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UA unveils Health Sciences Innovation Building

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Courtesy

The University of Arizona opened the doors of its new Health Sciences Innovation Building to students and faculty over the summer, but on Monday, Nov. 4 the

Tucson public got its first taste of the new nine-story, 220,000-square-foot, \$165 million structure.

“Open House” guided tours took place last Monday and Tuesday, where the public could explore the new building and could catch a panel of experts from across UA Health Sciences discussing cancer prevention.

The discussion took place in the “Forum,” a large, open space that hosts “educational presentations on various health-care topics” for community members on the ground floor of the new Health Sciences Innovation Building. The Forum is designed to accommodate over 1,000 people for special events.

The building also provides spaces for clinical skills development and simulation practice.

“We’re merging innovative curriculum, novel technology and state-of-the-art design to re-imagine the education and training our students need now to be productive and innovative team members later,” said Dr. Leigh A. Neumayer, UA Health Sciences Interim Senior Vice President.

The Health Sciences Innovation Building accomplishes a number of important objectives to provide the best inter-professional health education possible. Among these objectives are improving human health, fostering collaboration among different disciplines, launching valuable public-private partnerships, attracting and retaining the best health science students, closing the gap between new technology and modern medical education and moving healthcare forward.

However, the most prominent theme in this building is the encouragement of interdisciplinary collaboration. Dr. Kasi Kiehlbaugh, director of the Health Sciences design program, knows the value of working with people from other fields.

“I have seen the catalyst when you bring people together who have different backgrounds,” Dr. Kiehlbaugh said.

Designed by CO Architects out of Los Angeles, different floors of the building are allocated for specific uses. The ground floor includes the Forum, a bookstore and a café. An interaction space and IT support are on the second floor. Floors three through six include most of the classrooms in the building, some common areas and a student lounge on the sixth floor.

Classrooms at the Health Sciences Innovation Building are “flipped,” meaning student interaction is encouraged with whiteboards that can be mounted and

removed easily from walls, movable furniture with wheels and access to useful tools such as 3D printers.

“The professor provides students with articles and materials to read and learn outside of the classroom, so when students attend class, they’re working through problems and advanced concepts,” said Margie Arnett, an interprofessional education specialist for the UA Center for Interprofessional Transformative Healthcare. “The flipped-classroom concept reverses traditional learning into a dynamic, interactive environment.”

The seventh floor is used for simulation practice. Dr. Allan Hamilton is the executive director and Regents Professor of Surgery and he and his colleagues train prospective medical professionals “in an environment where learners can be fully immersed in simulated events.”

Some simulations consist of practicing on breathing and bleeding mannequins programmed with artificial intelligence to simulate real patients, a large-scale mass casualty and even a complicated birth scenario.

“Simulation is the education of the future,” Dr. Hamilton said.

The eighth floor is reserved for clinical skills training such as how to evaluate a patient’s body temperature, pulse, blood pressure and breathing. At the top of the building, on floor nine, is UAHS Research Centers and Administration.

With the opening of the new Health Sciences Innovation Building, the education of UA Health Sciences students will be more comprehensive, practical and collaborative as they start a career in healthcare.

“When we interface with people who are trained to see the world differently and think differently, new and exciting things happen,” Dr. Kiehlbaugh said. “When students go out into their careers, they’ll have firsthand experience with the creativity that flows from that.”

Jack Ramsey is a University of Arizona journalism student and Tucson Local Media intern.

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