

Designed for the Needs of the Next Generation

From the outside looking in, it's difficult to see what all the hubbub is about.

The exterior of the soon to be opened Anne and Michael Armstrong Medical Education Building is impressive, to be sure. The four-story, 100,000-square-foot structure is a dramatic addition to the East Baltimore campus, the first new medical education building in 25 years. But there's much more to be excited about—specifically, what is taking place inside the building: the implementation of the new Genes to Society curriculum, a radically different approach to learning medicine.

Ongoing breakthroughs in the study of genetics, as well as other major medical advances, required a rethinking of how best to prepare Hopkins students for practicing medicine. “We realized that harnessing the full power of learning 21st-century medicine would not be possible without a new physical environment,” explains David Nichols, vice dean for medical education. “This building was designed with the intellectual and scientific needs of the next generation in mind. Our students will tackle tomorrow's challenges—from healthcare economics to genetics—in the solid grounding of a truly fabulous building.”

The Armstrong Building is a powerhouse of the latest digital communications technology, featuring everything from virtual-reality simulations to MRI images, CT scans, surgical videos, and other reference tools ready and waiting, literally, at students' fingertips. Classrooms are designed for maximum flexibility, with projection capabilities on all four walls and mobile podiums for instructors. There are large lecture halls, intimate learning studios, and private study areas. The building is adjacent to the Outpatient Center, giving students easy access to the recently opened Simulation Center, where they can hone their clinical skills on manikin-based and computerized simulations.

Opportunities for learning and the informal exchange of ideas are not limited to the classroom or lecture hall; in fact, the Genes to Society curriculum stresses the importance of teamwork and communication. To foster collegiality among students and faculty,



one floor of the Armstrong Building is devoted to the Advisory Colleges Program. Each student is assigned to one of four colleges named in honor of Hopkins legends Daniel Nathans, Florence Sabin, Helen Taussig, and Vivien Thomas. The colleges and their respective areas have been designed to blend teaching and learning with a sense of camaraderie and community. Each college has its own suite of rooms where students can gather informally and where individualized and small group teaching can also take place. Small focus rooms are perfect for one-on-one mentoring sessions, while meeting rooms and learning studios can accommodate larger gatherings.

“These new approaches to mentoring and collaborative learning play an essential role in turning our visionary curriculum into reality,” says Nichols, adding that the Class of 2013, entering this fall, will be the first to experience the full spectrum of changes. “Every year, our new matriculants represent some of the smartest and most passionate future doctors who typically turn out to be leaders in their field. With the Armstrong Building and the new Genes to Society curriculum, the potential for these young students to achieve—and reach beyond—their dreams is greatly strengthened,” Nichols notes. (To learn more about the Genes to Society curriculum, visit

<http://www.jhu.edu/~gazette/2009/09mar09/09som.html>.)

At the foundation of this extraordinary project is a \$20 million commitment from then Board of Trustees Chair Michael Armstrong and his wife, Anne. The Armstrongs recognized a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Hopkins to construct a building around a new curriculum and, in the process, forever change the face of medical education at Hopkins and around the world.

“Without the generosity of the Armstrongs and other visionary donors, this project would never have gotten off the ground,” Nichols reflects. “An undertaking of this magnitude requires a few pioneers who share the vision of what medical education can and should be as we look to a future filled with rapid-paced discoveries and unpredictable challenges.” *Marlene England*

To contribute to the Anne and Michael Armstrong Medical Education Building,

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