

*The proposed Edward St. John Learning and Teaching Center would offer 2,000 classroom seats and be used daily by one-third of the campus's undergraduates. It would address a serious shortage of modern classroom space on the state's flagship campus. The following is excerpted from a Sept. 14, 2011 Baltimore "Sun" story.*

## **Baltimore developer donates \$10 million for high-tech classroom building at College Park**

**Governor praises St. John's gift; state funding still needed for \$63 million project to move forward**



Baltimore developer Edward St. John has donated \$10 million to the University of Maryland, College Park to help his alma mater build a new high-tech classroom building in the heart of campus.

"This signature building is destined to be one of the most popular and heavily used on campus, and it is a dramatic step forward educationally," University of Maryland President Wallace D. Loh said in a statement. "This is one of our most needed facilities."

For construction on the \$63 million building to move forward, the General Assembly would have to approve almost \$48 million in funding in the 2013 state budget. Gov. Martin O'Malley included the center in his projected budget.

The governor praised St. John for his gift.

"The impact of his leadership and vision will span decades and directly affect the day-to-day learning experiences of Maryland students," O'Malley said in a statement. "In difficult economic times, innovative approaches that bring the public and private sectors together enable the State to build on its strengths."

St. John, a 1961 graduate of the university, said he wants others to benefit from the kind of educational experience he had in College Park. He founded St. John Properties, one of the state's largest commercial development companies, in 1971.

"I strongly believe that education has the power to transform lives and strengthen communities, and know that this center will benefit University of Maryland students for decades to come," St. John said in a statement.

Sharon Akers, executive director of the Edward St. John Foundation, said the developer was traveling out of the country on Wednesday. "He feels education is so important," she said. "To combine that with the building component of his life and his alma mater, this is a gift that is tremendously special for him."

The proposed 47,900-square-foot building would largely replace Holzapfel Hall along the campus' central McKeldin Mall, though the facade of Holzapfel would remain to maintain design consistency. The space would feature large lecture halls connected by centralized technology and would be used most heavily by freshmen and sophomores.

"What worked in the past isn't adequate today," Loh said. "This new capacity will foster a more active style of learning, transform students' educational experience and fundamentally strengthen the university."

# Views of Proposed Edward St. John Learning and Teaching Center

