



Fisher Science Hall Addition and Renovation Susquehanna University | Selinsgrove, PA



Fisher Science Hall was originally built in 1962 to house the biology, chemistry and physics departments, with a student population of 1,150. The large open labs and the lack of smaller dedicated laboratories made Fisher increasingly inadequate for contemporary instruction and research.

After months of interaction with senior staff and conversations with science faculty, the concept emerged of a “science neighborhood” - a building that would not only support contemporary science instruction but also foster the interdisciplinary collaborations important to today’s scientific research.

The renovation and expansion of Fisher Hall took what was a factory-like rectangle with departments isolated in their various territories and turned it into a welcoming, synergistic environment organized around a three-story central atrium. The original 45,000 SF building was expanded with a 23,000 SF addition on its north side. An observatory, containing one of the largest telescopes in Pennsylvania, was added, creating an integral architectural element in the classical facade of the new addition. Where the old building was architecturally nondescript, the new Fisher Hall is a proud Georgian building at the campus center. Most importantly, the science building has become an active “hub” of campus activity beyond the sciences themselves. Four general-purpose classrooms were deliberately included, where classes in many other disciplines are scheduled; the Atrium is often used for receptions when classes are not in session.

The building fits into this Georgian campus and reorganizes pedestrian circulation. Major north-south and east-west paths now cross in the atrium, adding liveliness and excitement and providing the opportunity for chance meetings that encourage interdisciplinary dialogue. Fisher Hall is featured in Volume I of the PKAL series on “Science Learning Communities.”

Client:
Sarah Kirkland
VP for Development
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Contractor/CM:
R.S. Mowery & Sons
717-243-5454

Size:
45,000 SF renovation
23,000 SF addition

Cost:
\$ 5.6 million

Completed:
1990