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## Food sciences moving to Innovation Campus

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# Food sciences moving to Innovation Campus

The University of Nebraska added \$4.5 million in leased space at Nebraska Innovation Campus Friday, bringing its total lease commitment at the research and technology park to \$7.8 million.

The NU Board of Regents approved a plan adding 117,000 additional square feet of space to the campus and moving the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Food Science and Technology Department to the campus in 2015.

NU committed in 2012 to more than 31,000 square feet of office space in the Innovation Commons -- the former 4-H Building at the old State Fair Park -- expected to open later this year.

Last year, NU extended its lease to 90,000 square feet in the former Industrial Arts Building, called the Life Sciences Collaboration Center, for classrooms and access to second-story greenhouses to be used by UNL plant sciences students.

But as NU secured that space, leaders and faculty members in Lincoln also discussed moving the Food Sciences and Technology Department from its home in the Food Industry Complex on East Campus to Innovation Campus, doubling lab and classroom space and putting it in proximity to ConAgra, the only private company announced for the research and technology park.

Innovation Campus Director Dan Duncan said negotiations with a second company are under way and could be announced later this year.

Friday's revision to the lease adds 117,000 square feet of office space, classrooms and laboratories to the former Industrial Arts Building.

Food sciences Chairman Rolando Flores said the department's new space, totaling 123,000 square feet, will double its area and better accommodate the growing department, which has doubled enrollment to 78 undergraduate and 62 grad students in the past seven years.

The department plans to add six faculty members ahead of the May or June 2015 move to Innovation Campus, Flores said.

The newly christened Food Innovation Center will give faculty and students more space to do research in food processing, safety, allergens and nutrition, while also designating classrooms for chemistry, microbiology and food product development.

Flores said the most exciting benefit of the move will be putting food science students near ConAgra researchers.

"Not only will we be closer to city campus and industry, but also to ConAgra, whom we are working with closely," he said.

UNL administrators said moving the department to Innovation Campus "makes UNL an immediate national player in vying for a national 'Innovation Institute' in food engineering."

Food sciences classes will start at Innovation Campus in fall 2015.

The plans to add more classrooms to Innovation Campus also will increase busing costs, UNL administrators said, by as much as \$636,000 for shuttling food sciences students between the old fairgrounds and East and city campuses.

NU will also be responsible for several thousand square feet of undeveloped office space at the campus until a tenant is found, Regent Bob Phares of North Platte said Friday.

"We will intend to sublease that," Phares said. "Some of that has already been done. Great prospects are out there for the balance of it, but we are taking the sublease risk."

According to the program statement approved by the Board of Regents Friday, developer Nebraska Nova must "undertake good faith efforts to obtain leasing commitments" for Innovation Campus, and begin construction on the next phase of the project within one year of the Food Innovation Center's occupation.

Article by Chris Dunker, Lincoln Journal Star

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## Source

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