



Photos by Dr. Carlos Corona, www.professorcarloscorona.com

CONSTRUCTION AND PLANNING

by Dan Stachel

Carnegie Mellon's New Tepper Quad Boasts Collaboration and Innovation

Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) recently opened its largest building on campus, the David A. Tepper Quadrangle, reflecting a new model of higher education that connects teaching, learning and innovation. The 315,000-square-foot “Tepper Quad” serves as the new home of the Tepper School of Business and houses the University Welcome Center, multi-use HUB/Forum, 600-seat flat floor auditorium, a fitness center, café and coffee bar, as well as the Swartz Center for Entrepreneurship. Tepper School of Business classrooms and offices occupy the majority of the building, allowing for ample meeting places for business education and research.

Working with architectural firm Moore Ruble and Yudell and contractor PJ Dick, Trex Commercial Products provided more than 1,800 linear feet of glass stair railing for the educational facility. Our custom solutions were inspired by the building’s innovative design.

Designed for Collaboration

The campus hub—with the Tepper School as its center—was designed to promote an ecosystem of cross-campus collaboration, intersecting all seven of CMU’s colleges and schools. Business students in the Tepper Quad learn from management researchers and faculty while interacting and networking alongside engineers, computer scientists, roboticists and other interdisciplinary peers. Throughout the building, there are many different areas for faculty and students to interact, teach and learn in unique ways.

The building itself also is very distinctive. Its modern design emphasizes openness, with an abundance of natural light and spaces for “planned spontaneity” to energize innovation and interconnection. When planning

the new space, designers realized Carnegie Mellon lacked a proverbial "front door." Working with Campus Design and Facility Development, architectural firm Moore Ruble and Yudell and contractor PJ Dick purposely designed the Tepper Quad with no corridors, and the new building—with its expansive interior views and glass enclosures at every angle—now offers that grand sense of welcome. Inside, rooms are wide open with few barriers and long, dark hallways are virtually nonexistent.

Open Spaces and Natural Light

According to a study entitled "Effect of Daylighting on Student Health and Performance," daylighting enhances mental performance, decreases depression and stress levels, improves sleep and can help treat Seasonal Affective Disorder. Additionally, utilizing natural light can lead to substantial energy savings. With this in mind, the Tepper Quad design accentuates an open environment with 85 percent of the building having access to natural light.

The building's five-story main atrium features multi-level stairs with balcony overlooks. Enhancing the sense of openness, Trex Commercial Products provided more than 1,800 linear feet of glass stair railing and glass segmented overlooks to create a



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modern, “barely there” appearance and allow students, faculty and visitors to easily spot one another and see all the action on the various levels.

The building's stairs and curved overlooks feature clear fully tempered monolithic glass, providing unobstructed views of the entire space. These glass segmented overlooks and bridges jut out at different angles, connecting different wings of the new Tepper School of Business. The glass stair and overlook railings are mechanically fastened to structural steel finished off with aluminum cover plates, contributing to the minimalist design. Custom-designed rolled and raked stainless steel cladding lines the building's three curved staircases, adding a perfect finishing touch to the space.

Intersection of People and Ideas

With floor to ceiling heights, the open design of the Tepper Quad space was created to connect people and ideas, offering a learning environment for collaboration and innovation. The building's glass roof provides an abundance of natural light, while complementing the glass infill installed throughout the facility.

There are unique architectural elements at every level. The first floor features an angular staircase tucked smartly to the side to allow for the vast lobby and more open social areas. The second-floor Rohr Commons features a 2,825-square-foot food court. This floor serves as the main entrance to the building and spans nearly 65,000 square feet. In the fourth and fifth-floor common areas, the spacious atrium features curved glass overlooks, adding to the distinctive open feel of the building.

Select additional spaces in the building include the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation, which fosters development of new education technologies. The Askwith Kenner Global Languages and Cultures Room is an interactive learning space devoted to the study of modern languages and digital humanities.

About 1,200 students participate in entrepreneurial coursework and experiences annually at CMU. This entrepreneurial culture fuels connections between CMU and more than 1,000 companies across industries such as robotics, software and health care. This new facility offers a sense of lightness and freedom for students to create, innovate and explore while fostering community and inclusiveness among students and campus organizations.

The \$201 million building was made possible by a lead gift from David Tepper's charitable foundation. Tepper, who earned his MBA from Carnegie Mellon in 1982, has donated more than \$125 million to the university, including \$55 million to name and endow the business school. More than 1,200 alumni, parents, corporations, foundations and friends of the university also made gifts in support of the Tepper Quad. The project completed earlier this year with a grand opening celebration this past September. We worked with a phenomenal team, and we are proud to have been a part of creating this impressive facility that will help change the learning environment for CMU students and staff for years to come.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dan Stachel is Vice President at Trex Commercial Products, a leading national provider of decorative commercial railing systems. For more information, visit www.trexcommercial.com.



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