WMU medical school to renovate two floors for research using $10 million in private donations

Emily Monacelli | emonacel@mlive.com

Follow on Twitter

on January 23, 2015 at 3:34 PM, updated January 26, 2015 at 10:53 AM

KALAMAZOO, MI — The Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine will use a $10 million in private donations to renovate two floors in the school for research.

Western Michigan University's Board of Trustees on Thursday approved an amendment of a lease agreement with the medical school that allows the medical school to renovate and occupy two floors for research.

Under the terms of a lease agreement approved by the WMU Board of Trustees in September 2013, floors four and six of the medical school were to remain vacant for future use either by the university or the medical school. Now, medical school officials want to renovate the floors in order to develop and expand research efforts.

Renovations and equipment will be at the cost of the medical school. The medical school will not pay more to rent the building, since the original rent agreement covers debt service and operating costs.

Laura Eller, director of communications for the medical school, said three floors of the building at 300 Portage St. in downtown Kalamazoo will be dedicated toward research, and medical school officials expect floors four and five to be fully renovated by late this year.

Dr. Hal Jenson, dean of the medical school, told the board Thursday the school was starting to recruit its first group of researchers. Jenson said the medical school will focus on four areas of research — clinical, laboratory, community-based and education.

Jenson also gave the board a snapshot of the school's first class. It includes 54 students, 23 of whom are from Michigan. Three students are graduates of Western Michigan University and two are from Kalamazoo College. There are 30 men and 24 women, and the average age is 25 years old.

© 2015 MLive.com. All rights reserved.