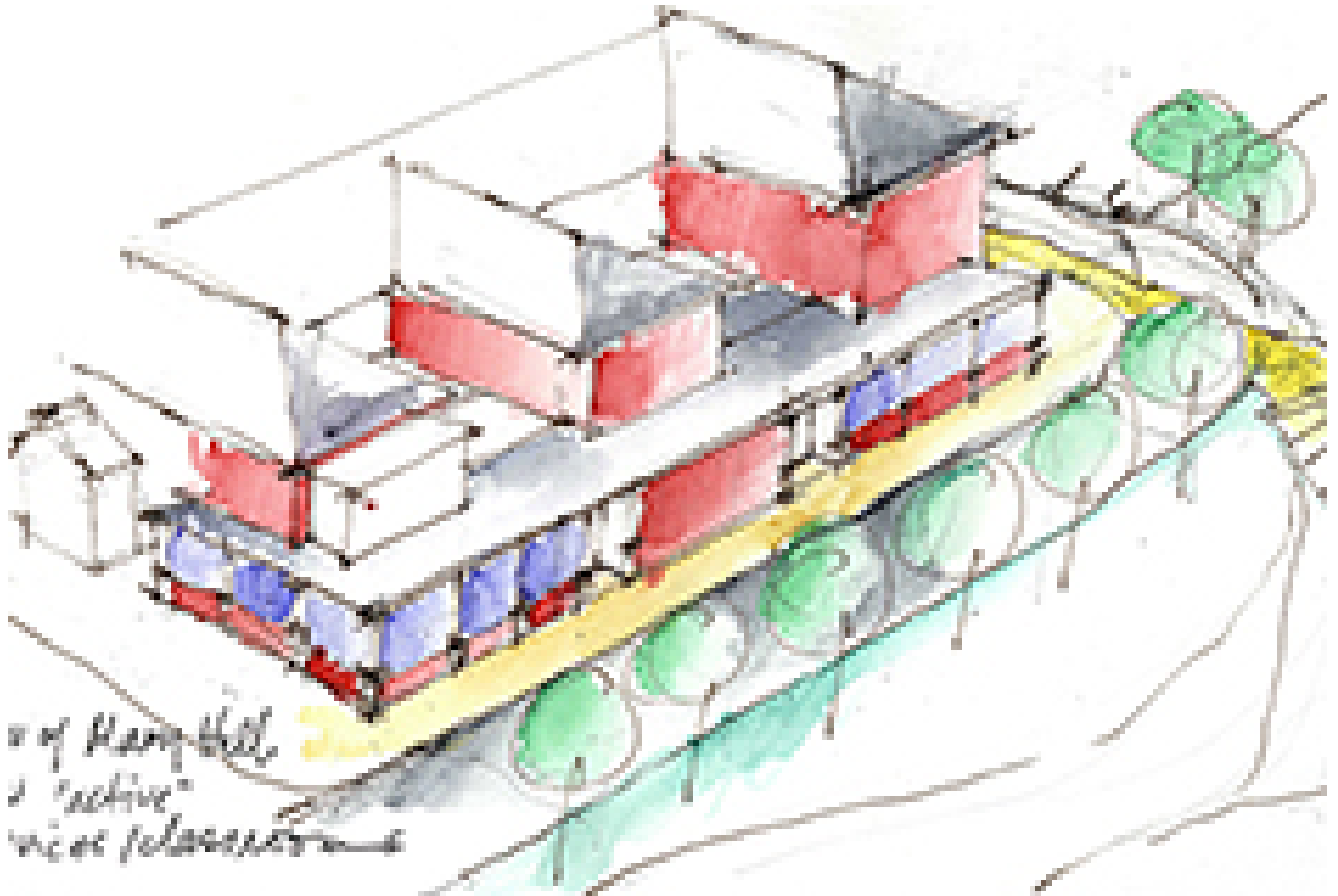




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Phase Planning Post Covid-19 - Part 1 of 4: How COVID-19 will affect the classroom and beyond

June 19, 2020 - Front Section



This is Part 1 of a 4-part series from Richard Turlington Architects.

We are entering a new era in design for institutional spaces, created by the reality of a world still battling the Covid pandemic. As colleges and universities struggle to navigate student enrollment and begin to welcome students back, the priority will be to design environments that keep everyone safe, while still allowing for interactive educational experiences and maintaining the college experience that students expect.

The first step for many institutions will be to facilitate social distancing by reducing classroom occupancy to less than 50%. Many classes and lectures will undoubtedly be moved online to help make room, but that alone will not be enough to address such a drastic increase in per capita space requirements. Furthermore, moving online is not a viable solution for every class, many of which require physical labs and hands on instruction.

To overcome these challenges, Richard Turlington Architects (RTA) partners with your institution's planning team to evaluate existing space and understand use patterns and traffic flows. Our solutions draw on broad industry experience and a personalized approach that implements the most effective designs and technologies for each individual project. Our design work has historically included: Repurposing of larger spaces into multi-use teaching spaces, redesign of airflow systems to minimize airborne particulate travel, installation of easy to clean surfaces, introduction of card readers and hands free entrances and exits, strategically placed sanitation stations, and site specific analysis of hallways and traffic flows to reduce congestion. Rather than focus on a few one size fits all solutions, our firm draws on a wide range of potential modifications to develop a complete package that is holistically and uniquely tailored to your institution's needs and resources.

Our team moves quickly to offer effective solutions, that adhere to the latest state guidelines, and which result in targeted cost-effective solutions that maximize return on investment. To facilitate dialogue and transparency, our work is based on a fixed fee model that breaks every project down into meaningful steps with measurable costs and outcomes.

Our goal is to support the existing planning staff in tackling problems as they arise in a rapidly changing education landscape. We also understand that reconfiguring spaces can alter the teaching experience, which is why we work closely with your staff to implement solutions that not only address the immediate challenge of keeping everyone safe, but also preserve the unique culture and learning experience of your institution.

At RTA we understand the immense challenges facing Institutions of Learning as they seek to reopen, but we also see an opportunity to rethink the classroom of tomorrow to create flexible, multipurpose spaces, that not only keep students and staff safe, but also incorporate the latest technologies and designs to elevate the learning experience and enhance both environmental and educational outcomes. RTA stands ready to help your institution navigate the challenges of our rapidly changing world. We are all in this together!

Part 2 will appear in the July 17th issue of NEREJ.

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