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PCA Inc., Worcester State College unveil energy efficient Dowden Residence Hall

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A 422-bed, environmentally-progressive residence hall greeted this year's incoming freshman at Worcester State College. Architects Prellwitz Chilinski Associates (PCA Inc.), in partnership with the school and the Mass. State College Building Authority (MSCBA), transformed the 20-year-old Dowden Residence Hall into a 100,000 s/f, campus hub featuring a 4-story glass entry façade, new common spaces and a wide range of student amenities. The project is pending certification at the LEED Gold level by the U.S. Green Building Council. It addresses rising demand for on-campus student housing while advancing Worcester State's identity as an environmentally-conscious campus community.

The latest of several partnerships between the MSCBA and PCA, the project's design re-oriented the existing 58,000 s/f building around a 41,000 s/f new wing connected by a 4-story glass entry/façade: a campus "front door" that floods the building halls and common spaces with natural light. A new courtyard replaces the building's previous entry, adding an amenity to the core campus and helping position the building as a welcoming gathering place. Inside, wide hallways, and new social spaces including a ground-floor fitness center, convenience store and game room create a modern college living experience for the incoming freshman.

In compliance with the Advanced Buildings Guide, sustainable design strategies are at work throughout the project. A natural-gas combined heat and power generation system is capable of providing electricity and hot water to both Dowden Hall and the adjacent Chandler Village apartment complex. Energy-conserving lighting, windows and plumbing ensure operational efficiency. Resource-saving building practices, such as the recycling of building materials and sourcing of locally produced materials, were applied throughout an 18-month construction process led by Consigli Construction Co. of Milford. Cumulatively, these initiatives are on track to receive the U.S. Green Building Council's second-highest distinction: LEED Gold Certification.

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