



Faculty members Paul Oberto and Adam Lang show students the Class of 2017 EFX Lab and the Leung Prototyping Studio.

The Class of 2017

EFX LAB

ENGINEERING FABRICATION EXPLORATION

“What might you imagine happening in here?” Economics Instructor Adam Lang asked students in his Design for Social Impact class as they toured the new Class of 2017 EFX Lab.

“Industrial design!” shouted one student. “Art and architecture projects,” chimed another.

Robotics, engineering, science, math, chemistry, photography — the possibilities of how to use this bright new space seemed endless to students. As they explored the lab, they looked quizzically at the new equipment and machines.

“I don’t even know what this does,” said Gabbie Coffy ’18, peering at a drill press in the Leung Prototyping Studio, a soundproof, glass-enclosed section of the lab.

In October, students and faculty got their first glimpse of the Class of 2017 EFX Lab (Engineering, Fabrication, and Exploration), located on the lower level of the A. Whitney Griswold Science Building. In the coming months, they will learn how to safely use the machines and tools to work on individual and group projects. The parents of the Class of 2017

PHOTOS BY WENDY CARLSON



The lab features retractable outlets for easy access.

“What’s great about this is that it’s right across from the classrooms, so we can apply what we’re learning with real materials right here,” said Coffy. “I feel like I can get stuff done here, apply what I learn and actually do it. It’s really cool.”

provided the majority of the funding for the \$1.4 million project as a Senior Parents Gift, and alumni also made significant gifts. The Leung family — Nisa Leung Lin '88, Erik Leung '94, and Jeffrey Leung '99 from Hong Kong — funded the Lab’s centerpiece, the Leung Prototyping Studio.

“Nisa Lin deserves immense credit for this project,” said Head of School Craig Bradley. “She helped us conceive what could be possible and organized and led a tour of lab spaces in Silicon Valley for several of our faculty members.”

The 3,136-square-foot lab provides space for collaboration, innovation, and problem-solving for student projects in areas of study beyond engineering and design.

“Students are so excited about the new space,” said Paul Oberto, instructor in biology and chemistry and associate dean of faculty. Oberto co-directs the lab with Instructor in Physics and Astronomy Bill Fenton who is currently on sabbatical.

“Early in the year, I brought my chemistry

class down to the EFX Lab. Before anyone had asked a question or picked up a tool, a student very matter-of-factly said, ‘It’s so open and bright. I just want to come down here to work on something. Can we have class in here today?’”

“The tools and equipment and the open layout will allow students to create in ways they most likely haven’t yet experienced, but my initial hope is that the EFX Lab simply draws people into its space to work together,” he said.

In thanking the parents who contributed to the gift campaign last spring, Bradley said, “The new facility will have a significant impact on the School by providing a ‘maker space’ with tools, equipment and space for hands-on, experiential ways to engage in engineering and innovation projects. It will forge new links across subjects such as fine arts, the sciences, economics, architecture, robotics, and environmental initiatives.”

In the Leung Prototyping Studio, “students will be able to design and prototype projects, often as a team, to dig deeper into cross-

disciplinary initiatives, and be prepared for a world that requires innovation and problem-solving in new ways,” he said.

The studio contains a CNC router, large-format laser cutter, chop saw, band saw, drill press, and storage for materials. Other lab features include a folding glass garage door that allows large prototypes to be moved in and out of the lab, soldering stations, mobile work tables, seating, and white boards. The lab also has a student project display area, sinks and counter space for “wet” projects, and a shop annex for 3-D printers.

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Neale Barkley '18 added, “It would be great if a group of students could work together and be responsible for creating something for the School by the end of their Hotchkiss career.”

—Wendy Carlson