

RENOVATION OF WELCH HALL



Imagine a chemistry building so decrepit that leaks from the ceiling regularly ruin experiments. Where centrifuges are so old they must be unplugged from the wall to be turned off. Where students wear coats on cold days because the inadequate HVAC system cannot heat the structure. Where a classroom is so dark students have trouble reading—they refer to the room as the “dungeon.” You now have a clear picture of what life is like inside Welch Hall, the home of the University of Texas at Austin’s chemistry and biochemistry departments.



Left, A typical classroom in Welch Hall. Above, damaged cabinets in a lab room

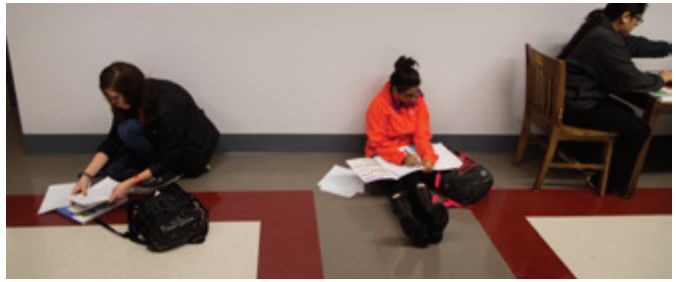
ABOUT WELCH HALL

Welch Hall is one of the largest buildings on the University of Texas campus, consisting of three wings, built in 1929, 1959, and 1978. Lecture halls and teaching laboratories provide learning space for more than 10,000 UT-Austin students daily. Welch Hall houses more than 50 chemistry, biochemistry, and molecular sciences faculty, who together generated \$12 million in research awards in 2013-14. The facility is so bad it has started to negatively affect student and faculty recruiting.

“The legislature shall...establish, organize and provide for the maintenance, support and direction of a University of the first class.”

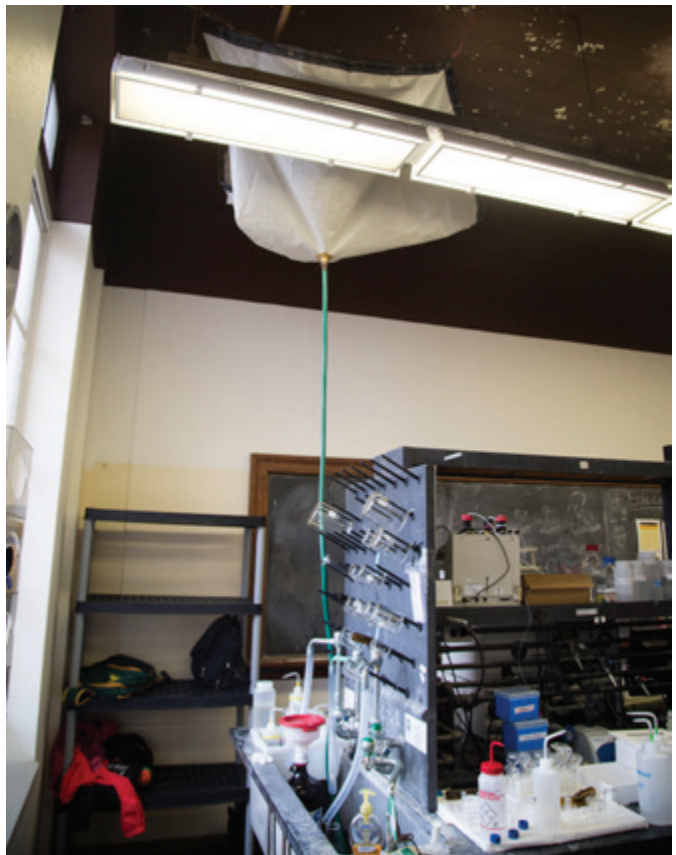
-Texas Constitution, Article 7, Section 10

Top right, moving clockwise: An example of lab equipment storage; because of limited table space, students often study on the floor in Welch Hall; a tarp hangs from the leaking ceiling in Welch Hall above research material, diverting water to a sink through a hose; pipes and duct systems in Welch Hall.



“There are no windows or ventilation areas. In my lab, there is a tarp collecting water from what I assume is a huge leak in the ceiling? It’s attached to a garden hose that empties into our sink. This is a scientific lab with volatile chemicals and it honestly scares me that the ceiling is leaking and could collapse at any moment.”

-Annie





“Many of my classrooms in Welch have had improper lighting, causing the rooms to be dim throughout the day to the point where students have had trouble seeing their notes and tests.”

-Bree

CONTEXT

In 1929, when Welch Hall was first constructed, there were approximately 5,800 students enrolled at UT Austin. Technology that is commonplace in the classroom today, such as laptops and computer chargers, were unheard of back then. Lab spaces were not built with computers in mind, and study areas rarely offer electrical outlets.

KEY RENOVATIONS TO ENHANCE WELCH

- Creation of new classrooms, dedicated Freshmen Research Initiative labs, and open, bright, and flexible community space adjacent to the Speedway colonnade and pedestrian mall
- Renovations of teaching labs and research labs
- HVAC and other system upgrades to ensure lab and building safety

Before



After



A GOOD CLASSROOM IN WELCH



OTHER PARTS OF WELCH...



“Welch Hall is an old building in need of basic renovations to prevent further dilapidation. Not only is this impacting research, it is also negatively impacting student and faculty recruitment.”

-Bree