

APPENDIX 9.6

Case Study

WALLENBERG HALL AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Wallenberg Hall has succeeded in its goal to be
“a working laboratory where the learning tools
of the future will be forged.”

The Steelcase logo consists of the word "Steelcase" in a white, sans-serif font, centered within a solid black square. A thin horizontal line is positioned below the square.

Steelcase

“ The Wallenberg Hall classrooms allow us to carry out multiple modes of collaboration in class and allow the students to continue those collaborations at other sites, including their dorm rooms.”

The goal was to provide learning spaces for university classes and state-of-the-art facilities for research in learning and education. The result is found in Stanford University's Wallenberg Hall.

A new world for learning.

Objectives

Wallenberg Hall embodies Stanford's commitment to understanding how people learn and to using that knowledge to improve the educational process for students of all ages. Its renovation was instrumental in helping support the "home base" work environment needs of three research efforts at the University:

- **The Stanford Center for Innovations in Learning (SCIL)**, a research facility dedicated to conducting scholarly research and related activities that advance the sciences, technologies, and practices supporting learning and teaching;
- **Stanford MediaX**, a new interdisciplinary research network that links research about people with the study and design of interactive technology, and
- **The Stanford Humanities Lab**, which offers the opportunity for scholars in the humanities to understand mid- to large-scale collaborative research projects.

Constructed within one of Stanford's historic sandstone buildings dating back to 1898, Wallenberg Hall features classrooms designed to foster and nurture collaboration with state-of-the-art technology that truly assists the education process for both faculty and students.

Expert help.

Situation

The project began in 1999 under the direction of the Stanford Learning Lab, which was later incorporated into the Stanford Center for Innovations in Learning. The building opened in fall 2002.

The Learning Lab brought in IDEO, a Steelcase partner and a worldwide leader in innovation and design to work on the project along with the architect and interior designer, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP. IDEO began with six weeks of research, using on-campus interviews, photo-surveys, and shadowing to understand the work process of the students and the staff and faculty. This work informed the design documentation IDEO delivered, including visualizations of every aspect from architecture and furnishings to information systems and protocols of use. In addition to IDEO, other Steelcase researchers contributed to the process.

The team delivered a space that was flexible enough to support a wide range of research activities from small private spaces that allow concentration to large-scale presentations.

The space needs to communicate the Center's work to a wide audience, both on campus and off, through technology and secure Internet connections.

Informal collaboration rules!

Solutions

The ground floor is Wallenberg Hall's most visible aspect and serves as its public face. A full-width display wall made of timber slats provides a warm, adaptable welcoming lobby to greet students, faculty, and guests. This area also provides information that showcases the Hall's work using many forms – from posters to plasma displays and beyond. The functional core of the ground floor contains the experimental classrooms and the Peter Wallenberg Learning Theater.

These spaces are inter-connected and provide a flexible, high-performance learning environment that integrates the architecture with the technology and the furnishings.

*Roberto Carra

“It has relatively open spaces. It has spaces that can be reconfigured. It allows for activities that aren't otherwise doable in a room on campus.”

Larry Liefer, Director, Center for Design Research

Solutions *continued*

The fourth floor houses the majority of the staff and is the most flexible, collaborative and experimental section of the Hall.

A space features a series of project rooms called “boxcars”, each with sliding doors on two walls, which allows the rooms to open wide to accommodate teams or close for privacy.

Spaces for informal collaboration have been woven throughout the interiors. Stair landings, lobbies, and overlooks become hubs of exchange, while a café further blurs the boundary between classroom and social space. The slatted interior wall and open plans maximize natural light to create an optimal environment.

Realizing this advanced approach to space planning and technology in an historic structure required yet another level of innovation. Using a whole-building design approach, the architects concealed significant seismic improvements while seamlessly integrating “smart” lighting, data, power, HVAC and acoustic systems. The result is a building infrastructure that allows for complete adaptability to changing needs – hour to hour and year to year.

Project rooms called “boxcars” allow room wall to open to support teams or close for privacy.