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Design-Build Institute of America honors Cutler Assoc. for University of Hartford's \$13.5 million Hawk Hall

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The Design-Build Institute of America (DBIA) recently awarded Cutler Associates the prestigious National Design-Build Excellence Award for its recent new residence hall project at the University of Hartford. Representatives from Cutler and the University accepted the honor at the 2008 Design-Build Conference on November 3 in Las Vegas.

DBIA's National Design-Build Project Awards recognize public and private construction-related projects that successfully demonstrate design-build principles including collaboration, integration and finding unique solutions for project challenges. Winners were selected in 13 categories from nearly 100 entries nationwide.

Completed in August of 2007, the 209-bed Hawk Hall enhances the experiences of first-year students as well as the culture of the campus by creating community spaces that maximize interaction between students. With a tight time frame and a firm budget, the University chose design-build delivery led by Cutler Associates and DiMella Shaffer for the project.

"We had not anticipated using a design-build method for construction, but had not ruled it out either," said Norman Young, executive director of facilities at the University of Hartford. "Cutler convinced us that design-build was a good fit for the project and both firms convinced us that we had the right team."

Understanding the need to simultaneously manage a number of critical variables, including site planning, design, schedule, and budget, Cutler created a uniquely structured project team: one that possessed the skills expertise, and capacity to sufficiently satisfy the multiple constraints of the project. Responding to the need for site planning and a high-end design, Cutler partnered with DiMella Shaffer for planning and conceptual designs. At the same time, addressing schedule and budget concerns, Cutler used its in-house design firm, Cutler Design, to complete documents and perform construction administration.

"The team of DiMella Shaffer and Cutler working with university officials worked through each challenge to design a cost effective building meeting the priority needs of the program," said Young.

The \$13.5 million complex was delivered over a 16-month design and construction schedule, including 12 months for construction. The project was also awarded a Merit Award and Spirit Award for Excellence in Construction from the Associated Builders and Contractors Massachusetts Chapter.