SPH Students, Faculty and Staff:

There was broad interest in the last update on the population health facility, so I am sharing the latest news more widely with the School. To view the prior update, and all others going forward, please visit this page on the SPH Intranet.

**Project Definition**

The project continues to be on schedule. For design, that means we are approaching the “Project Definition” phase – locking down the contractual ‘scope of work’ obligation between the University and the design/build team. Up to this point, we have had nice, free-flowing conversations about what we’d like to have in the building. The architects and builders have since taken it all in and are now turning those wishes into ballpark construction estimates to see what we can afford to build within our budget.

The first pass on the construction numbers is not too far off – we’re about 13 percent over budget. The next three weeks will involve a series of iterative ‘turns of the crank,’ during which we adjust what is in or out of scope, to come up with a building program that fits the budget. In some cases that means we'll incorporate more information. For example, preliminary site soil sampling turned up some water. As any Pacific Northwest homeowner knows, water is not ideal for basements. The current construction estimate includes substantial money to deal with the situation, but we are awaiting the final report to determine the severity of the issue.

Any good news from the final report might mean less money needs to be spent on the foundation, making more available for other building features. In other cases, we may need to make hard decisions about what to include or not to include, or how to shape what we do include. Some of those decisions will be visible (e.g., childcare facility or size/location of coffee shop), while others will largely be invisible (e.g., relative energy efficiency of the building heat pump).

Any one decision can impact multiple areas. For example, if we want to put large meeting spaces above the first floor, stairs and elevators will need to adequately (per code) be able to move/evacuate larger numbers of people, meaning relatively more investment in that building infrastructure. The cost tradeoff scenarios are still being compiled, so I can’t yet report on any specifics. The Project Executive Committee will strive to make any tradeoffs with reference to and within the spirit of the project goals.

**Sustainability and Health**

Building an energy- and water-efficient facility that improves occupant satisfaction and health is one of the goals of the project. To that end, the building will have some form of green roof, stormwater capture system and/or solar panels. It is highly unlikely that all of these will be in neat, separate boxes on the rooftop (as the schematic diagram below suggests), and any open terrace will likely be below the roof level to avoid incurring the cost of running an elevator to the roof.
As mentioned in the last update, opening windows and a number of other interior sustainability and occupant health features are also still under consideration. The building will have a large western exposure and dealing productively with the afternoon sun, both in terms of occupant comfort and energy use, is one of the architectural challenges of the project. The building will certainly be LEED Gold and it’s possible the new LEED Platinum standard is within reach. However, we are less likely to pursue a specific standard for the sake of that standard alone than we are to pursue good, smart decisions for the building and its occupants.

Building Core Material and Support Systems

For construction enthusiasts, know that Post-Tensioned Concrete will make up the core of the building. This will reduce overall concrete a bit and speed the construction.

Warm regards,
Uli

Uli Haller
Senior Director, SPH Finance & Administration
University of Washington School of Public Health