ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (RIT)

Rochester, NY

ACADEMIC SPACE STUDY 2016-2017

THE PROJECT

Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) engaged with a consultant team led by a collaborative of CJS Architects of Rochester and Buffalo, NY and Dober Lidsky Mathey (DLM) of Belmont MA to conduct a study to help identify the space needs of all of its academic schools and colleges. Guidance and support to the consultant team was provided by RIT's R.I.T. Facilities Management Services' Campus Planning & Design Office.

CHALLENGE

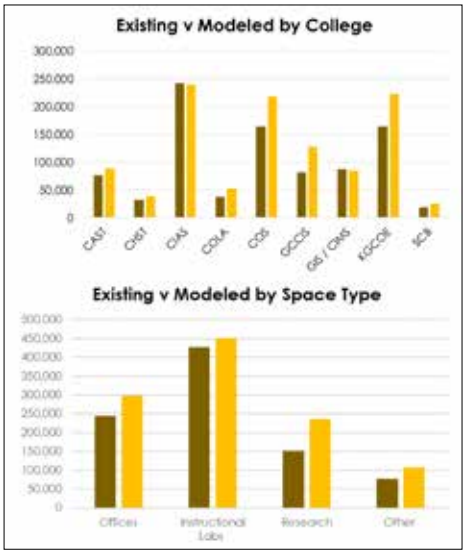
RIT has nine schools and colleges comprised of 88 individual units spanning the major fields in American higher education, all delivered through a rigorous technology-infused curriculum. While historically an undergraduate-focused institution, in recent years the university has invested heavily in attracting and executing significant, externally funded research projects, driving a need for substantially increased high quality space for this work. RIT has grown steadily since establishing its "new" campus in 1963, with several new buildings and additions enlarging its core mid-century facilities. However, the core is aging, and in many cases these buildings require major upgrades to meet the demands of 21st century undergraduate learning and research efforts. RIT wanted to engage all the colleges and schools in a participatory space needs assessment and projection study that established contemporary space guidelines and a readily replicated methodology to inform ongoing renovations and the definition of potential new building projects. The consultant team was also tasked with illustrating key conceptual solutions to describe ways for RIT to advance its facility development strategies.

SOLUTION

The study was conducted in two main phases to answer the following questions:

- What is the current distribution of space across the colleges and schools?
  - o Is that distribution appropriate for today and the future?
- What are the oncoming space needs that RIT must anticipate and address?
- What are the most promising strategies for meeting the needs identified?

After establishing metrics of the current situation, the consultant team designed a space needs model customized for each units within the colleges and schools. These models were driven by fundamental university data on numbers of people, instructional intensity and directions, and research initiatives as well as future-oriented space guidelines. The findings of the model were reviewed with a university steering committee and representatives of each of the colleges and schools with adjustments made incorporating unit feedback.



Analyses and Results Graphics by DLM

Proposed Central Classroom Building Concept by CJS Architects

Key strategies to respond to space needs were illustrated by CJS helping all involved to understand several ways to advance the space modernization and improvement agenda at RIT.

RESULTS

RIT has used the study and the model in a variety of ways since study completion. Currently one of the major projects identified by the study—a central, state of the art classroom and study/academic exploration facility (the SHED), connected to the library was completed in 2023, along with adding a performing arts center to RIT's rich mix of programs and facilities.

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