

by Clayton H. Heathcock, Dean



In this column, the Dean usually writes about important faculty and student achievements in research—creative breakthroughs that lead to useful technologies, scientific awards and election to the National Academies. In this installment, I would like to tell you about the creative endeavors of a somewhat different College group—a group of people of diverse talents who have worked together to accomplish an amazing amount in a short time.

Locally, this group is known simply as “the Surge Committee.” More correctly, we are “The Latimer-Hildebrand Surge Committee.” We were originally appointed by Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Carol Christ to plan and execute the moves of offices, teaching labs, and research labs necessary to implement the seismic upgrades of Latimer and Hildebrand Halls, which are scheduled to begin August 1, 2000.

This seismic work will be funded by FEMA, with matching money from the State of California. As we have described in a previous *News Journal*, the FEMA project will require that the entire Hildebrand tower and about 20 percent of the Hildebrand B- and D-levels be vacated for approximately 18 months. The challenge that faced the Surge Committee was to relocate (that is, to “surge”) researchers, teaching labs, faculty offices, and even the entire Chemistry Library, to appropriate space for this period of time.

At the outset of our planning, we made the decision that, to the extent possible, we would try to develop a “one-move” surge plan. That is, because of the complexity of some of the equipment we had to relocate, it seemed highly desirable to create new space that would serve the permanent needs of the function being relocated. This was feasible because we actually had a fair amount of space that became available when Tan Hall was occupied three years ago. The problem was that this available space was of rather low quality. However, we thought it made sense to invest the “surge money” into the upgrading of our older buildings, rather than to spend it to rent surge space off campus.

The key players of the Surge Committee are the project manager (Brad Noel of UCB Capital Projects), the architect (Bob Hayes of Anshen & Allen), the general contractor’s representatives (Al Menchaca and Craig Jamison of Rudolph & Sletten), and the “customer’s representatives” (Alex Shtromberg, the College Engineer, Susan Slavick, the College Building Manager, and myself). Our group is aided and abetted by our fiscal conscience, Tom Ventresco (UCB Space Management and Capital Projects), and we receive periodic support from Yau-Man Chan (Director of College Network Services).

The committee meets every Wednesday afternoon from 1-4 p.m. in room 403 Latimer Hall—a room we have all grown to view as our secondary office. In these weekly meetings, we review the progress of the more than 60 surge



The basement of Gilman Hall has been gutted to prepare for construction of the new Pitzer Center for Theoretical Chemistry.



The Surge Committee members (from front, clockwise): Brad Noel, Susan Slavick, Bruce Arsenaut, Al Lee, Bob Hayes, Al Menchaca, Gary German, Bob Rycerski, Tom Ventresco, Rich Schwab, Alex Shtromberg, and Dean Clayton Heathcock.



projects, ranging from million-dollar laboratory constructions to relatively simple office refurbishments. We also work out staging details and deal with budget issues. These weekly meetings are augmented by numerous detail meetings with individual faculty members whose research operations are being relocated. The purpose of these detail meetings is to find out exactly what we need to provide for surge space in order to make it possible for the researchers to do their work at that new location.

We have grown into a close-knit working group, with its own traditions and “in jokes.” Our meetings always have a printed agenda, but they usually begin with the need to take up some topic “out of order,” due to urgent need or because the person mostly responsible for that item has to leave early to go to another meeting or to the work site. After months of this pattern, last week we noticed the first item on our Surge Committee Agenda: “1. Out of Orders.” This kind of humor is an important reason why this group has been able to work so effectively and conjure so much creativity in solving problems, in the face of a constant series of deadlines—there is literally a “drop dead date” every week!

The first Surge Committee meeting was held on April 13, 1999. Since then, we have completed a great deal of work. Many projects are in progress, and several major projects will soon be initiated. The three most ambitious projects that have been completed are our suite of new upper division instructional laboratories on the third floor of Latimer Hall (relocated from the second floor of Hildebrand Hall), a 1360 square foot laser laboratory and darkroom on the third floor of Lewis Hall for Prof. Richard Mathies (moved from the third floor of Hildebrand Hall), and a 1300 square foot molecular beam laboratory on the D-level of Latimer Hall for Prof. Dan Neumark (moved from the C level of Giauque to make way for Prof. Evan Williams and Prof. Kristie Boering, who have to move their mass spectrometer laboratories out of Hildebrand Hall).

Just beginning is an even more ambitious project: the relocation of 6 theoretical chemistry faculty members and their 50 graduate student and postdoctoral coworkers from Hildebrand and Lewis Halls to the Pitzer Center for Theoretical Chemistry, a grand new office complex being created in the B-level of Gilman Hall. Also scheduled to be started in March are biophysical chemistry laboratories in Lewis Hall for Prof. Richard Mathies, Prof. Judith Klinman, and Prof. Ignacio Tinoco, who are part of the diaspora from the Hildebrand tower. When our work is complete this summer, we will have relocated part or all of the research laboratories and offices of more than 25 of the 65 faculty members in the College!

The work of the Surge Committee won't win a Nobel prize or get anyone elected to the National Academy of Science or Engineering. But the harmonious productivity of this diverse group is playing a key role in carrying the College through what could have been an exceedingly difficult time. Furthermore, the creative problem-solving achievements of this group will permit our faculty, students, and postdocs to continue to do the work that does bring scientific accolades to the College. ♦



College building manager Susan Slavick checking out the progress on new lab space for Alex Pines' group in the basement of Hildebrand Hall.



A graduate student enjoys the new computer space in Dan Neumark's newly renovated labs on the D level of Latimer Hall.

