College receives $5.25 million gift from The ALSAM Foundation

Idaho State University’s College of Pharmacy has received a $5 million gift from The ALSAM Foundation to acquire more teaching and research space in the Treasure Valley and an additional $250,000 to provide pharmacy scholarships for minority students, ISU and ALSAM officials recently announced.

“With tremendous pride, I accept this gift on behalf of Idaho State University and the College of Pharmacy,” said ISU President Arthur C. Vailas. “This generous donation from The ALSAM Foundation will serve as a catalyst in our efforts to provide quality education and fulfill our commitment to expand health-care education programs in the Treasure Valley.”

The ALSAM Foundation, a charitable organization based in Salt Lake City, is named in honor of Boise resident L.S. “Sam” Skaggs and wife Aline. The foundation supports a variety of causes and organizations, and is committed to improving the lives of people around the world.

“The ALSAM Foundation and the Skaggs family look forward to embarking on a partnership and association with Idaho State University and the College of Pharmacy,” said Ronny L. Cutshall, The ALSAM Foundation president, Idaho State University President Arthur Vailas and Bessie Katsilometes, academic dean for ISU-Boise.

Dean Joseph Steiner discusses the future of the College in the Treasure Valley during an April press conference. Joining Steiner are, l to r, Ronny L. Cutshall, The ALSAM Foundation president, Idaho State University President Arthur Vailas and Bessie Katsilometes, academic dean for ISU-Boise.

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Expansion of Idaho State University's facilities in the Treasure Valley will likely result in an increase in the number of seats available for pharmacy student admissions in the near future, according to Dean Joseph Steiner.

"To be successful in pharmacy education, we need excellent faculty and students, outstanding community resources for clinical training and a dedicated teaching site," he said. "We have always had all of these except the teaching site and this gift supplies that requirement. We expect to expand the class size of the College by 25 percent and plan on having 40 students located in both the Treasure Valley and Pocatello for all of their four years—therefore, each class will have a total of 80 students."

Accepting additional students to the PharmD program also requires hiring more faculty, Steiner said. "An increase of class size by 25 percent should justify an increase of faculty by the same amount," he added. "However, having students at two different sites will also require additional staff and administrative support."

"Since the ALSAM gift is earmarked for expansion in the Treasure Valley and minority scholarships, the College also will continue to generate funds to assist student pharmacists who don’t meet this criteria. "Pharmacy education is expensive and scholarships are so very important to many students," Steiner said. "The ALSAM Foundation has been generous in providing $50,000 per year for the next five years for scholarships for minority students. However, there are other students in need. It is unfortunate that most students can no longer work their way through college in any area of study and pharmacy is no exception to this."

Another area of support that is desperately needed from alumni and friends is their time in training future pharmacists. There are excellent pharmacists practicing in the locations where the College trains student pharmacists, he said. "We need mentors to take students on rotations to pass along the excellent skills they themselves have developed."

The Idaho State University College of Pharmacy faculty teach students at both the Pocatello and Treasure Valley campuses via distance learning.

The Idaho State University College of Pharmacy Treasure Valley campus and other ISU programs will be moved from their current ISU-Boise locations to the former Jabil building, located in Meridian. The new ISU health sciences education building will house ISU programs—initially occupying approximately 102,000 square feet of the 326,000 square foot facility. The building is also home to the Meridian Joint School District 2 administrative offices and other programs. The entrance to the ISU facilities will be on the south side of the building.
ISU College of Pharmacy gift from ALSAM....

April 19, the Idaho State Board of Education granted ISU permission to proceed with the purchase of the building.

ISU currently spends approximately $1 million a year on leases covering 55,000 square feet of classroom, office and instructional space in the Treasure Valley – including about 50,000 square feet at the main ISU-Boise complex at 12301 W. Explorer Dr.

Consolidating programs under one roof will allow ISU to apply the leasing fees toward the purchase and renovation of the former Jabil building, said Kenneth Prolo, ISU vice president for financial services.

ISU will apply the $5 million gift toward the purchase of approximately 102,000 square feet of the former Jabil Circuit building, owned by the Meridian School District and the home of the district’s new administrative offices. ISU intends to renovate its portion of the building and move its Treasure Valley-based health sciences programs to the site, with plans to open for classes within a couple of years. The section, which will house pharmacy, will be named in honor of L.S. “Sam” Skaggs, according to university officials.

“We are Idaho’s pharmacy college and we take this responsibility very seriously – striving to provide opportunities in pharmacy education to the entire state,” said Joseph F. Steiner, College of Pharmacy dean. “With the severe shortage of pharmacists today, it is important that we have sufficient numbers to meet Idaho’s demands for this important health care provider. We offer the last two years of our four-year curriculum in Boise and have about a third of our faculty located there. This gift from the ALSAM Foundation will make it possible for us to offer our entire curriculum in the Treasure Valley.”

The $250,000 slated for pharmacy scholarships for minority students will be distributed in $50,000 increments annually, beginning in the fall of 2007.

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Idaho State University College of Pharmacy facts:

- The ISU College of Pharmacy began as a two-year program on the campus of the Idaho Technical Institute in 1918, and in 1927, became the first college on the then University of Idaho Southern Branch campus in Pocatello.

- The College of Pharmacy began its presence in the Treasure Valley in 1970 when it began clinical rotations for fourth-year pharmacy students.

- Each year, the ISU College of Pharmacy receives more than 550 applicants for the 60 seats available. More than 80 percent of students admitted to the program are Idaho residents.

- The College of Pharmacy currently enrolls about 240 candidates, who are pursuing their doctor of pharmacy degrees (PharmD) in the four-year program.

- One-half of the third-year class attends lectures in the Treasure Valley, delivered by a Boise-based faculty member or through distance-learning video conferencing.

- The Doctor of Pharmacy program is accredited through the national Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), the College of Pharmacy also offers a PhD and MS in pharmaceutical sciences and a PharmD/MBA, PharmD/MS and PharmD/PhD dual degrees.
ALSAM minority scholarships to begin assisting pharmacy students for the fall 2007 semester

The $250,000 gift from The ALSAM Foundation, slated for pharmacy scholarships for minority students, will be distributed in $50,000 increments annually, beginning in the fall of 2007.

The first recipients of the scholarships include five ISU College of Pharmacy students.

Recipients are Rudy DeLeon Jr., class of 2011; Josie Huerta, ’10; Erick Lawton, ’10; Carmen Medina, ’10 and Julianne Ramirez, ’11.

Through generous support of alumni and friends, the College is able to award approximately 70 scholarships of various amounts to pharmacy students annually.

Each scholarship endowment awarded has been made possible by the philanthropic efforts of alumni and friends of the College.

For information on how to assist with the education of future pharmacists through a donation or endowment, contact Dan Dean, director of development, ISU College of Pharmacy, 208.282.3655 or dandean@pharmacy.isu.edu.

Alumni scholarship recipient profile:  
Dr. Oscar “Sid” Benavidez Jr. ~ Class of 2006

The first college graduate from his family, Dr. Sid Benavidez says completing his PharmD would not have been possible without the assistance of scholarships from donors to the ISU College of Pharmacy.

“The scholarships essentially made it possible for me to get through pharmacy school,” he said. “It was the money that allowed me to attend school, pay my bills and eat lunch.”

The Burley, Idaho native isn’t quite finished with his educational goals at Idaho State University. He is working towards his MBA degree with the assistance of a scholarship established for students enrolled in the joint PharmD/MBA program.

Once established in his career, the 26-year-old says he and his new bride, Jessica Kline, plan to give back to the University, which helped them obtain their degrees. Jessica is currently working towards her political science degree at ISU and will graduate in December.

“My family came from nothing, but worked hard to have something,” he said. “Giving back to the College and helping others like me - it will give me a feeling like no other.”