

COMPUTER SCIENCE



Fig. 1. Computer Science and Statistics, February 1997. Stage I is at right center, stage II center, and stage III at left. The intersection in the foreground is West Dayton Street and Orchard Street. [Del Brown Photo, AP-64]

Reflecting the very fast growth of the computer science department, the computer science complex was built in three major stages, in 1965, 1970 and 1986. It houses not only the faculty, classroom and laboratory facilities, and departmental offices of the Department of Computer Science, but other campus wide computer facilities, such as the Department of Information Technology (DoIt), and the MACC.

No department in the modern history of the University appeared and grew as quickly as the computer science department. Only eight years elapsed from its beginnings as the department of numerical analysis with a 1961 enrollment of 290, to its acquisition of its own building with an enrollment of more than 2000 in 1969. The department of statistics was formed in 1960-61,

with a single staff member (George Box). The establishment of the department of numerical analysis in July 1961 completed the forerunners of the computer science department.

In April of 1963, the respective heads (George Box and Stephen Kleene) of these two fledgling departments wrote an application to the National Science Foundation (NSF) requesting \$1.1 million in matching funds for a Numerical Analysis-Statistics building. The application notes that while the two departments would operate most efficiently in close cooperation in a single facility, they are "...presently housed separately. In the case of statistics its quarters are so woefully inadequate that it is a euphemism to say that they are 'housed' at all." At the time Numerical Analysis was in Sterling Hall, and statistics was in a Johnson Street house, and two rentals on University Avenue. The proposed new building would provide space for 197 faculty, grad students, lab personnel, for research labs and some undergraduate work.¹

By late 1963, unofficial word had been received that the NSF would supply matching funds for the building, but the amount available to the NSF was sharply reduced by congressional action. The total amount available for the grant was only \$600,000. In December a building committee was appointed (Box, Kleene, Dean Hugh Richards, Mr. Thomas Dyckman and Mr. Donald Sites). This committee, working with Madison architects Weiler and Strang, decided to erect the building in two phases. The first phase was to cost \$1.3 million.²

Nothing official was done by the University on this project until August 14, 1964 when the regents granted authority to prepare preliminary plans for the "Numerical Analysis Building ... to be located at the southwest corner of West Dayton Street and North Charter Street." The regents were told that the total budget was \$1.32 million, with the NSF providing about half the funds. The state would be asked to pay for the other half and the cost of land to be purchased at the site.³

Shortly after the approval to make preliminary plans for phase one, the building committee began to lobby for the construction of phase two. They told dean of L & S Edwin Young in October 1964 that "based on experience of the last eighteen months, it becomes evident that this plan and schedule would provide an inadequate facility even if we went ahead with the original project (Stage I plus Stage II)." [emphasis original]. They estimate that Stage I will be inadequate when opened. In December 1964 the regents voted to change the funding of the Computer Science-Statistics complex to \$1.52 million, with the new funding to come from the state. This funding was approved by the state in December 1964. The reason for the increase was to provide for housing centralized computers. The combined statistics and numerical analysis departments possessed a total of one computer, a CDC 1604 with card equipment.⁴

In January 1965 the regents heard Mr. Sites present the two phase concept of the Computer Science-Statistics complex. Sites explained that there might also be a high-rise third section. A month later the regents approved the preliminary plans for Computer Science-Statistics Unit I.⁵

Final plans for Unit I were approved by the regents in May 1965. The estimated completion date was September 1966. Construction contracts were let on August 20, 1965, with the general contract going to John Dahl of Madison for \$694,000. Total contract amounts were \$1.63 million. Construction of stage I was completed in the summer of 1967. Stage I is 118 by 121 feet, with basement and three stories, located at the extreme east part of the site, immediately adjacent to the small grocery store at Dayton and Charter Streets. Stage I held only office and research space, no instructional space. In June 1967, the new building was named the "Computer Sciences-Statistics Center."⁶

As suspected earlier by the building committee, the project had been "overwhelmed by events". The name of the Department of Numerical Analysis was changed to the Department of Computer Sciences in 1964, and in November 1968, dean of the graduate school Robert Bock wrote to now chancellor Edwin Young: "The center building was not adequate to house the staff even when it was built, and is now... grossly inadequate and requires a great deal of additional outside space."

Planning for stage II, again designed by Weiler and Strang, was pushed as quickly as possible during 1969, with the hope that it could be finished by November 1971. The estimated \$3 million was not available in late 1969 and the addition was reduced by eliminating the part that was to replace the grocery store at Charter and Dayton Streets. This reduced the cost of the addition to \$2.4 million which was available entirely from state funds, as federal grant money had become unavailable. The state approved the funding in December 1969.⁷

In February 1970 the regents approved preliminary plans for stage II (also known as IIA). Land acquisition and more planning took the spring of 1970. The final plans were approved on June 12, 1970. On September 11, 1970 the construction contracts for stage II were let. The general contract went to J. H. Findorff & Son for \$1.3 million. Total contracts let were \$2.42 million, with funding entirely from state funds. Stage II was completed in December 1971. Stage II is a 130 by 170 foot, four story with basement structure to the west of stage I, and connected to it by a three story bridge. Stage II contained labs and classrooms as well as more office space. The computer science department was still growing at a rate unforeseen by the planners.⁸

As computers became smaller, cheaper, and easier to use, they became increasingly important to various disciplines. Engineering, business, medicine and other realms of study began to require that students learn at least the rudiments of computer use. The computer science building was increasingly unable to handle this demand. The University's 1983-85 project priority list, published in late 1982, has Computer Sciences Unit III in eighth position, at an estimated cost of \$9.9 million. In July 1983 the regents increased the funding to \$11.7 million. \$1.2 million of this increase was to correct deficiencies in stages I and II. The money for this project would come from the state. The stage III plans were drawn by architects Bowen, Zimmerman, and Strang, and called for a seven story tower section bounded by the stages I and II building on the south and east, the railroad tracks on the north, and Orchard Street on the west. Bids for stage III were opened and rejected in August 1985. After re-planning, new bids were accepted February 5, 1986, and the general contract was let to Kraemer Brothers for \$5.44 million. Total contracts amounted to \$9.55 million. Ground-breaking took place April 1, 1986 and was finished in the summer of 1987. Stage III added an entry-way and plaza on the west side of the complex to provide a traffic path from Union South. It also closed Orchard Street.⁹

1) University directories and Instructional reports; Application for Nation Science Foundation Grant, April 1, 1963, series 40/1/7-1 box 29.

2) Wendt to Box et al. December 4, 1963, series 4/0/3 box 191; Box et al to Young, October 21, 1964, series 40/1/7-1 box 123;

3) *Regent's Minutes*, August 14, 1964;

4) Box et al to Young, October 21, 1964, series 40/1/7-1 box 123;

5) *Regent's Minutes*, January 8, 1965, February 5, 1965;

6) *Regent's Minutes*, May 7, 1965, August 20, 1965, exhibit F, June 9, 1967; Rosen to Clodius, April 11, 1967, series 40/1/2-1 box 38.

7) Bock to Young, November 8, 1968, series 40/1/7-1 box 123; Young to Clodius, May 1, 1964, series 40/1/2-1 box 12; Lemon to State Building Commission, November 24, 1969, Concept and Budget Report, Computer Sciences-Statistics Unit IIA, December 1, 1969, Minutes of Planning Committee Meeting, November 11, 1969, Lemon to Atwell, December 10, 1969, series 40/1/7-1 box 123.

8) *Regent's Minutes*, February 6, 1970, June 12, 1970, July 27, 1970, September 11, 1970 schedule III; Comments on the need for Stage II of the Computer Science..., undated, Department of Planning and Construction, Computer Science and Statistics-Unit IIA, January 28, 1970, series 40/1/7-1 box 123, Dietrich to Dorman, September 30, 1970, series 4/31/9-3 box 3.

9) *Regent's Minutes*, December 10, 1982 exhibit E, April 6, 1984, July 13, 1974, February 7, 1986; State Budget Letters, *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine*, May/June 1986 p. 18, Regent Request, July 1984, Van Ess to Lobe, June 7, 1988, Fulop to Waack, October 28, 1987, Agency Request for State Building Commission Action, February 1986, Fact Sheet, Computer Science and Statistics Building - Phase III, undated, UW news Release, March 27, 1986, series 4/31/9-3 box 3.