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Boston College's McMullen Museum of Art marks turning point for education sector in Boston - by Matt Guarracino

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Boston is certainly a hub for higher education, with a total of 35 colleges, universities, and community colleges concentrated in the city. And over the past few years, we've seen a building boom on campuses, as many of the area's institutions compete to create the most attractive and most academically advanced setting.

It is safe to say that construction in the education sector is constant and steady, providing jobs to construction workers and contractors all over the city.

A prime example of projects like this is the newly finished McMullen Museum of Art at Boston College, which JM Electrical recently completed. McMullen Museum of Art is a new, 3-story space at 2101 Commonwealth Ave. that spans 30,000 s/f and triples the exhibition areas of the museum. The museum's expansion allowed the college to move exhibitions from Devlin Hall, where they had resided since 1993, to this new facility alleviating the problem of space limitations.

Designed by Boston architects Maginnis and Walsh, the McMullen building was built in 1927 in the Roman Renaissance style. In 2014, construction began on the new, 7,000 s/f glass structure added to the building, which was reconfigured by architectural planning and design firm DiMella Shaffer, according to a release on Boston College's website. It features main galleries on the second floor, with a smaller gallery on the third. The first floor serves as a university conference center. McMullen was built using state-of-the-art technology, and has movable walls and enlarged galleries.

The large, complex structure took nearly two years to complete, with help from the JM Electrical team, who worked on-site from May of 2015 to October of this year. Niall Black, project manager at JM, and Tony Rosa, JM Electrical's foreman on the job, worked with the mechanical equipment housed in the penthouse and basement in order to ensure humidity control in the museum. Controlling the air is of significant importance, as visitors should be experiencing the art pieces in a comfortable environment. Additionally, temperature control is critical in the preservation of art. Temperatures that are too cold or too hot could lead to quicker deterioration.

For a museum such as this, it is important that the mechanical systems create a comfortable environment for visitors, while still preserving the integrity of the art. For students, teachers, and the public to gain the most value from their experience, it is necessary to enforce the best and most energy efficient air controls, which JM Electrical helped make possible working with a leader in advanced automated building systems.

The McMullen Museum of Art adds a fresh, enriching aspect to Boston College's Brighton campus culture and provides a wonderful new exhibit where students, both of Boston College and surrounding schools, can enhance their knowledge of art. Professors can now use this space as a means to enhance and revamp the learning experience of their students, especially in the case of museum studies classes. The museum is a key resource for the students and professors of Boston College as they now have the means to apply practical learning to their education. McMullen Museum of Art is open to the public as well, providing a unique benefit to the surrounding community.

With the enhancement of Boston College's educational programs, the museum has provided much more than jobs, it has created a lasting legacy that students for many years to come will be able to take advantage of. Boston College's McMullen Museum of Art is an example that helps illustrate the importance of education projects to both the economy and the communities they serve, benefiting many future generations.

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