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Dyer Brown expands higher education architecture

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Boston University, Office of Information Services and Technology

Boston, MA Expanding its national portfolio of design and planning for colleges and universities, the architecture and interiors firm Dyer Brown has announced the completion of varied campus building projects for Emory University, Northeastern University, and Boston University, with more in the pipeline. Uniting the diverse solutions are acclaimed design innovations and focused interpretations of client institutional mission.

“As Dyer Brown’s work has shown, the power of college and university mission to reshape campuses and invigorate student success has emerged as a central tenet of design and architectural solutions for campus life and academic experience,” said Rachel Woodhouse, NCIDQ, principal and director of operations for Dyer Brown.

With those ideas in mind -- and to share best practices -- Dyer Brown is currently preparing a thought-leader publication drawing from input by leading campus architects and planners, facility managers, and capital projects administrators, called “How Does Mission Drives Decisions Elevating Built Spaces?” The campaign will incorporate knowledge from institutional leaders around the country, says Woodhouse.

Examples of the college and university work by Dyer Brown includes:

Boston University, Office of Information Services and Technology

For the kickoff phase of a major renovation and consolidation campaign for Boston University’s Office of Information Services and Technology (IS&T), Dyer Brown worked closely with department leaders to realign eight departments for hundreds of employees spread across a dozen different facilities on the Boston University campus. With experience in realigning academic and workplace facilities, Dyer Brown conducted space analysis and relocation studies, followed by redesign and restacking of workplaces to significantly improve efficiencies and increase usage of approximately 50,000 s/f of IS&T offices, open work areas, collaboration zones and support spaces. The department reduced its footprint from 12 buildings to six, all reorganized and renovated with fresh new furnishings and finishes that appeal to staff and bolster recruitment and retention.

Northeastern University, Frost Lounge

Northeastern University, Media Services and Faculty Offices

Dyer Brown has worked with Northeastern University's College of Art, Media and Design to develop facility solutions connecting to departmental and institutional mission, including engaging stakeholders and building consensus on early-phase design solutions. The three related projects comprise two workplace areas for faculty offices and student circulation, as well as the school's Media Services location, which includes a maker space and two added academic rooms. Designed with custom millwork and prints, the new facility offers laydown and storage solutions for photography equipment as well as dedicated virtual-reality (VR) and multimedia classrooms. Fitted with advanced technologies and an operable partition opening to the adjacent Collaboration Space with maker equipment, the areas are separated by a glass partition with a smart film switchable to opaque or clear, as needed, to optimize visibility and flexibility. Industrial-inspired finishes include butcher block surfaces, wood baffles, and a storefront partition opening the spaces up to nearby student circulation zones.

Northeastern University, Orientation Department Offices

Northeastern University, Orientation Department Offices and Frost Lounge

For new student-orientation departmental offices and an adjacent conference center, Frost Lounge, Dyer Brown redesigned this essential student life area with cost-effective and highly beneficial, mission-focused solutions. The layout supports more flexible uses and creates a stronger impression for first-year arrivals. New custom elements incorporate an abstracted version of Northeastern University's logo as a subtle reference in new furnishings and finishes, with a bold and highly contemporary look.

These commissions for leading institutions of higher education represent the largest projects to date for Dyer Brown in the academic sector, and build on the firm's success in workplace architecture and strategic interiors. The works also add to Dyer Brown's growing portfolio of mission-driven architecture and design projects at top-ranked institutions of higher education.

Emory University, Campus Services Workplace Renovation

Creating a memorable and highly effective workplace for the Campus Services division of Emory University in Atlanta, Dyer Brown worked with the client group to reimagine a three-building complex

for the work group that includes four of Emory's divisions: Finance & Business, Transportation, Public Safety, and Planning, Design & Construction. Finished on time and on schedule, the project comprises two full facility renovations and a third building's partial renovation, together reinventing the workplaces responsible for core campus services and student facility services.

"Our goal for the near future is to continue reinforcing how mission-driven design best serves world-class institutions, which we've seen in projects from Atlanta to Boston and beyond," said Brent Zeigler, AIA, IIDA, Dyer Brown's president and director of design.

"Dyer Brown's planning leadership and direction made it possible to develop and implement a comprehensive space study," said one university client, who commended the firm's "understanding of the issues at play," and methods that are "meticulous and exhaustive." The firm's ability to respond to unexpected changes and challenges during varied project phases is equally valuable, earning Dyer Brown a reputation for being "consistently nimble, thorough, and imaginative."

Expanding nationally, Dyer Brown plans to expand its mission-focused architecture and interior design approach to innovative new facilities for colleges and universities that place a high priority on design.

Photo credit Darrin Hunter, courtesy Dyer Brown

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