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ADD completes \$12.3 million renovations to Westfield State University's Ely Campus Center and construction of new student residence, University Hall

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ADD Inc recently completed the renovation of Westfield State University's (WSU) Ely Campus Center and the construction of its new student residence, University Hall, the largest project of its kind in the college's history.

Ely Campus Center's renovation, totaling 37,600 s/f, included major upgrades to the college's student center, the expansion of the fitness area into a new two-story wellness center, and the repurposing of basement space into a new, mixed-use student common area with a new entrance and outdoor terrace. The construction of University Hall totals 139,000 s/f and adds 411-beds to the campus. The architecture and interior design of both buildings directly respond to how today's students live and learn.

"Students today require more collaborative and interactive learning environments, in and out of the classroom," said B.K. Boley, principal at ADD. "Based upon our surveys, they spend more time in the residence halls and campus centers than in any other locations on campus. We felt we had to go beyond enhancing the school's facilities and services by designing 'memorable' spaces that truly enrich a student's college experience and strengthen academic life."

ADD Inc worked with the Massachusetts State College Building Authority (MSCBA), who financed the project, the university's staff, faculty, and students to incorporate their vision into the two projects.

Originally built in 1968, Ely Campus Center underwent an extensive \$12.3 million renovation. To create a greater sense of space and transparency, ADD removed much of the brick façade, installed double-glazed windows, doubling the exterior glass of the main floors, while introducing natural light and views of the main quad. ADD opened up corridors, reorganized and repurposed underutilized basement space, and created a light-filled facility that connects spaces and creates a unified identity.

Jon Conlogue, WSU's executive director of residential services and campus life said, "It was some of the best money Westfield has spent on improving a campus facility since we were able to save the building."

University Hall features 1, 4 and 6 bedroom suites, including singles and doubles, each with a shared suite bath, living room and kitchenette.

The woods and mountains surrounding University Hall inspired the architecture and interior design of the new building. Designed around the concept of a student's journey of 'walking through the woods toward the light' ADD created a building shaped like "two trees fallen in the forest" with a large arch that leads from a wooded overlook of the Tekoa mountains back to the campus quad.

As a nod to today's environmental concerns and pursuit of LEED Silver certification, green features

were used throughout the building, including recycled and regional materials, highly sustainable interface carpet, and reclaimed wood elements were used for the reception desk and for the large bay window seat on the ground floor.

Inside, student rooms and corridors extend like branches out to study perches in the tree canopy. Ground floor common areas and meeting rooms feel like the forest floor with wooded ceilings and colorful furnishings that evoke "wild flowers".

Following this theme, the building's exterior consists of highly textured red and black brick that resembles bark, while the inside communal courtyard is composed of wood-tone panels. The building's interior space is similarly inspired through the strategic use of dark colors that gradually grow lighter down the corridors into the "branches" of the building.

ADD Inc's primary objective was to provide diverse units with a variety of common space options that range from a large multi-purpose room for university functions to common lounges and kitchens for socializing to intimate light-filled "perch" lounges that are ideal for quiet study and showcase views of the surrounding woods.

The building's Grand Arch is an all-glass, floor-to-ceiling, five-story archway with open spaces for student lounging and studying that overlooks the campus with dramatic "window to the world" views of the Tekoa Mountains.

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