ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Resolution No. 2026.05/21
Authorization for Design and Construction Services for Research and Teaching Greenhouse Facilities

Resolution

Whereas, Illinois State University (ISU) Felmley Science Annex (FSA) opened for classes in 1963 and is a four-story, 80,784 gross square foot STEM facility that houses spaces for Geology/Geography, Health Sciences, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and General Classrooms, and

Whereas, FSA has been modified numerous times during the past 60 years, but not in a planned or comprehensive manner. As a result, changing University pedagogical requirements, aging, failed and obsolete infrastructure, and changing codes have resulted in the building not functioning as designed or required, and

Whereas, the FSA Greenhouse (4,000 GSF) opened in 1964. ISU evaluated the facility and determined this facility to be an unsafe teaching environment and terminated instructional classes in this facility for the foreseeable future. The greenhouse is currently being used by the Biological Sciences Department to house and grow various plants that were previously used for multiple teaching pedagogies, and

Whereas, FSA and the FSA Greenhouse are currently performing well below ISU requirements. Subsequently several ISU biology and chemistry labs in FSA are not fully functional resulting in reduced ISU College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) laboratory teaching capacity, and

Therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Illinois State University authorizes University expenditures not to exceed $7,118,639 million for all necessary design and construction services for the new Research and Teaching Greenhouse Facilities and directs University administration to establish the project budget and appoint architects, engineers, and other necessary project consultants in accordance with University procedures.

Board Action on:		Postpone:	
Motion by:		Amend:	
Second by:		Disapprove:	
Vote:	Yeas: ____ Nays: ____	Approve:	

ATTEST: Board Action, May 8, 2026

Secretary / Chairperson

Board of Trustees
Illinois State University
Authorization for Design and Construction Services for
Research and Teaching Greenhouse Facilities

Background

Felmley Science Annex (FSA) opened for classes in 1963 and is a four-story 80,784 gross square foot Illinois State University (ISU) STEM facility that houses spaces for Geology/Geography, Health Sciences, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and General Classrooms. FSA has been modified numerous times during the past 60 years, but not in a planned or comprehensive manner. As a result, changing University pedagogical requirements, aging, failed and obsolete infrastructure, and changing codes have resulted in the building not functioning as designed or required. Therefore, FSA is currently performing well below university requirements. Subsequently, several biology and chemistry labs in FSA are not fully functional resulting in reduced College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) laboratory teaching capacity.

The FSA Greenhouse (4,000 GSF) opened in 1964. The greenhouse is currently used by the Biological Sciences Department to house and grow various plants that were previously used for multiple teaching pedagogies. Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) evaluated the facility due to operational issue complaints and determined this facility to be an unsafe teaching environment and unsuitable working facility, terminating teaching activities. Until this determination, approximately 3,000 ISU students and 500 community visitors used this as a Biological Sciences teaching facility on an annual basis. The CAS Biological Sciences department needs an environment to teach, not just grow, production plants. The University is currently renting an off-campus greenhouse through July 2027, with (2) one-year extensions available.

The Science Laboratory Building research greenhouse (2,481 GSF) was built in 1996 and has been in continuous operation since that time. Given the age of the facility, many components have failed or are failing, and the overall design of the space is limiting with only three greenhouse bays to accommodate all research needs for the School of Biological Sciences. The space is in high demand for plant-focused projects for undergraduate and graduate research projects associated with independent studies and thesis/dissertation work.

Justification

The relocation of the new STEM Building site enables the development of a cohesive Science Complex through the completion of the Science Laboratory Building Annex (SLB-A), the STEM Building, and the construction of Research and Teaching Greenhouse Facilities. This re-imagined plan also eliminates the need to build a rooftop teaching greenhouse, improves constructability of both projects, eliminates maintenance and logistic challenges related to a rooftop greenhouse, and lowers exposure to unknown site conditions.

The FSA Greenhouse needs to be replaced to restore pedagogical functionality. The Science Laboratory Building Greenhouse is also outdated and lacks the ability to support state-of-the-art research. Building the new Teaching and Research Greenhouse Facilities will co-locate the teaching and research greenhouses, provide a state-of-the-art research facility, and the needed teaching and research greenhouse space to accommodate current students and future growth. The ISU Strategic Plan calls for STEM teaching capacity to be increased and to accommodate the realized Mennonite College of Nursing (MCN) growth.

Finally, the new greenhouse facilities will support opportunities for community engagement, including educational programming, facility tours, and the potential reinstatement of the ISU Greenhouse Philanthropic Gala.

In summary, the proposed relocation and associated improvements provide necessary instructional capacity, modern teaching and research greenhouse facilities, improved accessibility, reduced project risk, and alignment with Illinois State University's long-term strategic and academic priorities.

Research and Teaching Greenhouse Facilities Project Plan

The project scope involves constructing an on-grade 11,850 square foot divided research and teaching greenhouse.

Design Fees Total	$	512,126
Construction Total		5,536,073
FF&E Total		469,848
Contingency		600,592
Total Research and Teaching Greenhouse Facilities Project	$	7,118,639

Source of Funding

The University will issue debt to finance the project and use Academic Enhancement Fee (AEF) revenue to repay the debt. A comprehensive debt issuance resolution will be brought to the July 2026 Board of Trustees Meeting.