

NEWS

Faculty move to the CSBR, University's resident fish follow

BEN STARK, CONTRIBUTOR

Nineteen months after breaking ground, this week, faculty members began moving into the new CSBR facility. One professor, Dr. Bill Capman, has his work cut out for him. In addition to his office and lab supplies, he is installing nearly one thousand gallons of saltwater aquariums.

Dr. Capman is a professor in the biology department. For 20 years, he has been keeping coral reef aquariums at Augsburg for use in teaching. The biology department has talked of expanding the aquariums for many years, and the donor supporting the new aquariums was interested in funding this project a decade before the CSBR broke ground. Without a facility to house their ideas, the project was put on hold.

Over the last two years, Dr. Capman has been busy along with the rest of the science faculty planning for the new building. As the project progressed, faculty worked with administration, architects and McGough Construction. Because corals begin to die after only hours in stagnant water, it was important

to have redundancy in life support equipment which greatly complicated the aquaria's plumbing and electrical needs. As an added precaution, the new aquariums are connected to the facility's backup generator.

Dr. Capman gave me a tour of the new facility which is at the south end of one of the two new general biology labs. Just to the right as you enter from the skyway is the aquarium research lab behind the display aquaria. On the hallway wall outside the lab is a long news ticker. Instead of displaying headlines and stock index numbers, the screens will be connected to a live aquarium feed. Soon students will watch fish, shrimp and live corals.

Inside the lab, the salt water tanks run from the floor to the ceiling. The stands and tanks

have been installed, but there is a great deal of aquarium plumbing, lighting and filtration work yet to be completed. The next step is installing the elaborate rockwork, including a freestanding rock wall Dr. Capman built this summer. The wall will give active fish a circular track to swim, and will allow the rear of the big tank to function as a fish trap if certain fish need to be captured. The tanks will have sensors to monitor temperature, pH and water flow, and email alarms will be sent out if there is a power outage or if conditions are out of range.

In addition to the fundamental goal of housing lots of biological diversity for teaching, a goal is to have reef fish spawning in the new aquariums and for students to do research in state-of-the-

art fish larva-rearing techniques.

Capman said, "My goal is for students to see the aquarium inhabitants as complicated and dynamic organisms, and being able to observe courtship behavior and spawning will help students to see that the fish are not just decorative objects that swim around."

The next couple of weeks will be busy for Dr. Capman and others moving into the new building while wrapping up their fall classes. Despite the additional logistics, every professor is excited for the new building. In total, eight departments are moving into the new building: biology, business, chemistry, computer science, mathematics, physics, psychology and religion.

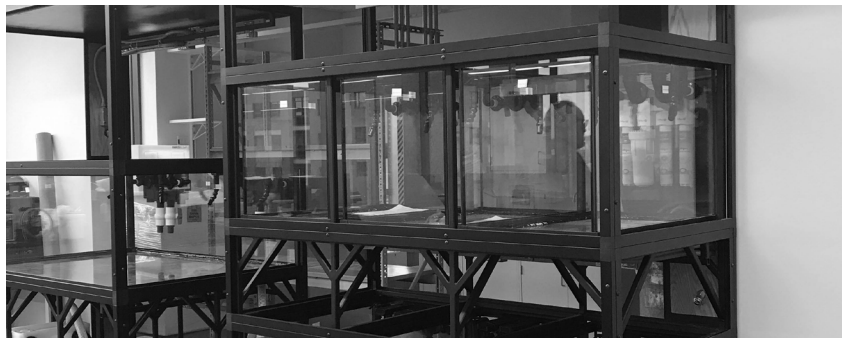


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