancer growth.

The new research building marks an expansion within the “innovation triangle,” a three way branch of scientific breakthrough within the commonwealth of Massachusetts that includes the Advanced Technology Manufacturing Center in Fall River as well as the Center for Marine Science and Technology in New Bedford.

During the opening remarks of the ceremony, Chancellor MacCormack described the research building as being a “resource for our students, our facility, and our community. It is the latest stage in a rapid evolution of the university.”

The building is also recognized as one of the only centers of its kind within the south of Boston, bringing recognition not only to itself, but to the University as well.

As UMass Dartmouth evolves, so too does the scientific community. Many scientists, graduates, and other workers from many science departments including chemistry, engineering, biology, and textiles were gathered to witness the “birth” of one of UMass Dartmouth’s greatest achievements in recent memory. Some students studying in the field of science will be granted the experience of working outside of the traditional classroom by working in this research facility. This will give them a unique opportunity to perform science beyond the realm of a college classroom.

President Wilson was also proud to present the opening of the new building because of its potential to expand upon breakthroughs in science. He declared that the opportunities provided by the new facility will be “ones that will enable our faculty and students to make further advances in the important area of biotechnology?”. With a highly respected professor such as Dr. Bal Ram Singh, one of the nation’s leading experts in Botulism as well as the leading man of the National Botulinum Center at the helm, a bright future seems to be ahead in the fight against this leading bio-terrorism threat.

The building itself could not have been conceived without the talented and hard working architects at the ARC (Architectural Resources Cambridge), as well as the builders at Suffolk Construction, proudly recognized as at top leading contracting firm in the United States. Still, even with the numerous rooms dedicated to scientific experiments, perfectly symmetric hallway design, and impressive looking sky bridge, the building, as MacCormack best explains, “is only a shell if you don’t have intellectual life living in it?”. Now, many look upon the building with excitement and high expectations for future generations of scientists to develop many different treatments and cures within the near future. In time, the research building will hopefully prove itself to become one of UMass Dartmouth’s most valuable assets in the field of science.

