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Taylor & Burns' Bennington College project honored by Society for College & University Planning

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Taylor & Burns Architects' design for the 7,000 s/f Student Center at Bennington College has been recognized with the honor award for excellence in architecture for a new building, conferred jointly by the Society for College & University Planning (SCUP) and the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

The construction team for the \$3.7 million project included: Reed Hildebrand Associates Inc.; The Collaborative Engineers; Acentech; Otter Creek Engineers, Inc.; and Ricca/Newmark Design.

The project entailed the expansion of the old 3,000 s/f brick cafe into a 7,000 s/f mixed-use center. The new student center has a shed roof that slopes diagonally to a height of 36 feet at its peak and is supported by exposed glue-laminated beams. The building has cedar rainscreen cladding detailed as vertical battens. A broad wall of fenestration is enhanced with glass doors that can be raised to open the interior space to an outdoor brick terrace.

An exterior horizontal screen of steel rods is expanded across the glazing to provide shade. The glazed link between the old and new portions of the building, and the interior and exterior space, creates a continuous landscape that opens to the campus. The student center was designed for adaptable use; the building transforms to host the kinetic activities of students. A demountable stage, theatrical sound and lighting, a DJ control booth, a sprung floor for dancing, and adjustable acoustics, including wall paneling and a motor-operated curtain to dampen amplified productions, enable the space to cater to various student events. The use of the space alters by day, week, and season to accommodate cafeteria use, weekend dance parties, poetry readings, musical recitals, and informal gatherings.

The Bennington Student Center design has won other awards:

- * honor award for design excellence from the Boston Society of Architects
- * and honor award for excellence in architecture from the American Institute of Architects New England Chapter.

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