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Facts & Figures

Owner: State of North Carolina

Type of Project: A new university building

Architect: Pease Associates, Inc., Charlotte, NC

General Contractor: Turner Construction Company, Charlotte, NC

Size: 163,321 square feet

Cost: \$31.1 million

Construction Time: December 2004 - November 2006

The Need: The last building in a three-building science quadrant on campus

The Challenge: Working on a site located above water and staying on a tight budget

Supportive Team Members

Blythe Development Co.
General Contractor

F.C. Schafer Consulting - LLC
Acoustics/Sound

PicTec
Scheduling - CPM Project Planning

Southern Steel Company, LLC
Steel Fabricator



Photos courtesy of Turner Construction Company

Charlotte, North Carolina

College of Health and Human Services - University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Visible from any point on the campus of University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC) is a 54-foot-tall, gold-colored cupola that beckons visitors to the College of Health and Human Services. This new building is the last of three buildings that make up the new science quadrant on the college campus.

Situated between the new College of Education and the Burson Building, the new 163,321-square-foot, four-story building is home to three distinct users. The College of Health and Human Services occupies the first and fourth floors and most of the third floor. The Institute for Social Capital utilizes the remaining space on the third floor, and the Department for International Studies occupies the entire second floor.

In all, the building features new classrooms, lecture halls, laboratory spaces and a teleconference classroom with the capacity to hold up to 105 people. "[This building is] the latest in a series of classroom expansions designed to meet the university's current educational needs," said John H. Duncan, AIA, executive vice president and CFO of Pease Associates, Inc., the project's architect.

According to Gary T. Runions, AIA, associate vice president for Pease Associates, the building's design reflects the university's desire for a single unified look. "The design goal was to provide a stately building that reflects traditional values of Georgian architecture," he said. Brick masonry and precast concrete panels form the exterior facade. The building sits on a precast concrete base with a series of concrete and brick columns that create two-story porticos at the entrances. More than 90 percent of the classrooms, offices, conference rooms and lounges have access to natural light through windows, large open spaces and skylights.

The construction site, which rested over a creek bed with running water fed by an underground spring and surface runoff, posed a challenge for the project team. Water flow was inconsistent and unpredictable. To solve this, the design team set the building into a hillside, which cuts off the main flow of the creek, and then added a permanent de-watering system in the foundation to keep the basement dry.

In addition, a system was designed to mitigate unpredictable

rainstorms and effects of surface runoff. A flume, which is a 2-foot-tall by 3-foot-wide concrete gutter that is used to channel water into the storm system, was also added to divert water away from the building and into other storm drainage systems that could share the load.

Budgetary factors posed additional challenges. Bill Lynch, project manager for Turner Construction Company, the project's general contractor, reported that the original bid was over budget. Turner worked with the design team and identified nearly \$1.5 million in potential cost-reduction items. "Ultimately cost-reduction items valued at \$965,000 were taken, allowing the university to proceed with the project," he said. Through effective communication, the project team solved budget, construction and design problems quickly.

As with all successful projects, the team member's expertise and skills contributed to the outcome. John A. Fessler, PE, director of capital projects for the university, said, "All parties participated in teambuilding exercises to address concerns and to facilitate a good working relationship." ■

— June Campbell

