

President Mary Sue Coleman's Remarks
School of Nursing Groundbreaking
April 5, 2013

It's really wonderful to hear how much this new building means to so many people.

I'm sure the students, faculty and staff agree it is long overdue.

They have no idea.

Way back in 1837, before a single class had been taught in Ann Arbor and the University was still located in Detroit, the Board of Regents considered this location for U-of-M's new home.

Wouldn't it be something, people said, for the university to be built on a bluff, for all to see and looking out across rolling farmland, forests and the Huron River.

Alas, the Board decided – in a razor-thin vote – to locate closer to town, on the 40 acres we call the Diag.

But as the years passed, there was still a nagging sense of wonder. One longtime administrator went so far as to say:

“We can only imagine how much more beautiful and impressive the buildings of the future University might have been, lining the brows of the hills overlooking the Huron Valley.”

I think he would have enjoyed today, and our plans for the School of Nursing.

This new building is part of the continued evolution of the University.

As with all of our new facilities, what's truly important is what happens inside.

New facilities are really about saying to our faculty, students and staff: you will always have what you need to carry out your work.

It means laboratories that will redefine research and caregiving, because we are always looking to improve human health and wellbeing.

It means classrooms, clinical training areas and shared spaces that encourage collaboration between students, faculty, patients and the community.

Today's world is too complicated and chaotic for one discipline to unravel. Partnerships and innovations hold tomorrow's answers and cures.

Our learning spaces are where the Michigan experience unfolds every day with intellectual capital.

We have done much across campus in recent years to renovate and expand, and today's groundbreaking is an important addition to that growth.

Congratulations to the Michigan nursing family.

Your new home will help anchor the northern edge of the campus, which began so long ago as a vision of scholarly presence.