

SCHOOL of PUBLIC HEALTH - October 26, 2006

There were several goals that the design of this building sought to fulfill, with the most important and challenging one being to embody the School's vision.

Our first goal was to make a building that would, at once, be part of the genetic code of the whole campus, and unite two separate and distinctly different buildings within the School itself. So we matched the old brick and copied the patterns of Stockwell Hall across the street; we aligned our new windows with the old; we combined the modern look of SPH 2 with the Art Deco spirit of SPH 1, and we used sculpted limestone with colored tiles, commonly used among the older buildings elsewhere on campus.

Our second goal was to enhance the experience of the Markley Hall students. We enlivened the path they take under our bridge with bay windows, planters, and village scaled elements. The bridge, lit up at night, serves as a beacon and source of security. We also connected our new café courtyard with Markley's forested courtyard to create a unified, intimate, and social park-like setting.

Our third goal was to unify the school by connecting its two buildings. We bridged over Washington Heights Blvd. and connected our new laboratory/office tower to each floor of SPH 2. We also did a few gymnastic moves down at SPH 2's entry level to connect up and over the street to our new Community Crossroads. Then we connected to SPH 1 at all three of its floors and, as well, across an outdoor bridge with a gazebo that would serve as a pleasant spot to sit in nice weather. Last, at the north end of each of the tower floors we located a small faculty lounge each of which connects directly down to the Crossroads' café.

Our fourth goal was to take care of the future, so we built a tower that can accommodate either offices or laboratories (wet or dry) on

any floor, and the laboratories themselves are of a modular design that can be routinely adjusted in many different ways.

Our last goal was the most challenging. It was to imbue an inanimate object made of bricks, glass, and steel with a sense of life, community, and energy that would convey the School's focus on people. We began with a series of participatory design workshops to capture the culture and expertise of all those who would use this building and ultimately shape it. Together, we created the Community Crossroads that would symbolically as well as functionally reach out to local and regional communities with a message of welcome. The Community Crossroads is filled with sunlight and color; it is made of natural, non-toxic, and renewable materials; it has a sense of the handmade and craft; and our columns with their brightly colored nuts and berries and flourish of broad leaves on top! They not only represent flora that bring health to us all, but will, someday we hope, be adorned by local artists with designs from a variety of cultures. **So, this is a building that, in order to understand it, does not need intellect, but simply human instinct, and it means to say, "Our concerns are about people. They extend beyond our obvious concerns for their physical health to concerns about their state of well being, the uplifting of their spirit, and their sense of community."**

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