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SLAM designs \$65 million Center for Healthcare Education

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Fairfield, CT The S/L/A/M Collaborative (SLAM) programmed and designed the new 120,000 s/f, \$65 million Center for Healthcare Education at Sacred Heart University, shared between the College of Health Professions and College of Nursing.

The exterior of the building is designed as three distinct forms that represent the three major programmatic functions of the building. “This helped with the scale of the building,” said Rick Herzer, AIA, design principal at SLAM. “We thought of it as three elegant parallel forms and not just one enormous building with a door.”

A main upper plaza receives arriving users and orients them to the main entrance and central atrium. An adjacent lower plaza features a reflecting pool and a sculpture by David Harber. This more sheltered, contemplative space is flanked by an amphitheater of tiered stone seating encourages formal or informal gatherings. The sound of falling water is provided by a spillway that connects upper and lower plazas.

Active-learning classrooms, a team-based learning lecture hall, library with study rooms, simulation suite, and a 44-seat café is housed within the natural Texas limestone portion of the building, on the south. A concealed 50,000 s/f parking garage is beneath this zone. The brick facade, on the west, fronts human performance space, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and teaching labs. Faculty offices are located within the metal façade of the building, on the north.

Sacred Heart University has taken an innovative approach to the building design, as well as to teaching and learning for the 11 health professions and nursing program occupying the Center. SLAM responded with a layout simulating real-world environments that mix the inter-professionals together. A combination of new labs with emerging technologies and larger rooms allow collaborative, team-based learning across multiple disciplines.

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