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Prellwitz Chilinski Associates completes 19,000 s/f renovation and addition at UConn

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An "inside-out" design approach at the University of Connecticut integrates interior and building design to create a whole. The 19,000 s/f renovation and addition by Prellwitz Chilinski Associates (PCA) at McMahon Dining Hall makes a big impact, offering international dining in restaurant-style "display kitchens," new connections to adjacent residential towers, and the vibrant, airy, porch-like feel of a "pavilion in the woods" - all combining to create the new gathering spot on campus.

The complete renovation and 5,000 s/f addition to the existing 14,000 s/f facility has created a social environment which highlights the food and offers seating alternatives that encourage students to gather, study, dine or relax. The iconic, curved shape of the building takes advantage of the sloped, wooded site, preserving a grove of established campus trees and creating a new main entry to the two adjacent 1960s era concrete residential towers.

"McMahon Dining Hall has become a beacon on campus - the place to see and be seen. It's welcoming and exciting - an interior space that people love to be in," said Karen Dubrovsky, PCA's project manager.

Based on tours of recently completed dining halls designed by PCA, UConn opted to upgrade their dining service to restaurant-style "display kitchens" and rotating cuisine choices served at several serving stations.

McMahon Dining Hall is leading the way for UConn as the first LEED Gold commercial interiors "CI" on a UConn campus. In addition, McMahon won one of a total of seven state energy efficiency awards as part of the first annual Power of Change Award sponsored by the Common Sense Fund, the Hampshire Foundation, and the Emily Hall Tremain Foundation. The Power of Change Award recognized project teams and leadership for their innovative approaches and initiatives that highlight Connecticut's drive to save taxpayer dollars, and realize environmental and economic benefits from saving energy in state public buildings and facilities. McMahon Dining Hall won one of two first honors as Most Energy-Efficient Top Building Award, recognizing spaces used for state general office, professional and administrative purposes.

In addition to the Most Energy-Efficient Top Building Award, McMahon has been awarded a 2013 1st place for Excellence in Renovation/Construction by the Associated Builders & Contractors.

PCA is a Cambridge-based, full-service architectural firm of 40 people who enjoy putting design into action on behalf of clients.

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