Physics Professor Mario Affatigato and Amy Marquardt ’09 use Coe’s new electron microscope.
Coe College is at a defining moment in its history, one that presents the institution with an opportunity of compelling importance. Owing to a unique set of circumstances, Coe’s alumni and friends have a chance to help vault the college forward in ways that may have seemed unimaginable just a short time ago. It is a moment that comes to a college perhaps only once in its history. It is a defining moment, which those who love Coe College must seize.

“All of these priorities serve the overarching purpose of the Defining Moment Campaign: to achieve a level of academic excellence at Coe unparalleled in the institution’s history, and to set us apart from colleges with which we presently compete. The college calls on all who cherish the role Coe has played in the past, who value the kind of education it currently offers, and who can envision that larger role Coe can play in the future to step forward.”

Support the Defining Moment Campaign

Peterson Hall of Science: $16 million

Campus Expansion Project: $7 million

Coe Fund: $7 million

Special Projects: $5 million

Endowment Enhancement: $45 million

Total: $80 million

“We met during freshmen orientation week at Coe when we were 18 years old, and it is enlightening to reflect on how our lives have changed since then. We are grateful of how our experiences at Coe have shaped us as individuals and made us who we are today. Certainly our academic experience provided the tools we needed to succeed, but the personal relationships that we developed with the college and its people continue to enrich our lives.”

David ’89 and Susan Koenig Gehring ’89

Toddville, Iowa

David: Orthodontist

Susan: Community volunteer
A growing problem

The problem is two fold. First, enrollments have increased significantly at Coe in recent years, and the rate of growth in the sciences has surpassed that of the college as a whole. There is a compelling need for renovated laboratory and classroom space. Second, the nature of science education has changed dramatically in the last 40 years. The way material is presented in classrooms and in laboratories—the basic way that faculty and students interact—has changed. For example, when Peterson was built four decades ago, there were no personal computers, and scientific fields such as molecular biology were not envisioned. Different kinds of spaces were needed; they must be configured, shaped and outfitted with instrumentation to accommodate current practice. The dramatic growth of research conducted by students during the summer has been an exciting development that nevertheless has generated stress on the building.

In response to these challenges, most of the better schools in Iowa and the Midwest, and nearly all of the ACM colleges, have built new science facilities or undertaken major renovations of their science halls within the past decade. The current configurations of laboratories, offices, and classrooms in Peterson Hall stand as significant barriers to Coe’s ability to make the leap to the next level of academic quality as an institution. As well, the situation hampers the college’s ability to recruit high-caliber science students.

Furthermore, the need for a modern, state-of-the-art science facility is all the greater because of the sheer quality of Coe’s science programs and faculty. Science education at Coe has earned national recognition for excellence. The contrast between the quality of the faculty and the aging building in which they teach is striking. The extraordinarily impressive record of the scientists in gaining grant support, in scholarly publication, and in placing our students each year in the very best graduate programs in the country demonstrates that science is one of the peaks of excellence at Coe College.

Peterson Hall of Science

Goal: $16 Million

To be a premier liberal arts college requires first-rate facilities. Largely as the result of the success of the previous One by One Campaign for Coe, many of Coe’s facilities have been renovated, replaced, or expanded. A notable exception is Peterson Hall of Science.

Peterson Hall, which houses the departments of biology, chemistry, and physics, was built in the 1960s. The current challenges with the building are both numerous and serious. As a 40-year-old building, Peterson is showing signs of age. Yet this presents an opportunity to improve teaching and research at the college, impacting future generations of students and helping Coe to maintain its lead in science and technology.

Thanks to a prestigious $4.6 million grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF), Coe now has the opportunity to renovate Peterson Hall. However, the project cannot be completed unless the college raises an additional $14.4 million between now and the summer of 2011. This $8 million effort represents the first half of the larger $16 million overall project to remodel and expand Coe’s science facility.

The NSF grant was earned through a highly competitive peer-review process, and is one of a small number of such awards granted nationally to colleges and universities conducting scientific research. Not only does the award recognize the excellence of past research conducted at Coe, it also affirms the college’s established national reputation for scientific programs and represents confidence in continued success. Therefore, it is critical to seize the moment and raise the funds necessary to complete the project.
The renovated Peterson Hall — leveraging your gift

To maintain and build on this hallmark, Coe envisions the reconfiguration, renovation and eventual expansion of Peterson Hall. Given the national reputation of science at Coe, the college has the opportunity to grow its world-class science programs. To achieve this vision, Coe must create a building that provides space and facilities essential for teaching and research occurring at the frontiers of contemporary science.

The first phase of the Peterson Hall project will entail the complete renovation of the existing space. This incredible opportunity—provided by leveraging a $4.6 million National Science Foundation grant with $3.4 million in gifts—will represent one of the giant leaps forward for the college in its 160-year history.

The remodeling will involve reconfiguring space throughout the existing building, creating classrooms and laboratories that are fully capable of housing Coe’s modern research-grade equipment. The success of the faculty’s efforts has resulted in a growing number of state-of-the-art instruments, all of which require dedicated spaces. Finally, new mechanicals and new lighting must be installed to create an inviting and welcoming educational environment. The building must aid and reinforce, not impede, the educational efforts of the faculty who teach in it.

The building must be high quality and modern, the possibilities for achievement will be endless. When completed, the renovated Peterson Hall of Science will:

• Give students and faculty ample teaching and laboratory space for instruction and research, providing an environment conducive to scientific learning.
• Reconfigure space not only for school year instruction, but also for the summer months when dozens of students and faculty from around the world utilize the facilities for innovative scientific research.
• Allow dedicated space for large, specialized equipment and computer installations with technology that was not envisioned when Peterson Hall was originally constructed.
• Include the behind-the-scenes infrastructure needed to accommodate the millions of dollars of complex scientific equipment in the building.
• Allow for relatively new interdisciplinary science programs—like molecular biology, environmental microbiology and materials science—to thrive in specially designed rooms.
• Include introductory teaching laboratories, and space that is configured for joint classrooms/laboratories.
• Create environmentally friendly, energy efficient surroundings.
• Help attract the best and brightest students to study science at Coe, as well as highly motivated professors to teach and conduct research at the college.
• Provide Coe science faculty with a high quality facility to match their exceptional academic accomplishments.
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The Moment is at Hand

Coe’s enrollments have increased to record levels, growing by more than 20 percent over the last 10 years.

• The academic profile of our students has steadily improved.
• The graduation rate has risen to the highest level in the college’s history.
• The number of students residing on campus is, by far, the largest ever, as is the number studying abroad or off campus.
• The current volume of scholarly work produced each year by Coe’s faculty is unequaled in the institution’s history.

Coe research laboratories provide students with access to more than $2 million in state-of-the-art research-grade scientific instrumentation, like the equipment used here by Biology Professor Michael Leonardo, Alex Michaud ’09 and Laura Steele ’09.

Giving opportunities

To leverage the $4.6 million grant from the National Science Foundation and make the Peterson Hall renovation project a reality, Coe needs to raise $3.4 million by the summer of 2011.

Laboratories and classrooms will be named according to the wishes of the donor for gifts in the range of $100,000 to $250,000. Naming opportunities for biology, chemistry and physics common spaces will be available for contributions of $500,000 or more.

To modernize teaching methods, more than $200,000 is needed for updated bench equipment. Gifts of $2,500 or more for this and general purposes will be recognized on a plaque prominently displayed in the building.
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“...the small class size, the dedicated faculty that gets to know their students as individuals, and the broad, liberal arts curriculum were all important factors in my undergraduate education, and I think they are still important for students today. You can’t hide in classes at Coe; the faculty get to know you personally. As a shy undergraduate, I’ll always be grateful for that personal attention.”

Rebecca Anderson ’71
Santa Barbara, California
Pharmaceutical industry researcher and executive

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