



nerej

Prellwitz Chilinski Associates selected to design new UConn dining center

June 16, 2011 - Construction Design & Engineering

The University of Connecticut (UConn) has selected Prellwitz Chilinski Associates (PCA Inc.) to transform an underperforming dining center at its McMahon residential complex into a modern, LEED Certified multipurpose social and dining place. The 14,000 s/f project will include a complete renovation of the existing facility, which links two residence hall towers, and a 5,000 s/f "glass pavilion in the woods" addition. UConn plans to open the new facility in Fall, 2012, and will seek a minimum LEED Silver Certification for Commercial Interiors from the U.S. Green Building Council. Colburn & Guyette, who recently partnered with PCA on the award-winning International Village Dining Center at Northeastern University, will serve as the project's Foodservice Consultant. BVH Integrated Services will provide civil, structural, mechanical and electrical engineering services.

Varied Menu, Versatile Space

The project represents a step forward in UConn's dining approach. In the current McMahon dining facility, which has operated since the mid 1960s, a single cafeteria line serves a central dining room lined with rectangular tables. PCA's addition and renovation will create several serving stations, each offering different cuisine options in a "display kitchen" setting. Social options will be equally diverse, with soft seating, study tables, and dining counters throughout the space to encourage students to gather and make use of the facility. Seating capacity will be enhanced from 300 to approximately 500.

"In dining design, it's easy to overlook the fact that student space is often limited on campus," said Steve Allen, LEED AP, PCA's principal-in-charge on the project. "At McMahon, we're focused on offering not only a first-rate dining experience, but a rich social place. Somewhere to meet, eat, study and plug into the university community. We see great potential in this project."

Trendsetting Partnership

The project's hallmarks - varied cuisine stations, environmentally progressive technologies, and versatile space - build off a successful formula implemented by PCA and Colburn & Guyette at Northeastern University's International Village Dining Hall, which opened in 2010. That project has garnered multiple industry awards, exceeded revenue expectations, and gained a following both within the campus community and the general public. The team hopes to replicate that level of success at UConn.

"This will be a terrific step forward in our service to students" said Dennis Pierce, director of dining services at UConn. "We have the opportunity to apply advanced, sustainable technologies while creating a great place people will want to spend time in. We look forward to working with our new partners to make it a reality."