

## News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Charleston Southern University Campus  
Developing a Lowcountry Aesthetic  
With Completion of New Science Building**

*Facility Allows for New Undergraduate Research Opportunities*

CHARLESTON, S.C., Dec. 13, 2005 – Charleston Southern University, whose 41-year-old campus features mostly simple painted stucco buildings with exterior circulation, is beginning to reinvent its campus appearance, bringing a more collegiate, Lowcountry-inspired aesthetic to the campus with the completion of a \$13.1 million undergraduate science research and teaching building.

Designed by the architecture firm Lord, Aeck & Sargent, the new Charleston Southern Science Building opened its doors this fall to biology, chemistry and biochemistry majors. The 54,000-square-foot facility is two stories plus a mechanical penthouse beneath the roof. It has eight research laboratories, 11 teaching laboratories, 15 faculty offices and additional classrooms. The building will expand opportunities in undergraduate research.

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“The Science Building adds new architectural language to our campus,” said Sue Mitchell, Charleston Southern vice president for business affairs. “While it is unlike any other building at the University, it complements our existing, historic structure, Lightsey Chapel, and allows us to take the University in a new architectural direction. We will incorporate elements from the Science Building into the other buildings we are planning for our campus.”

“The Lord, Aeck & Sargent design team tried to create an architecture that would respond to the existing campus environment but also add a greater collegiate sensibility with Lowcountry elements,” said Joe Greco, AIA, Lord, Aeck & Sargent design principal for the project. “So the Science Building’s exterior is clad in a complementary buff-colored brick and cast stone in the color range of the existing architecture, and it also features generous porches, overhanging copper roofs, gutters and downspouts, and metalwork inspired by traditional Lowcountry wrought iron detailing.”

Greco noted that the project’s biggest architectural challenge was to simultaneously create a prominent building that would complement, yet remain deferential to the most important and distinctive building on the Charleston Southern campus, Lightsey Chapel, which fronts the north side of Charleston Southern’s square-shaped Reflection Pond.

“We determined that the best way to respond to the challenge was to situate the Science Building perpendicular to Lightsey Chapel on the west side of the pond in a similarly bold and axial manner, though set back further from the pond. This allowed us to create a structure of sufficient strength to serve as a strong counterpoint worthy of terminating a major campus axis without overpowering Lightsey Chapel,” Greco said.

The Science Building was developed in a U-shaped courtyard arrangement with the aim of creating an intimate pedestrian-scaled campus space as part of the entry sequence. A copper dome, which serves as the terminus of the axis, sits atop a plinth articulated with

panoramic clerestories. An oculus graces the top of the building rotunda, and highlights the dome's interior mural – a blue sky and clouds.

“In the broadest sense, our goal was to create a top-notch campus science center that combines learning and research spaces with collegial, informal spaces for students and faculty to meet and interact,” Greco said. “So we designed a rotunda with a large, circular public staircase that drives this interaction. The downstairs rotunda lobby features several whiteboard lounge areas for collaboration, and at the top of the stairs the second floor features a ‘great room’ with a variety of more casual gathering areas punctuated by natural clerestory lighting from above. Because the campus is flat, we purposely located this gathering space at the upper level to provide vistas out across the Reflection Pond and beyond.”

Greco noted that the building's interior was also designed with a good deal of contiguous, uninterrupted program area for future reconfiguration. “College and university buildings need to last for a long time, but science buildings in particular need to be designed with long-term flexibility because of the rapid rate of scientific discovery and of changes in scientific instrumentation,” Greco said. “Charleston Southern's Science Building was designed to be able to adapt to such changes over the years.”

In fact, three of the Science Building's research laboratories house an extensive package of new, state-of-the-art research instrumentation, including mass spectrometers, gas and liquid chromatographs, spectrophotometers, a fluorimeter, a real-time protein chain reactor and a fluorescence microscope. “With this new capability, Charleston Southern joins a small number of the most prestigious private colleges in offering undergraduates the opportunity to participate directly with faculty in novel scientific research,” said Dr. Jeryl Johnson, dean of Charleston Southern's College of Science and Mathematics.

## **The Design and Construction Team**

The design and construction team for the Charleston Southern Science Building includes:

- Lord, Aeck & Sargent (Atlanta), architect
- Newcomb & Boyd (Atlanta), MEP/FP engineer
- Uzun & Case (Atlanta), structural engineer
- Forsberg Engineering (Charleston), civil engineer
- Seamon, Whiteside & Associates (Charleston), landscape architect
- Trident Construction Company, Inc. (Charleston), construction manager
- Cullum Constructors Inc. (Charleston), cost estimation & mechanical
- Atlantic Electric Inc. (Charleston), cost estimation & electrical

## **About Charleston Southern University**

Charleston Southern's mission is promoting academic excellence in a Christian environment. It is one of the largest accredited, private universities in South Carolina. Affiliated with the South Carolina Baptist Convention, the university offers 32 undergraduate and three graduate programs. For more information, visit Charleston Southern at [www.csuniv.edu](http://www.csuniv.edu).

## **About Lord, Aeck & Sargent**

Founded in 1942, Lord, Aeck & Sargent is an award-winning architectural firm serving clients in scientific, academic, historic preservation, arts and cultural, and multi-family housing and mixed-use markets. The firm's core values are responsive design, technological expertise and exceptional service. Lord, Aeck & Sargent has offices in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Atlanta; and Chapel Hill, North Carolina. For more information, visit the firm at [www.lordaecksargent.com](http://www.lordaecksargent.com).

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