Ross Hall

Today’s Vision,
Tomorrow’s Achievements
Something amazing happened in 1929. A group of visionaries raised $224,000 to construct a building on the campus of Alabama Polytechnic Institute to meet the needs of the institution’s rapidly-growing chemistry and chemical engineering programs.

With its blackboards and Bunsen burners, lecture halls and laboratories, Ross Hall’s cutting-edge facilities helped to educate generations of chemists and engineers, and launch technologies that changed the way we lived.

But times have changed and so has engineering. A $13.5 million renovation of Ross Hall, including the addition of 10,000 square feet, will transform this historic Georgian structure into a facility designed to anticipate and accommodate today’s fast-paced technological advances. Flexible, state-of-the-art classrooms, labs and office space will help to ensure the college’s place among the engineering programs that are shaping the 21st century.

We invite you to invest in Ross Hall and the students who pass through its doors. Give this Auburn Engineering landmark’s past a promising future.

Bennett Battle Ross
1854-1930
Professor, Dean, Acting President
1912 - First classes in chemical engineering taught at Alabama Polytechnic Institute

1913 - Department of Chemical Engineering formed

1929 - Groundbreaking begins for the new chemistry building to house chemistry, pharmacy, and chemical engineering programs. The building is named for Bennett Battle Ross, a leading professor, dean and acting president of the institution in the early 1900s

1930 - Ross dies just before the building is completed. Its first use is to allow his body to lie in state while hundreds of friends and colleagues honor him

1952 - Pharmacy moves from Ross to Miller Hall

1964 - School of Chemistry moves from Ross to Saunders Laboratory

1964 - Ross is renovated to accommodate the needs of Auburn’s mechanical, chemical and aerospace engineering departments

1977 - Aerospace engineering moves to Harbert Center, creating space for the expanding mechanical and chemical engineering programs

1990 - Renovations and additions begin on Ross Hall

2005 - Renovations and additions begin on Ross Hall
The Samuel Ginn College of Engineering is at a crossroads, positioning itself to become one of the top engineering programs in the country. The strategic plan that supports this vision is aggressive, and a major priority includes significant facility enhancements. Ross Hall’s renovation and expansion is a cornerstone of this plan, designed to provide facilities that anticipate future technologies and enable cross-disciplinary collaboration while respecting the building’s historic architectural elements.

Ross Hall’s Georgian exterior will be cleaned and repairs made to the brick and limestone face. New windows and doors resembling those of the original structure will incorporate today’s energy-efficient technology. The area around the building will be reconfigured to allow natural light to enter the basement levels and create a barrier against water intrusion.

Emphasis for the interior spaces is on function and flexibility. Movable furnishings and multiple access points for utilities such as power, computer and water will ensure that the facilities – laboratories, classrooms or offices – meet a variety of current and future needs. Furnishings, blending neutral tones with green and blue highlights and natural woods, will complement new light-colored oak doors and cabinetry. Black will be used on counters and furnishings to add depth and interest.

In the short term, the new classrooms, laboratories and administrative offices will address the needs of the chemical and mechanical engineering departments. Upon completion of Phase II of the new Transportation Technology Center, mechanical engineering will move out of Ross Hall, providing chemical engineering with the facilities necessary to expand its academic and research programs.

The existing patio on the north side has been demolished to accommodate the 10,000-square-foot addition. This will provide a three-story atrium with the Old North pediment and its Palladian window as a focal point. This new area will serve as a gathering space which will increase opportunities for interaction among faculty and students.
The frontier of scientific discovery is blurring the lines between traditional disciplines such as chemical engineering and the biological sciences. Auburn’s chemical engineering program encompasses areas of study such as biotechnology, nanotechnology, computational engineering and advanced energy systems, as well as the more traditional areas.

The new Ross Hall is designed to give students and faculty the facilities and the flexibility they need to succeed and to lead in this ever-changing discipline. It will provide:

- A state-of-the-art computer laboratory, multimedia auditorium, instructional undergraduate project labs, and student study areas designed to increase faculty and student interaction and to support interdisciplinary cooperation within the college, with peer institutions and with the businesses community.

- Laboratories to support research of efficient fuels and a strategic move into biological engineering.

- An environment that encourages research and helps the department reach its goal of $9 million annually in research expenditures or an average of $300,000-$400,000 per faculty member.

- An environment where faculty offices, classrooms and most labs are together under one roof – for the first time in many years – fostering department synergy and a sense of community.

Advancing chemical engineering
The renovation of Ross Hall offers an opportunity for you to remain connected to a future of promise and progress – to the place where you found your world of opportunity and where the engineers who follow you will find theirs.

The Samuel Ginn College of Engineering invites you to invest in the future of Auburn Engineering. Your gift to the renovation of Ross Hall or the designation of one of its rooms will have a lasting impact not only on the educational opportunities available to our students, but also on the ongoing realization of the college’s vision. To recognize those whose philanthropy makes this endeavor possible, the Auburn University Board of Trustees has approved a number of naming opportunities ranging from laboratories to classrooms to large public spaces.

Thanks to your generous commitment, Ross Hall, from its cupola to its classrooms, will continue to provide an environment where knowledge, creativity, curiosity and vision come together to create the technologies and the leaders of the future.

The Joe T. and Billie Carole McMillan Auditorium (Funded) $1 million

The 1,700-square-foot auditorium, fully equipped with modern multimedia capabilities, facilitates advanced instructional techniques and supports conferencing with industry partners and educators at other top institutions. Tiered seating for 90-120 allows participants to view speakers in comfort. Movable chairs and desks equipped with computer and power connections provide flexibility. The arched ceiling and treatment of the walls and stage reflect the rich decorative details and neoclassical elements of the building’s original design.

Computer Laboratory $1 million

Today’s rapidly emerging innovations and technologies require that students be well versed in computer techniques and practice. The new state-of-the-art, 2,500-square-foot instructional computer lab accommodates up to 65 students or can be partitioned for use by two smaller groups. Four large tables provide convenient locations for group projects, collaborative activities and multi-disciplinary team meetings. The lab’s location, adjacent to faculty and graduate teaching assistant offices, offers increased opportunities for instructional interaction with faculty and graduate students.

Audio Video $250,000

Ross’s auditorium, computer labs, and conference rooms house the latest audiovisual and multimedia technology to enhance classroom instruction and support cross-disciplinary and team activities with industrial and academic partners. State-of-the-art equipment includes ceiling-mounted video projectors and screens, smart podiums with presentation computers, document cameras, VCR/DVD and laptop connections, and speakers.

First Floor Mezzanine $100,000

Second Floor Mezzanine $100,000

The mezzanines open to a three-story atrium with the structure’s original brick face pediment as its focal point. This light-filled space acts as a bridge between the new addition and the original structure by combining a timeless interior with natural fabrics. These areas contain a variety of comfortable seating and allow for the observation of activity on surrounding levels.

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Faculty Lounge

This 400-square-foot space provides faculty members with a convenient environment in which to gather and relax. This lounge allows for informal faculty get-togethers and collaboration, and provides a renewed sense of cohesion and unity among faculty. Comfortable seating and a kitchenette offers a convenient place for faculty members to dine together and its location allows it to service events in the nearby conference rooms.

Student Advisor Offices

Department academic advisors are a critical component of the college’s recruiting and retention efforts. Conveniently located next to the department administration suites, these offices house advisors who assist students with academic planning, scholarships, career choice, study habits, assistance in locating academic help, referrals for personal, physical or mental health assessment, and other needs as they arise. A hallway alcove provides a comfortable waiting area for students, and prospective students and their families interested in learning more about the department, to wait for an advisor.

Faculty Offices

Faculty offices located on the ground, first and second floors provide a functional and aesthetically pleasing environment in which to work.

U-shaped, light-colored oak desks with a peninsula provide a large expanse of work space and a convenient location for one-on-one student conferences. File cabinets and bookshelves provide ample storage space.

Student Facilities

Undergraduate Project Research Laboratory

Hands-on research experiences are an integral component of the undergraduate chemical engineering curriculum. This laboratory houses general lab equipment to support undergraduate research efforts and enhances unit operations teaching and research in the areas of heat and mass transfer, fluid mechanics, thermodynamics, and mass and energy balances.

Conference Rooms

Two large conference rooms (625 square feet) and four smaller rooms (145 square feet) provide venues for receptions, seminars, faculty meetings, senior design presentations, student experiment reports, and conferences with academic, industry or government partners.

Each large conference room includes a table to seat 14, with capability to seat an additional 14 around the perimeter of the room. Two south-facing windows and a window wall facing the corridor ensure that the space is light and open. Smaller conference rooms are furnished with oak tables and comfortable seating. All of the rooms have the latest computer and presentation connections.

Faculty Facilities

Faculty Research Laboratories

Four large laboratories ranging in size from 1,140 to almost 2,000 square feet and two smaller laboratories support research efforts in the areas of electronics packaging, environmental transport, process control, microfibrous materials, systems research, and engineering education. Oak cabinets with black countertops are designed to accommodate future research with flexible configurations and multiple locations for utilities such as power, water and computer.

Department Chair Suites

These house the department chairs of mechanical and mechanical engineering and their administrative staff. Filled with natural light, these corner offices’ light-wood furnishings include a desk and small conference area. The adjacent staff work area complements the suite and is convenient to the small and large conference rooms and the lounge.

Distinguished Professor Suites

In addition to cutting-edge research laboratories, the renovated Ross Hall includes four distinguished professor suites. Each houses a top-level researcher, an administrative assistant, and doctoral fellows who support the professor’s research. The suites’ location in the same facility as laboratory work space and graduate student offices facilitates collegiality and team communication.
Collaborative learning experiences and team projects are important elements of any practical engineering education. Designed with comfort in mind, these centrally located lounges furnished with couches, chairs and tables, provide convenient meeting places for students.

The Student Lounge opens to the atrium providing a dramatic view of the building’s interior. The Student Organization Lounge contains a secure storage space for student organization materials and equipment. Vending machines nearby provide easy access to refreshments.

Auburn engineers are known for their solid foundation in the fundamentals and their hands-on experience. This 1,560-square-foot space provides quality work space and the educational tools and equipment required for senior design projects and competitive teams.

The Graduate Student Villages are designed to create a sense of academic community and collaboration. Daily interaction between graduate teaching and research assistants and senior faculty encourages the sharing of knowledge and expertise, benefiting their educational process as well as that of the undergraduates with whom they work.

The light and airy environment is furnished with functional and comfortable light-colored wood furnishings consistent with the building’s color scheme.

These offices provide work space for postdoctoral students whose training and experience allows them to work closely with lead faculty and graduate students to identify and develop new technologies in the college’s research centers and laboratories.