

UCSD structural laboratory receives \$2.6 million to expand existing lab

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UCSD STRUCTURES LABORATORY RECEIVES \$2.6 MILLION TO EXPAND EXISTING LAB

Structural design and seismic testing studies at the University of California, San Diego, already the focus of attention from the international research community, will expand further with the construction of a new \$2.6 million laboratory adjacent to the Charles Lee Powell Structural Systems Laboratory.

As envisioned, the new 5,175 square-foot laboratory--to be called the Charles Lee Powell Structural Components Laboratory-- will house equipment for component testing, a machine and electronic shop, and a shake table that would simulate real-time seismic loads on a variety of structures.

Combined, the new structural components lab and the original structural systems lab will be called the Charles Lee Powell Structures Laboratories.

Construction of the new structures building, which has about the same area and will be about 60 percent as tall as the original 5-story building, is being made possible through a \$1 million grant from the Charles Lee Powell Foundation, with the remainder coming from UC research funds.

"We are grateful to the Powell Foundation for their continued support for earthquake-related research which is so important to the citizens of California," said M. Lea Rudee, dean of UCSD's Division of Engineering.

Frieder Seible, associate director of the Powell laboratory, said the extra space is needed to permit Powell researchers to pursue an estimated two-year backlog of seismic studies. Once built, he said, the new lab is expected to be self-sustaining with research funded by Caltrans, the National Science Foundation, the masonry and concrete industries, and others.

Full-scale testing on large structures, such as bridge columns, freeway on-and-off ramps and ocean platforms, are planned in the original lab, which will remain as the Charles Lee Powell Structural Systems Laboratory.

Completed in March 1986, the Powell laboratory is one of the largest structures research laboratory in the Western Hemisphere. Powell researchers currently are conducting the first, full-scale test in the United States for earthquake resistance of a five-story reinforced masonry building. The structural integrity of such buildings is of considerable concern in seismic regions throughout the country. The study's principal investigators include Gilbert Hegemier, director of the Powell lab; Frieder Seible; and Nigel Priestley, an internationally recognized expert in the seismic design of both bridges and buildings.

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