The UD College of Health Sciences: Front Door to the STAR Campus

By J. Michael Bowman

WHEN THE UNIVERSITY of Delaware cuts the ribbon at its Science, Technology and Advanced Research (STAR) Campus in January 2014, the College of Health Sciences will occupy a building the length of two football fields on South College Avenue.

The facility will house clinics, core research facilities, and high-tech meeting places for CHS faculty, staff, and students as well as offer space for businesses and organizations that complement the College’s mission.

At almost 275 acres, the STAR Campus will ultimately be home to much more than just the UD College of Health Sciences, but health will drive a great deal of what happens there.

I’m now President of the Delaware Technology Park, but I spent the early part of my career working in the field of advanced composites, and my colleagues and I came to understand the power of partnerships in advancing and commercializing composites technology—we saw that teams of designers, material suppliers, part manufacturers, and end users were critical to success in the rapidly changing world of advanced materials.

The same is true now of health, with increasing recognition that it will take teams of professionals with varied expertise to conduct cutting-edge research, provide effective education and training programs, deliver patient-centered care, and commercialize new technologies.

The STAR Campus will provide the ideal venue for this venture.

When we talk about “health” today, we’re talking about not only the traditional health sciences but also health engineering for device design, fabrication, and testing; health IT for data collection, storage, and analysis; and health business for the commercialization of intellectual property.

All of these enterprises will have a place on the STAR Campus in a physical infrastructure that facilitates collaboration, sparks innovation, and fosters entrepreneurship. The result will be better health outcomes, more effective prevention strategies, extended lifespan, and lower life-cycle costs.

An improved rail system will provide convenient, environmentally friendly transportation to our existing partners at Thomas Jefferson University and Aberdeen Proving Ground, as well as position the site to attract new clinical, academic, and business partners up and down the Eastern Seaboard.

This first building, which features an impressive list of amenities, will make a statement for a very long time about STAR and health sciences, serving as a “billboard” for the College and what it’s doing in this very public endeavor to improve health-related education, research, practice, and workforce development.

Being the first UD tenant on the STAR Campus is an opportunity of a lifetime for the UD College of Health Sciences, and the College is well positioned to take full advantage of it.

Mike Bowman is President of the Delaware Technology Park and a member of the 1743 Advisory Board.