

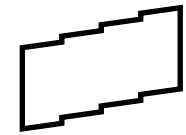


TOGETHER, WE

# ENHANCE EXPERIENCE & EMPOWER PEOPLE

THE CULTURE OF STUDENT CONNECTION





# WHEN STUDENTS THRIVE, UNIVERSITIES THRIVE.



Making friends and building networks in a new place can be an overwhelming experience for many university students, but it doesn't have to be. What if the space itself encouraged connections and fostered deeper relationships?

Building community shouldn't be left to chance. Intentionally designed, shared spaces foster student well-being, connecting them to other students and to the life of the university.

By understanding the needs of your students and the culture that sets your university apart, GBBN designs shared, campus spaces that promote autonomy, well-being, and a sense of belonging. This not only sets students up for success in and out of the classroom, but it contributes to the culture and success of your institution.

# DESIGNING FOR CONNECTION

College is a time of rich and rewarding friendships. Whether they endure into old age or fade into cherished memories, a growing body of research underscores the importance of friendships in fostering success in college and beyond.

It doesn't take that many friends—some estimate 12-20, others go as low as 6 (depending on the types of friendships formed)—but the bonds students form can make the difference between feeling overwhelmed by the challenges of college life and finding the emotional support needed to meet those challenges.\*

Well designed public spaces cultivate a sense of control and social well-being. By juxtaposing different types of space (and different uses), good designs empower students to overcome their anxieties and engage their peers on their own terms

\*McCabe, *Connecting In College: How Friendship Networks Matter for Academic and Social Success*, University of Chicago Press





# DESIGNING FOR WELL-BEING

## How Do Spaces Promote Well-Being?

By providing for mind, body, and spirit, a well-designed space promotes well-being and connection. Light-filled spaces that connect to nature and encourage movement cultivate a sense of comfort and contentment. By drawing students out of their rooms to study, play, eat, or just relax and take in the activity around them, such spaces help students find their place in campus life.

## How Are Students Doing?

Things could be better. According to the World Happiness Report,\* first-year university students have reported the lowest levels of general happiness in years.

This finding is in line with recent survey data\*\* from the American College Health Association, which shows:

- 49% of college students report experiencing loneliness.
- 60% of students report feeling “overwhelming” anxiety.
- 40% of students report experiencing depression so severe they had difficulty functioning.

\*\*World Happiness Report, Sustainable Development Solutions Networks

\*\*American College Health Association (ACHA) 2018 and 2019 Survey

## Dimensions of Well-Being

A happy life—one that is full and meaningful—must satisfy all an individual’s needs. That’s as true for students as it is for adults.



### PSYCHOLOGICAL

Sense of Control  
Creative Challenge/  
Accomplishment  
Sense of Connectedness



### PHYSICAL

Connection to Nature  
Movement  
Circadian Rhythms



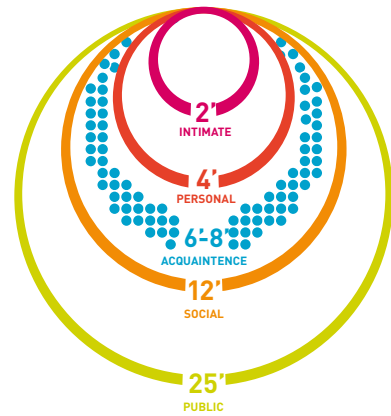
### EMOTIONAL

Self-Perception  
Self-Expression  
Satisfying Relationships

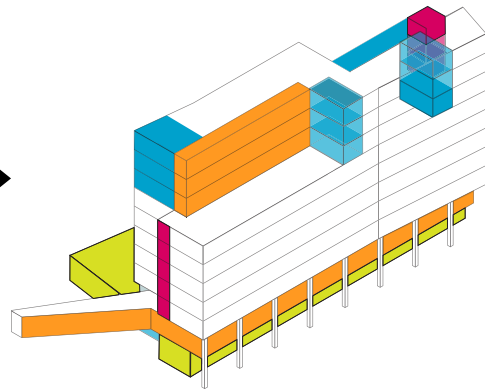
*Colleges and universities are investing more in mental health services to meet surging demand, but spatial strategies for promoting student well-being remain underutilized.*

# TRANSLATING WELL-BEING INTO SPACE

Integrating our proxemics research with psychological insights into individual needs, our designs are crafted with an understanding of how students inhabit and meet their needs within public space. Some areas enable students to see themselves as part of a broader community, others open the door to new friendships. Some enable students to deepen existing relationships, and others provide quiet, comfortable spots for enjoying the confidence of a trusted friend.



Proxemic Rings



University of Cincinnati  
Marian Spencer Hall  
Zones of Proximity



**Proxemics Research** confirms what we intuitively know: We enter into different zones of proximity with others when satisfying different emotional and psychological needs. While we lean in close with loved ones, we keep a wider berth with acquaintances. More intimate spaces supply refuge for friends but might be too close to occupy with an acquaintance.



# TRANSLATING CULTURE INTO SPACE

Whether one lives on or off-campus, finding one's "home" on campus always involves adaptation. Without losing their sense of self, successful students are transformed by the culture of the university they attend – that's kind of the point!

We take the time to understand your culture. Because it's by understanding what your community and students are invested in that we're able to design spaces that help them find their place in campus life.

Do your students make friends at the big game or in excited, post-lab discussions? Are study groups the primary path to meaningful connection or do they rely on extracurricular activities? The answers to these questions help us provide the right mix of spaces to help your students find friends, support, and success on your campus.



SAMPLE OF CASE STUDIES TO DEMONSTRATE

# RESULTS

**Case Western Reserve University**

Roger E. Susi First-Year Experience Lab

**University of Pittsburgh**

Hillman Library

**University of Cincinnati**

Marian Spencer Hall



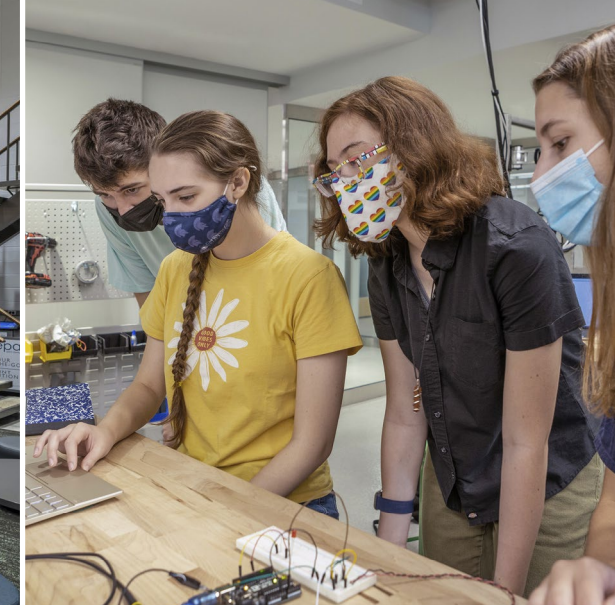
Case Western Reserve University  
**SUSI FIRST-YEAR  
EXPERIENCE LAB**

At Case Western Reserve University, friendships frequently blossom out of intellectual exchange. A smart, in-class contribution prompts post-lab discussions and, if that goes well, an invitation to a study group. From there, friendships are built.

The key consideration for this project is how students spend their time right before and after their labs because it's in these moments that connections are made.

Drawing on predictive modeling to understand how students would move through the corridors outside the lab, the design creates an architectural anchor ("the Hub") that focuses attention and establishes pathways that flow through and around it.

Supported by intentional furniture, comfortable lighting, and technological support (wifi, charging ports, and so on), this fosters a mix of uses—circulation, quiet study, group congregation—that create opportunities for recognition and familiarity, helping students build the connections that make them resilient in school and beyond.



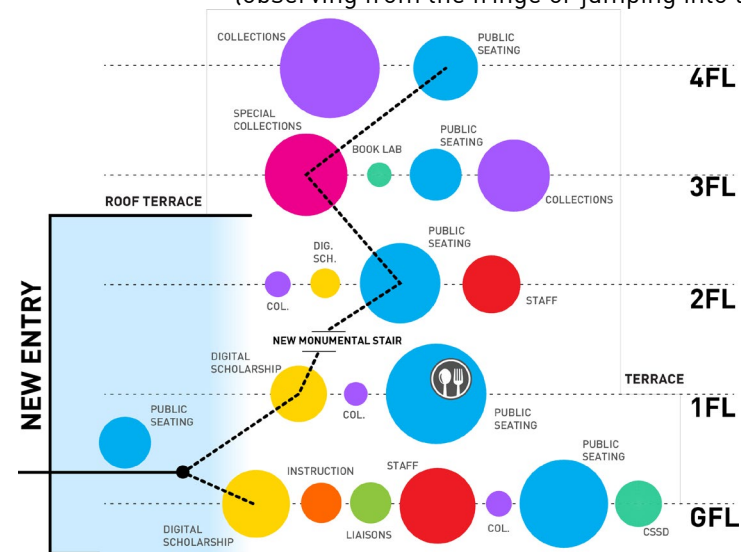


# University of Pittsburgh HILLMAN LIBRARY

The principal hub of intellectual activity, Hillman Library provides services, resources, and spaces that inspire students to dream big while fostering individual and collaborative learning. As space that once housed printed material is opened to welcome more students, technology is integrated to open new ways of learning.

Bathed in natural light, Hillman Library's atrium provides a range of spaces to support quiet study, focused collaborations, loose-knit gatherings, and formal presentations. Offering students a range of ways to inhabit the space (observing from the fringe or jumping into the fray), the atrium also lays out a world of possibilities to explore.

Prominently featured along a central stair that wraps the atrium are the library's many unique resources: its book-binding lab, the 'Open Lab' makerspace, its audiovisual suites, etc. This enables students to survey and discover unexpected interests from a place of relative comfort, discovering as well, the vibrant communities that come with them.



*New monumental stair replaces internal stairwell to connect resources and people.*





University of Cincinnati

# MARIAN SPENCER HALL

From the large, ground floor dining room to shared amenities for residents above, public spaces within Marian Spencer Hall are designed for layers of activities in order to enable students to engage their peers in a manner of their choosing.

Within the dining room students can opt for a quiet spot by the window to do some people watching, relaxed companionship at a communal table, or a more intimate booth where they can deepen their connection with new friends over a meal.

...designed for layers of activities in order to enable young students to engage their peers in a manner of their choosing.

Flexible, communal areas on the living floors accommodate groups of varying sizes and activity levels, allowing students occupied with different activities to share the same spaces while they slowly build the rapport needed to feel comfortable engaging one another.

Shared public spaces are marked by low barriers of entry. Everyone does laundry, everyone eats. The proximity of these spaces makes it so students can begin to recognize each other, overhear conversations, and take advantage of opportunities for connection.





Sample of

# NATIONAL REGIONAL & LOCAL AWARDS

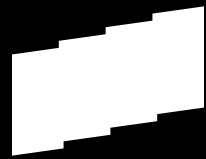


We work with visionaries to create spaces that **enhance experience and empower people.**

We combine technical mastery and creative tenacity to find design solutions that enhance healing while empowering patients; foster collaboration while supporting care providers; and set our healthcare clients up to reach their long term goals.

We see architecture as more than just buildings, because positively impacting people is the most important thing we do.





**POSITIVELY  
IMPACTING  
PEOPLE IS THE  
MOST IMPORTANT  
THING WE DO.**





ENHANCE & EMPOWER