

THE PROJECT

Westfield State University (WSU) sought to understand the space needs of all of its academic departments while developing consensus regarding the departments and functions to be accommodated in a new academic building as well as an elementary school building that the University would gain control of in the planning period. This effort was a joint project of WSU and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM).

CHALLENGE

WSU had more than doubled its enrollment in the 40 years since Wilson Hall, its most recent permanent academic building, was constructed. The University's other Main Campus academic buildings, Bates and Parenzo Halls have mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems that are operating well beyond their expected life spans. All of the buildings exhibit qualitative shortcomings reflecting their age—dated teaching/learning spaces, spaces converted from one use to another on a low budget, worn finishes, poor heating and cooling control, etc. On a positive note, the University had negotiated transfer of the control of Juniper Park School (on university property) from the Westfield Public School District. The best University use of this new space resource was another issue the study addressed.

SOLUTION

The study was designed to answer the following questions:

- What are the best uses for a New Academic Building projected to be built on the WSU campus by Fall Semester 2015?
- How much space of what types will be required for the New Academic Building?
- What are the best uses for a re-purposed Juniper Park School (located adjacent to the University) due to be transferred to WSU full control in 2014?
- How can the existing major academic buildings—Bates, Parenzo and Wilson—be most effectively renovated to support WSU's evolving academic programs?

It was essential that the study focus equally on all departments' needs and not solely those of the users that would occupy the new construction. Engaging each of the departments in a transparent process was critical to achieving full participation and support for the study findings. Interviews were conducted with each department and program. The customized space needs projection model developed to estimate departmental space requirements by space type



was reviewed by each department. Multiple work sessions were held with the All-University Committee that coordinated faculty and staff input.

The plan that developed proposed an addition to Wilson Hall to accommodate the most advanced science department needs, the conversion of Juniper Park as a new Fine and Performing Arts Center, and a comprehensive renovation program for each of the historic academic buildings to extend their useful service for another 40 years.

RESULTS

The Wilson addition concept has been confirmed through detailed architectural study and is awaiting approval by the Commonwealth. Renovation planning is ongoing.

REFERENCES

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