Grand opening of the new Science Education Center

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The new Science Education Center (SEC) is holding a grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony at noon on Tuesday, April 12. The event is a chance for current and prospective students to tour the building and familiarize themselves with the new SEC student resources and Metropolitan State’s Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programs.

The addition of the Science Education Center provides space and resources tailored to students enrolled in the university’s science and math courses. The delegation of the new space feeds anticipation for new degree programs in the future to enhance the university’s current profile of STEM programs.

Currently, the university offers both undergraduate and graduate programs in nursing, biology, chemistry, dental hygiene, urban science education, life science teaching, applied mathematics and environmental science, among others.

The building will offer classrooms, laboratories and resources to advance student research, such as lasers, ventilated lab tables and a 3D projector for the study of anatomical structures.

The $39 million building features three floors totaling 65,700 square feet comprising six classrooms, a large symposium room, nine teaching labs, four research labs, one geographic information systems computer lab, eight small group study rooms, a science and math tutoring center, a large atrium to host civic and academic functions, and a catering room.

The building features innovative design and architecture inspired by the sciences. Each floor displays a different color scheme to symbolize the many disciplines of science. For example, the first floor, which offers biology courses, is designed with earth tones. The first floor also displays many pieces of art. A large, hand-blown glass sculpture created by local artists, represents waves of light.

Solar panels, donated by Xcel Energy, line the building’s roof. The building’s water use and waste water production are tracked automatically. Salt-tolerant landscape plants shape the Sixth Street side of the building, and native Minnesota prairie plants complement the landscape near the back sidewalk, where porous pavement and terraced sand beds provide a reduction in runoff water. Student study rooms are equipped with whiteboard paint, allowing a nearly 360-degree projection of ideas and collaborative student work.

Faculty members and current STEM students will be available to answer questions and share their experiences and future plans at the grand opening. Food and tours will be provided. For more information on the building, please contact me directly. Information on the artists whose works are featured in the building may be found at www.inplainsightart.com.