

The Science Center Directors identified four broad areas that would benefit from future investments in next year's budget:

- Adequate funding for scientific equipment and specialized computing
- Funding to sustain the SURF program, such as housing subsidies
- Seed funding for high-impact educational practices, including math readiness efforts as well as course-based research innovation
- Additional administrative services support for new initiatives and growth in science

Our top budget priority is represented in the first bullet above: funding of our 5-year Equipment Capital Plan (ECP). We will keep you updated on its status in the College's strategic budget planning. The Directors will visit all Div III departments and programs before next year's operating budgets are due at the end of March to answer questions about the new ECP processes for equipment funding requests in our division.

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FROM THE CLARK SCIENCE CENTER DIRECTORS' OFFICE

Cultivating Promise



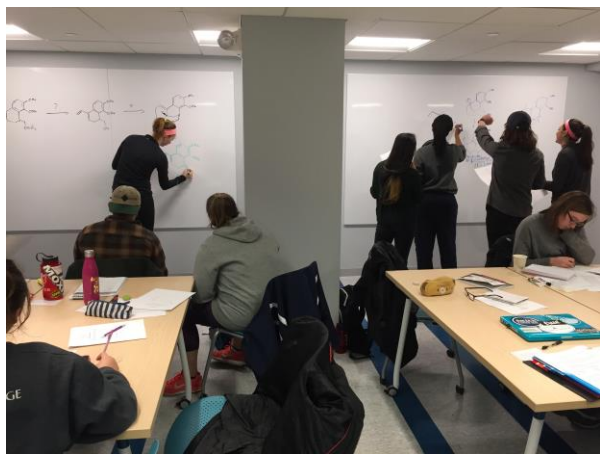
The College's [new strategic plan](#) has just been delivered to our mailboxes. In it, we reaffirm our mission to educate “women of promise for lives of distinction.” This statement puts a heavy emphasis on developing our students, a role that Alexander Astin argues needs [greater attention in higher education](#). So how do we understand our obligations to admitted students with intentions for STEM study but whose circumstances create incoming inequities that can interfere with the full realization of their promise?

This critical question is at the heart of ongoing conversations in our division about the role of calculus (and math readiness more broadly) as an essential gateway to advanced STEM study. Nationally, student access to higher level math courses in high school predicts [STEM persistence in college](#). In a large-scale representative study of introductory college science course performance in biology, chemistry, and physics, [Sadler and Tai](#) found two pillars to college STEM success: having taken science courses within the same discipline in high school and more advanced study of math (i.e., calculus) in high school. Interestingly, math was the *only* high school academic subject that had cross-disciplinary preparatory benefit across college science classes.

For the last six months, an interdisciplinary Teaching Circle, led by Gary Felder, with members from across our division as well as other allied offices at the College have been meeting to address the ways in which under-preparation in math readiness impacts student success and access in STEM here at Smith. We all work quite hard to support our students' math skills. Indeed, we have a wide range of supports in place to address this challenge, yet many of these systems are put into play after students are already in trouble. Our group has been working to develop a system of coordinated, strategic, and proactive strategies for supporting students arriving to Smith with math under-preparation. Conversations about the shape of this work are ongoing and we are actively pursuing its financial support through development efforts as well as in our strategic budget requests (see side bar).

Come hear about our efforts and share your thoughts at a Sigma Xi presentation on March 21st. Let's work together to create new institutional practices and systems that will cultivate our students' talent, no matter where they start. In this way, our division can give further shape to the College's educational mission.

--Patty DiBartolo



CONGRATULATIONS

... to the Biochemistry Program for its accreditation by the ASBMB (American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology). To quote the ASBMB letter: “Smith is exemplar of what an undergraduate BMB experience should be.”

☞ *Newly renovated innovative classroom: Kevin Shea took this photo in McConnell B05 early this semester. Lots of whiteboards! Great light!*

CLASSROOM PLANNING

There are plans afoot to keep on improving classrooms in the sciences and across campus. Science Planning Committee just heard from Dano Weisbord (Dir., Campus Sustainability & Space Planning) about a recently completed survey of classroom usage and plans to develop a teaching and learning space master plan over the next 18 mos. The College’s Classroom Committee (a subcommittee of CAP, co-chaired by Assoc. Vice Provost Bill Peterson and Dano) will help shape the scope of work with Boston-based consultants [Sasaki Associates, Inc.](#)



“Smith College will receive nearly half a million dollars for its life sciences facilities.”

[Read more here](#) about our recent Massachusetts Life Sciences Center grant award



Update on Fellowships

In late January, we nominated four Div 3 juniors for [Goldwater Scholarships](#). Cross your fingers for good news in late March for:

- Katrina Anderson, '18, BIO
- Suroor Gandhi, '18, PHY
- Peyton Higgins, '18, CHM
- Morgan Schwartz, '18, BIO

Daniela Deny, '18, BCH, Africana Studies, was awarded an [HHMI EXROP SURF](#) internship.

Thank you to all of the faculty members who mentored these students and wrote letters of recommendation for them!

This month please [email Margaret](#) with **your suggestions** of first years and sophomores who would be strong candidates for competitive awards next year or the year after:

- Students who are academically strong
- Students who have begun promising research
- Students who are leaders, doers, and making a difference in our campus community.

In the Science Center, we start the process by inviting students to meet a small panel of faculty and fellowships advisors. This format offers an effective way to get to know potential candidates and tailor advice to fellowship programs that best fit the individuals.

IMPORTANT DATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 23, 2017	RALLY DAY—no afternoon classes
March 1, 2017	Beverly Daniel Tatum Q & A, 4:30 pm, Weinstein Auditorium
March 10, 2017	Majority of SURF awards announced to students
March 2, 2017	Annual AEMES symposium panel, 5 pm, McConnell 103
March 11-19, 2017	SPRING BREAK—no classes
March 21, 2017	Sigma Xi lunch, <i>Math preparation for introductory STEM courses</i> , Gary Felder

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