

## 'Health sciences' building in downtown Camden advances

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Continuing toward [its goal](#) of opening a multidisciplinary "health sciences" building for colleges in Camden, a joint Rowan University/Rutgers-Camden board authorized Tuesday a search for property appraisal and architectural firms.

Kris Kolluri, the CEO of the Rowan University/Rutgers-Camden Board of Governors, said he expects to hire the firms within 60 days. The property appraisal firm will evaluate potential building sites in downtown Camden, including one Kolluri is eyeing near the Walter Rand Transportation Center.

"The goal is the board will want to advance a plan [that will house a joint program](#) in a space that ... fits within a larger university district vision that the city has," he said in an interview.

Kolluri said at Tuesday's board meeting that he had begun the search for a project manager, who will be hired later this year. By next winter, Kolluri said, he hopes to have a tentative building site selected, and broad outlines for how the building will look and function.

A funding proposal last year by Rowan University envisioned a state-aided \$79 million, 106,523-square-foot project. That proposal, which was not funded, serves as a fair estimate, Kolluri said, for square footage and cost. More specific numbers will become clearer as he meets with academic leaders, he said. The board will seek public funding, though there may be some private funding if the building has retail space on the ground floor.

"But for the moment, this is viewed as a higher education institution, and the building is a higher education institution building," Kolluri said. "Therefore, we will be focused on available public funds to advance this project."

Once plans are in hand, the building will take four to five years before completion, Kolluri said. For now, that is several steps away.

"I'm not there yet. I'm not even at a point where I'm ready to forecast when I'm going to be done developing it," he said.

"Remember that the design process takes a long time," he said. "This is not a small undertaking."