

AGENDA ITEM BRIEFING

Submitted by: Mark A. Welsh III, President
Texas A&M University

Subject: Approval to Amend the FY 2025 – FY 2029 Texas A&M University System Capital Plan to Change the Fiscal Year Designation for Project Initiation and Appropriate Funding for Pre-Construction Services for the Heldenfels 4th Floor Instructional Lab Renovation Project for Texas A&M University (Project No. 02-3432)

Background and Prior Actions:

The project was included as a proposed project on the FY 2025 – FY 2029 Texas A&M University System Capital Plan approved by the Board at the May 2024 meeting with an FY 2026 start date and a total planning amount of \$12,000,000.

Proposed Board Action:

- (1) Amend the approved FY 2025 – FY 2029 Texas A&M University System Capital Plan to change the fiscal year designation for project initiation for the Heldenfels 4th Floor Instructional Lab Renovation Project from FY 2026 to FY 2025.
- (2) Appropriate \$1,200,000 for pre-construction services and related project costs after August 31, 2024. Funds cannot be appropriated prior to September 1, 2024.

Funding/Planning Amount:

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>Planning Amount</u>	<u>Average Estimated Annual Debt Service</u>	<u>Debt Service Source</u>
Cash (AUF)	<u>\$12,000,000</u>	N/A	N/A
Total Project Cost	<u>\$12,000,000</u>		

Change Justification:

The Heldenfels 4th Floor Instructional Lab Renovation is projected to be approximately 19,567 gross square feet (GSF) with a budget not to exceed \$12,000,000 and was approved as part of the FY 2025 – FY 2029 Texas A&M University System Capital Plan to begin in FY 2026. Texas A&M University (Texas A&M) is requesting a fiscal year change from FY 2026 to FY 2025 to be able to move into a completed 4th floor of Heldenfels Hall (HELD) by summer of 2026. The teaching spaces to be renovated are necessary for the scheduling of courses for the Department of Biology in the College of Arts & Sciences, the Biomedical Sciences Program in the School of

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Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, and the Nutrition Program in the College of Agriculture & Life Sciences. Current teaching spaces are over capacity for the current demand and renovation of the spaces on the 4th floor of HELD with a more efficient layout is imperative to help meet the growing demand.

Project Justification:

Teaching laboratory space likely represents the most significant bottleneck for teaching undergraduate life-science majors across the university. The Department of Biology has taken on an expanded role in service teaching, making it one of the largest Biology teaching programs in the nation. The department estimates having a 50% or more increase in student credit hours in the fall of 2024 compared to the fall of 2020. Introductory Biology and Anatomy and Physiology (A&P) courses represent the most significant bottlenecks. These large courses serve students from across the university and are critical for professional school admission. Improved and expanded lab space would serve students across the entire university improving instruction and student outcomes for over 25% of Texas A&M undergraduate students that are educated in Biology teaching laboratories.

The 4th floor of HELD originally supported organic chemistry instruction on campus. When the Instructional Laboratory & Innovative Learning Building (ILSQ) was opened on West Campus in January 2023, the entire lower-division chemistry instruction program was relocated into this facility. The currently vacant 4th floor of HELD and its 12 decommissioned labs present an opportunity to consolidate biology instruction into one facility and expand capacity to meet the expanded enrollment and increased demand.

The A&P program has seen historic growth since the academic realignment associated with the Path Forward. Consolidating most A&P teaching across the university in the Department of Biology makes Texas A&M home to one of the largest A&P teaching programs in the nation. This academic realignment has filled available laboratory space, with labs running from 8:00am to 9:30pm Monday through Thursday, with Friday as the laboratory change-over day to prepare for the next week's instruction and train Teaching Assistants (TAs) for the week ahead. The additional growth projected for the fall of 2025 will exceed the department's current capacity. The existing space is utilized as efficiently as possible and is currently at capacity given the student enrollment numbers and needs. To meet enrollment demands and train the next generation of students and prepare them for their careers, new space is required. The proposed project will create laboratory space that serves A&P courses in addition to meeting other laboratory needs of Texas A&M as they arise.

Relocating the A&P program from the 2nd floor to the 4th floor of HELD will allow the department to reallocate space on the 2nd floor for introductory courses, resulting in more sections available to meet the increasing demand for these courses, and create additional flexible instructional laboratory space.

Space is the largest factor impacting the ability of the Department of Biology to serve the undergraduate students who need biology courses to begin their degree plan and graduate on time. A thoughtful and carefully considered renovation of the 4th floor of HELD will create a range of

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instructional laboratory spaces that will extend the Department of Biology's exceptional impact with regard to service teaching, preparing students for professional education and integrating structured educational research experiences at the undergraduate level.

Scope:

As currently programmed, the Heldenfels 4th Floor Instructional Lab Renovation totals 19,567 GSF for the one floor associated with this project. The renovation will provide the Department of Biology with seven A&P instructional labs, five flexible wet labs for upper-division instruction and support for the Course-based Undergraduate Research Experiences program, and a "help desk" to support student success. The seven A&P instructional labs are planned to be reconfigurable as students learn using a variety of instructional techniques such as models, specimens and 3D anatomy visualization. The "help desk" will provide dedicated space for students to interact, study, collaborate, seek academic assistance, and gather for pre- and post-lab sessions. Limited office space is included for lab coordinators and technicians. The teaching spaces are meant to be utilized across several departments including the Department of Biology in the College of Arts & Sciences, the Biomedical Sciences Program in the School of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, and the Nutrition Program in the College of Agriculture & Life Sciences.

Most of the assignable square feet is dedicated to instructional space. The 4th floor of HELD is programmed to provide critical instructional lab space to continue the Department of Biology's service teaching role to complete degree plans in a timely and efficient manner and prepare students across the university for professional school.

Other Major Fiscal Impacts:

None.

Strategic Plan Imperative(s) this Item Advances:

Approval of this agenda item will support The Texas A&M University System (A&M System) strategic imperatives 1 (*All qualified students will find a place in the A&M System and will have an array of pathways to pursue their ambitions and interests*), 3 (*Our students will leave the A&M System as responsible and engaged citizens prepared for successful careers in an increasingly global economy*) and 5 (*The A&M System will provide services that respond to the needs of the people of Texas and contribute to the strength of the state's economy*).

Renovating the 4th floor of HELD will provide much needed instructional lab space for the Biology program, allowing the Department of Biology to continue their expanded role in service teaching of critical pre-requisite coursework for professional school admission and enable students across the university to complete their degree plan. By providing additional A&P and upper-division Biology laboratory space, Texas A&M will continue to provide transformational education that prepares students for the next phase of their education or career.

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Office of the President

July 1, 2024

Members, Board of Regents
The Texas A&M University System

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I recommend adoption of the following minute order:

“The request to amend the FY 2025 – FY 2029 Texas A&M University System Capital Plan to change the fiscal year designation for project initiation for the Heldenfels 4th Floor Instructional Lab Renovation Project for Texas A&M University from FY 2026 to FY 2025 is approved.

The amount of \$1,200,000 is appropriated from Account No. 02-806306, Heldenfels, for pre-construction services and related project costs. Funds cannot be appropriated prior to September 1, 2024.”

Respectfully submitted,

[ORIGINAL SIGNED BY]

Mark A. Welsh III
President

Approval Recommended:

[ORIGINAL SIGNED BY]

John Sharp
Chancellor

Approved for Legal Sufficiency:

[ORIGINAL SIGNED BY]

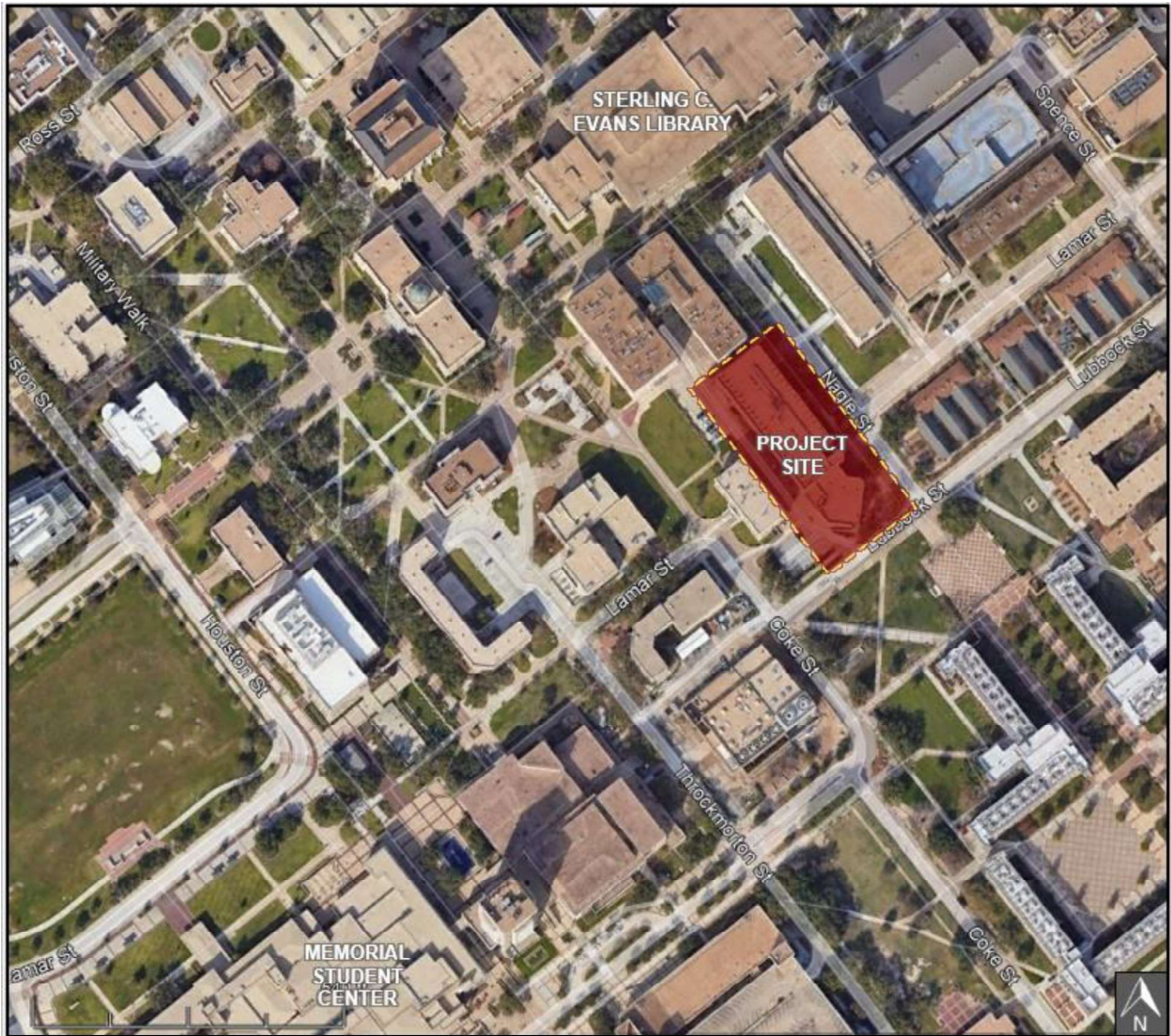
Ray Bonilla
General Counsel

[ORIGINAL SIGNED BY]

Billy Hamilton
Deputy Chancellor and
Chief Financial Officer

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Phillip Ray
Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs



Heldenfels 4th Floor Instructional Lab Renovation

Texas A&M University

Project No. 02-3432