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**ENHANCING CAMPUS
SECURITY WITHOUT
SACRIFICING AESTHETICS**

by Hilary Moreno

Adhering to current safety standards without lessening the aesthetic charm of older campus buildings and outdoor spaces is both achievable and essential.



Photo courtesy D&D Technologies

First Impressions

Campus should be a haven for higher learning—a vibrant community of students, faculty, staff, and visitors striving to create an institution that nurtures and cultivates our next generation. Accordingly, the safety of those on campus is of the utmost importance and should not be compromised in a desire to maintain architectural aesthetics. Although we've been taught to not judge a book by its cover, first impressions matter when it comes to campus architecture and landscaping and need to be considered when installing required safety products.

Aesthetic fluidity throughout a campus helps foster an overarching cultural tone that can be visually disrupted when safety railings, security gates, and even bike racks are installed. However, with foresight and planning, these potential eyesores can be implemented in a way that blends in almost seamlessly while also creating a safer environment for those on campus.

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Safety Railings and Fall Protection

As of 2018 OSHA regulations require that all commercial building rooftops incorporate safety rails and fall protection equipment. At first thought, it may seem like an undesirable expenditure—it's not necessarily a daily occurrence for students or staff to roam the rooftops, but it happens more frequently than one may think.

From the annual work of clearing debris after a storm, fixing or replacing HVAC units, cleaning skylights, or installing solar panels, to the educational opportunities for a class to examine Newton's law of gravity, grow a rooftop garden or set up a telescope, there will occasionally be people on top of buildings or dormitories.

Guard rails—not only around the edge of the roof but also around skylights and large equipment—are the first level of protection as well as gates on ladders and secured doors to roof access stairs. A variety of companies can custom-build railings on older, existing buildings in tasteful and unobtrusive ways that do not detract from the original design while concordantly bringing the building up to code.

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Although most third-party companies contracted for roof maintenance or repair supply their workers with additional security measures, the college is nevertheless responsible for already having required safety equipment and procedures in place.

Security Gate Hardware

Campuses frequently have ornate, custom-designed gates at their main entrances that may have been gifted to the college many decades

ago. Often the gates themselves have successfully withstood the test of time, but the hinges and latches have begun to show their age due to constant use. Although small, the hinges and locking mechanisms that keep gates secure need to be reviewed and maintained regularly to help ensure campus safety.

Jeff Horton, with D&D Technologies, notes that when antiquated gate hardware needs to be replaced several factors should be considered. Products that allow for vertical

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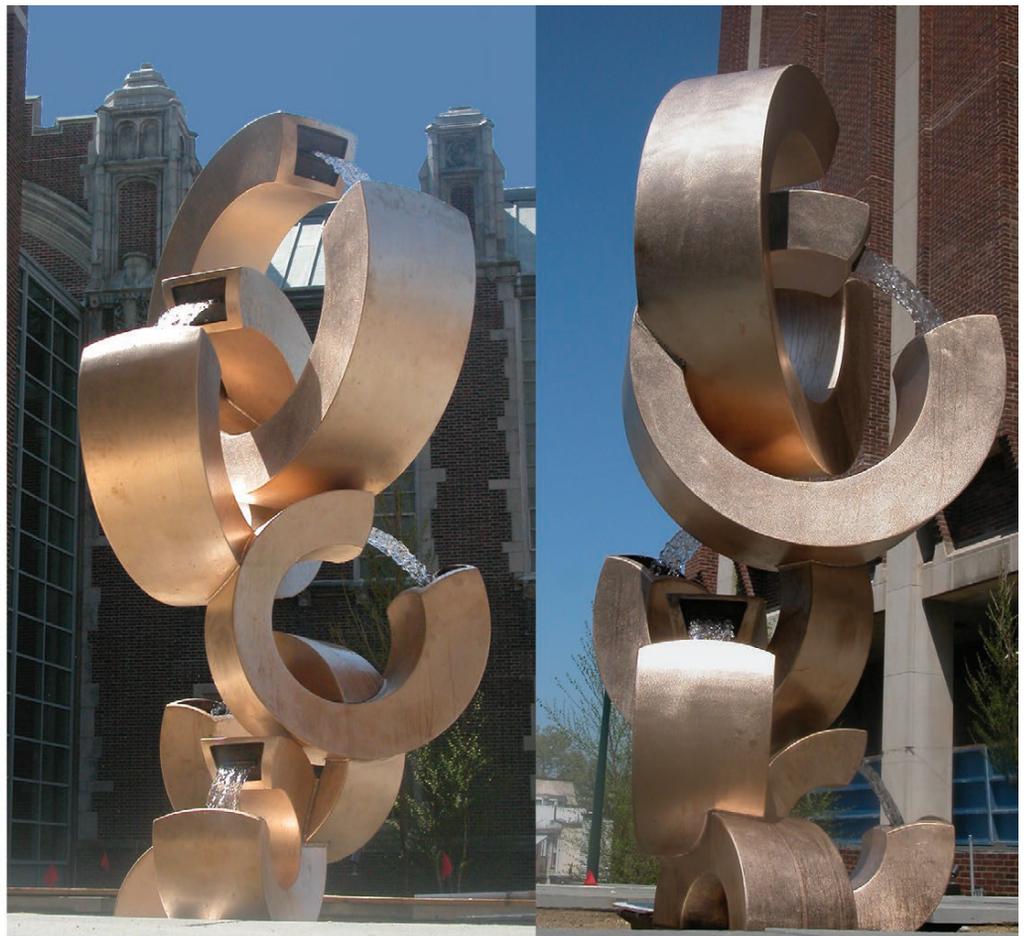




Photo courtesy Madrax

and horizontal adjustment of the gaps between gates and posts help gates to operate smoothly, aid in avoiding sagging gates, and create a more uniform look. Depending on the design of the gate, hinges can be set flush or centered or even completely concealed within the post or frame but, most importantly, all hinges and latches should be corrosion-resistant.

Security gates must be well-maintained to remain reliable. If the hardware malfunctions, becomes rusted, or does not close well gates can become both unsightly and unsafe.

Bike Racks

According to the results of the 2017-18 *Campus Travel Survey*: conducted by the Transportation and Parking Services at UC Davis and the Institute of Transportation Studies, around 40% of students, faculty, and staff bike to or on campus—a number that has steadily risen over the years. Whether students bike for exercise, to avoid the hassle with finding a parking space, to help protect the environment by reducing emissions or just to save money, bike security has become an important consideration on many campuses.

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For best results Jolene Guberud with Madrax recommends bicycle racks should horizontally support the bike frame in at least two different areas to keep the bike upright as well as allowing both the frame and a wheel to be locked to the rack. An in-ground mount is the most secure option where the rack is installed and set in place with concrete, however, on existing concrete surfaces the rack will need to be mounted to the slab with plates and anchors. Rail mounts can be installed or

left free-standing on asphalt, pavers or dirt but do not offer the same level of bike security as in-ground mounts. Guberud also suggests that campuses consider investing in high-density bike racks to alleviate the need for multiple, smaller racks.

Unfortunately, poorly chosen bike racks can be a blemish on an historic campus composed of red brick, hand-carved stonework, and century-old trees. Many companies offer custom-made bike racks to help alleviate

competing design elements. Galvanized steel is the most common option. As well as being durable and easily maintained, steel can be shaped in multiple ways to accommodate existing architectural styles. Another design option is adding a powder-coat finish that not only further protects the rack itself but can be matched to school colors or other college-wide design motifs, which may actually heighten the overall campus aesthetic.

Does Form Have to Follow Function?

No longer do campuses need to adhere to the late 19th-century idea that form must follow function—that the design of an item should primarily relate to its intended purpose. With custom-built security options, function can now seamlessly blend with, or even enhance, form without sacrificing safety.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Hilary Moreno is an alum of Birmingham-Southern College. Currently, she is the Creative Director and a staff writer for Flaherty Media.

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