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Gilbane Building Co. celebrates Salem State groundbreaking

May 16, 2025 - Construction Design & Engineering



Rendering of Meier Hall

Salem, MA Gilbane Building Company, a national industry leader in the construction of education facilities, celebrated the much-anticipated Salem State University's SSU BOLD groundbreaking, a campus unification and modernization project first announced in 2019.

Among those in attendance included the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' lieutenant governor Kim Driscoll, SSU's president, John Keenan, DCAMM's commissioner Adam Baacke, and many additional elected officials and dignitaries who gathered to celebrate this milestone event.

"Our project team is fully committed to fulfilling the mission of these transformative projects that are reshaping the landscape by addressing long-term infrastructure needs and creating a more connected community. On this project, Salem State University is leading the way on sustainability for college campuses across the Commonwealth while ushering in the next generation of future innovators and leaders," said Justin MacEachern, vice president and leader of Gilbane Building Company's Massachusetts and Northern New England office.

Through SSU BOLD, these eagerly-awaited projects incorporate renovations to the existing Horace Mann building, which has been vacant since 2018, and the expansion of Meier Hall to bring new lab spaces to programs housed in the building. Once completed in the fall of 2027, the project will allow Salem State to relocate its South Campus-housed programs to North Campus, unifying its footprint and allowing the state's planned sale of South Campus to move forward. The programs housed in these new facilities will include nursing, occupational therapy, biology, chemistry, and geological sciences, as well as additional student hubs and flexible classrooms.

In addition to the renovation and addition projects, Gilbane will also oversee the decarbonization of the North Campus through the construction of a geothermal wellfield under the faculty parking behind Meier Hall. Once completed, the system of about 100 wells will support the heating and cooling of both the Meier Hall expansion and the Horace Mann building, as well as improvements to the heating and cooling of the Berry Library. As part of this effort, connections between other buildings and the wells will be installed in preparation for the second phase of this project, which will bring four additional buildings on North Campus into this system. All three projects are expected to be completed by the summer of 2027, allowing the activation of Horace Mann and Meier Hall's addition for the fall 2027 semester.

"Addressing significant deferred maintenance, creating state-of-the-art lab facilities, making the best use of vacant spaces, and establishing a compact, efficient campus to optimize constructive collaboration and sustainability. These guiding principles have led us to SSU Bold and our continued commitment to a sustainable campus. These initiatives are not just about infrastructure, they're about transforming lives," said Keenan.

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