



PSU  
Foundation  
PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

# LET KNOWLEDGE SERVE

the case for  
**THE VERNIER SCIENCE CENTER  
AT PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY**



## A MORE INCLUSIVE STEM REVOLUTION FOR OREGON

How we design and build a space matters. Today we have the opportunity to transform PSU students' interest and success in STEM majors through the dramatic reinvention of Portland State's undergraduate science building. With your support, the aging Science Building 1 will soon emerge as the Vernier Science Center (VSC)—with contemporary laboratories, classrooms and culturally affirming spaces to support students' collaboration, exploratory learning and authentic research experiences.

The Vernier Science Center will be an equity-minded, student-centered space that resets the narrative around science education and research by making it visible and accessible, providing teaching and learning spaces that reflect the quality of a PSU education, and expanding understanding among students and the public of what science is and what research looks like.

Throughout the building's visioning and design phases, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) students, faculty and community members—including those who identify as LGBTQIA+ and disabled—offered critical insights to help build spaces that will ultimately serve Oregon's most diverse student population. This effort is not just about creating a welcoming environment. It is about de-centering whiteness in STEM education and fostering diverse perspectives in science.

When students feel affirmed by a space, their confidence soars. They are more likely to build community with others, and more likely to see a future for themselves in the sciences. The result? Powerful new opportunities for PSU students and for our region.

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**Note:** This ask is part of a PSU request to finish two projects in which the legislature has already invested.

### WHO WE SERVE

# 62%

LOW INCOME,  
STUDENTS OF COLOR

# 1,500+

STUDENTS IN PROGRAMS  
SUPPORTING FIRST-GEN +  
STUDENTS OF COLOR

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### PROJECT DETAILS

# \$107M

PROJECT COST

# \$7.5M

PHILANTHROPIC  
MATCHING FUNDS  
COMMITTED

# \$64.7M

STATE BOND FUNDING  
ALREADY COMMITTED

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### 2023 LEGISLATIVE ASK

# \$32M

XI-Q BONDS REQUESTED





CONCEPTUAL RENDERING

## WHY IT MATTERS

### **A DIVERSE STEM WORKFORCE**

This project will be one of the single biggest drivers for diversifying Oregon's STEM workforce. It will also support the development of the next climate and environmental science leaders who are more representative of the communities disproportionately impacted by global climate change.

### **CULTURALLY COMPETENT STEM EDUCATION**

The STEM programming offered by this renovation will acknowledge diverse perspectives in science, including indigenous ways of knowing—helping to prepare a culturally competent workforce.

### **CAREER-FOCUSED RESEARCH EXPERIENCES**

Innovative undergraduate laboratories will provide real-world research experiences that empower, engage and train the next generation of science and health professionals.

### **NETWORK OF DEEP PARTNERSHIPS**

VSC programs will connect with the following partners across the state: City of Portland, Clackamas Community College, Kaiser Permanente, METRO Regional Government, Mount Hood Community College, Portland Community College, Portland Leadership Foundation, Portland Parks & Recreation, Oregon Health & Science University, Oregon State University, U.S. Fish & Wildlife and U.S. Geological Survey.

### **INCREASED CAPACITY, SAFETY + ACCESSIBILITY**

The renovation of this 53-year-old building will increase the number of undergraduates served daily from 700 to 4,000 students. It will also remove asbestos, lead and PCBs, provide seismic upgrades, enhance safety and update accessibility for all students.



**JUDY BLUEHORSE SKELTON**

Assistant Professor of Indigenous Nations Studies

*"Our vision for the new Vernier Science Center is one of collaboration—a place designed for and by the students we support every day."*



**DIANA DEMCHENKO**

PSU biology student, future virus researcher

*"The amazing research I got to be involved with as a Portland State undergraduate opened up everything to me."*



**VERNIER SCIENCE CENTER  
PROPOSED OCCUPANTS**

**DEPARTMENTS**

Biology  
Chemistry  
Env. Science & Management  
Geography  
Geology  
Indigenous Nations Studies  
Physics

**CENTERS & PROGRAMS**

**BUILD EXITO**

Center for Spatial Analysis  
and Research  
Honors College  
Institute for Natural Resources  
Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority  
Participation in STEM  
McNair Scholars  
STEM Undergraduate Education  
Research  
STEM Education & Equity  
Institute

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