

## SCIENCE LEARNING COMMONS

FOSTERING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY  
AND EXCELLENCE IN THE SCIENCES

Lawrence seeks to transform a dated and underutilized lecture hall classroom into a modern active learning space for introductory science courses to boost student academic success.

### A POWERFUL PAIRING

A prestigious 5-year \$1 million grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) through the Science Education Program allows faculty to implement transformational methods in teaching and learning in key introductory science courses, evolving the curriculum and strengthening Lawrence's strong reputation in the sciences. Lawrence is one of just 57 institutions nationwide selected for this support by HHMI, one of the nation's leading science institutes. A reimagined and revamped space is vital for effective implementation.

**LEARNING SPACES PLAY A HUGE  
ROLE IN LEARNING OUTCOMES.  
ACTIVE LEARNING RESULTS IN:**

# 36%

decrease in overall failure rates upon adoption of active learning strategies (analysis of over 200 studies)

# 41%

decrease in failure rates in introductory biology classes with significant in-class group work

# 40-60%

decrease in failure rates in introductory physics classes adopting SCALE-UP active learning

### REIMAGINING THE CLASSROOM Creating an Active Learning Environment

Lawrence is leading the way in educational innovation. Faculty across the sciences are introducing best-in-class methods that are already having an impact on student success. Active Learning Classrooms (ALC) are a fundamental piece of that transformation. Lawrence currently lacks ALC space for large introductory classes where this work can be the most impactful. ALCs are student-centered, technology-rich environments featuring furniture with embedded technology that can easily be reconfigured. ALCs promote critical thinking and active learning through problem-solving, group work, peer teaching, and increased faculty-student interaction.



*Raymond H. Herzog Professor of Science and Professor of Biology Beth DeStasio '83 uses active learning methods in her classes.*

*“Renovating Youngchild 121 into a Science Learning Commons will transform the way faculty and students do science at Lawrence. The redesigned space will allow us to move from a traditional ‘sage on the stage’ practice based on a lecture format to the more contemporary ‘guide at your side’ model of interactive, project-based learning. This approach fosters greater creativity, a team approach to problem-solving, and a richer sense of community in STEM courses.”*

—KATIE KODAT

Provost and Dean of the Faculty

*An active learning classroom in Main Hall serves smaller class sizes.*

**Goal:** \$1M to renovate outdated lecture hall Youngchild 121 by removing lecture style rows and transform it into an open, active learning space that fosters engaged learning and invites collaboration among students and faculty. It will be the main classroom for foundational science courses with enrollments exceeding 40 students.

The revamped space will include:

- Reconfigurable furniture
- State of the art classroom technologies to support group work and active learning teaching methods
- A gathering place for aspiring students to build community, collaborate with peers, and participate in activities that support classroom and laboratory learning.

Reimagined teaching and learning spaces impact the student experience from recruitment to graduation and beyond.

*“The Science Commons will help us give our students the best possible foundation in learning about the natural world. Active learning tables will facilitate closer connections among faculty and students, and technology upgrades will allow seamless sharing of ideas and data. This modern learning space will serve as a physical manifestation of Lawrence’s deep commitment to inclusive excellence in the natural sciences.”*

—STEFAN DEBBERT

Associate Professor of Chemistry & Program Director for Lawrence’s Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Inclusive Excellence Grant

*“In my experiences as a science faculty member at a small liberal arts college, nothing transformed my teaching or the experiences of my students more than the creation of flexible, student-centered classrooms to replace traditional lecture halls.”*

—BARBARA LOM '89

Professor of Biology at Davidson College

Thank you for your consideration of this transformational gift, which will make our vision for offering world-class student support a reality and impact the lives and futures of Lawrentians for years to come.

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LEARNERS. LEADERS. LAWRENTIANS.