

# New Technology and Infrastructure: A Look at the Future of Medical Education

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On October 19, 2022, IU School of Medicine (IUSM) broke ground on the new medical education and research building, which is slated to finish construction by the end of 2024. Not only is this \$230 million project the largest in IUSM's 120-year history, but it's also the first new classroom space IUSM has built in Indianapolis since 1959.

Even though I will have graduated by then, it's exciting to see what future IUSM students have in store. I sat down with Dr. Jay Hess, Dean of IUSM since 2013, to talk more about the new building and how it may spur new ideas regarding medical education. »»



The construction timeline for the new medical education building coincides with a multibillion-dollar project by IU Health to build a new downtown hospital on 16th St and Capitol Ave. However, proximity to the new hospital wasn't the only reason for IUSM's new space, according to Dean Hess. "There's been many changes in medical education, moving away from large lecture halls to streamed lectures and small group learning. We wanted to optimize the building for the kind of education students will receive in the future."

Future medical education will almost certainly place an increasingly heavier emphasis on technology. Applications of technology in healthcare, such as telemedicine during the COVID-19 pandemic, have already proven invaluable in helping to meet the dynamic

needs of both patients and physicians. The new facility accounts for this increasing importance, incorporating infrastructure that will allow students to practice interacting with patients through a virtual medium.

IUSM's new building will also include technology that makes me wish I was back in Human Structure, the first-year anatomy course. "Learning anatomy is hard with just cadaveric dissection, so there will be more virtual reality and more ways of connecting things like radiographic imaging to what you're actually seeing," says Dean Hess. Furthermore, there will be robotic simulators for various surgical procedures, which may serve as an interesting way for students to apply their anatomical knowledge.



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Outside of these futuristic educational features, students can also look forward to a beautiful architectural layout and design, according to Dean Hess. “One of the things we’ve needed in the School of Medicine in Indianapolis is a common gathering area. A place where you can grab a cup of coffee, meet with other people, and enjoy the view. The new building has a spectacular three-story sunlit atrium that looks like the Guggenheim Museum.”

Beyond the atrium, the building was designed with the intention of creating a sense of cohesion and teamwork. This aligns with the school’s plan to group future students into 12 learning communities. On the second and third floors, the new building will have individualized lockers, study areas, practice exam rooms, and

kitchenettes for the groups. “It goes beyond the facility,” adds Dean Hess. “We’re planning to have faculty assigned to each learning community to make it similar to the regional campuses. They will be right there where the students are, which will facilitate getting advice and help with study material.”

It’s clear that the new building is only one part of the equation for IUSM. Dean Hess emphasized that even with all the new technology and educational opportunities coming to IUSM, student experience remains at the core. “I’ve always wanted the School of Medicine to be a place where each learner can discover and begin to realize their dream for their career.”

Exciting times are ahead. Students will be able to experience the new building in 2025.



Scan the QR code for a livestream of the construction of the new medical education and research building.