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Svigals designs 45,500 s/f Bergami Center at Univ. of New Haven

February 19, 2021 - Connecticut

New Haven, CT Students at the University of New Haven now enjoy access to a technology-enhanced academic building designed to foster the type of inspired collaboration that is an increasingly important component of workflow in high-tech and other market sectors.

Designed by Svigals + Partners the Bergami Center for Science, Technology & Innovation serves as a central hub of interdisciplinary academic and social activity for students and faculty alike.

The 45,500 s/f, three-story innovation hub is organized around an artful, airy central atrium where students, faculty and administrators can congregate informally for conversations and breakout ideation sessions. The Svigals + Partners design team engaged with University of New Haven faculty in visioning workshops to develop the programming, aiming specifically to cultivate three essential skills: working collaboratively, making prototypes through rapid interaction and development, and the ability to communicate ideas.

A LEED Gold Certified green building, Bergami Center was the centerpiece of the Charger Challenge, the University of New Haven's first comprehensive campaign, which culminated with the University's Centennial year in 2020. The Bergami Center is named in honor of alumnus and longtime university benefactor and Connecticut business executive Samuel Bergami Jr. and his wife, Lois.

"Bergami Center was conceived as a place that would stimulate the kind of productive, collaborative interaction currently leading to breakthrough thinking in institutional, corporate and scientific settings," said Julia McFadden, AIA, ALEP, associate principal with Svigals + Partners.

To that end, the Bergami Center features collaborative classrooms, huddle spaces, a teaching auditorium that functions as a cinema, a live broadcast studio, and a makerspace with a wood shop, 3D printers, and CNC cutters. The building complex is also equipped with an esports management teaching, training and varsity-level competition venue, and a cafe.

Known for integrating artwork directly into architecture, Svigals + Partners incorporated thematic

installations throughout the building, evoking the process by which ideas and hypotheses evolve from concepts to experiments to solutions. “The University’s leaders understand that their students need to be prepared for life after college,” said McFadden. “Bergami Center combines advanced technology with the collaborative modes that produce transformative thinking, offering students a place to acquire both the skills and the competitive edge they will need.”

According to University of New Haven president Steven Kaplan, “At its core, the Bergami Center embodies our university-wide commitment to fostering innovation, cultivating creativity and ingenuity, and educating the next generation of problem solvers. In creating this space, we have strengthened our commitment to preparing our students to excel in the careers of the future.”

Bergami Center represents the latest by-product of an ongoing collaborative partnership between the University of New Haven and Svigals + Partners — the firm also designed the acclaimed Engineering and Science University Magnet School (ESUMS) adjacent to the University campus.

Sited at the University’s academic core, the Bergami Center is connected to Buckman Hall, home of the Tagliatela College of Engineering. The creation of the Bergami Center and a partial renovation of Buckman Hall increases the available space on campus for STEAM curriculum and related studies. The fusion of these two buildings creates a critical mass of program area and collaborative spaces at the heart of the campus.