

Category: 10 – Best Building Project – General Contractor (Under \$10 Million)

Contractor: W.E. O’Neil Construction

Project Name: Red Rocks Community College Community Room Renovations

The Red Rocks Community College, Lakewood Campus main building has two wings, built in 1973 and 1976. The focus of the project was eliminating/repurposing spaces that were a health/life safety concern and re-organizing academic support services adjacencies to improve functionality for students and collaboration opportunities for staff and the community.

The complex renovation included adding an entire second floor within an existing building and a foundation system to support it. The RRCC Community Room Renovations were completed on schedule, below budget and without any safety issues within an operating building and campus.

Relocation of the Community Room provided functional improvements such as: The new space is much more accessible to campus visitors, conveniently located near major services and centrally located for students and staff. The new location allows an approximate 25% increase in capacity.

The new location of the Community Room is in the campus Learning Commons, a two-story building. As part of the remodel, a 5,800 square foot second floor was installed in the space, connecting two existing upper spaces. This allows the relocation of tutoring services, the College Prep Zone and other academic support services to the second floor adjacent to the Library. Moving these support programs to the second floor opens space for the High School Relations and Student Outreach/Retention to be relocated adjacent to other Student Success Services, such as TRiO, Inclusion/Diversity, Accessibility Services, etc. In

addition, the creation of this additional square footage within the college allowed the sculpture classroom/lab to move into new space, which is adjacent to the other Art Program classrooms. The improved space allows the lab to be multipurpose, allowing the Art Program to utilize it for additional courses. The reorganization of the lower level allows the photography lab to be moved into the building from the annex it currently occupied and provides improved space for the Theater programs' set building classes.

Technology services are markedly improved in the new location. This space has better access to cell phone coverage and has increased bandwidth with a new agreement with the college's service provider.

Building a "building within a building" presented a design and construction challenge that is not typical. The original building was not intended to support a second floor. As a result, a separate, new, independent deep foundation system was required to be installed within and underneath the existing floor structure. The structure including the new foundation and elevated deck had to be chosen to be able to serve the purpose of creating a new, inviting Community Center at the College while being able to be brought into, and constructed within an existing operational facility. The use of micropiles as a foundation system in lieu of more traditional construction techniques allowed for this to happen within the time period allotted for the project. W.E. O'Neil worked closely with the design team to finalize connection and constructability details based on field conditions. Real time coordination meetings onsite provided immediate design direction and allowed the project to continue on schedule and achieve the quality desired. W.E. O'Neil also worked with Yon Tanner to complete mock-ups and renderings to achieve a level of finishes at the Community Center making it a gathering place and center point showcasing RRCC's unique architecture.

W.E. O'Neil and the project management team at RRCC created a phasing plan considerate of the operational college. The project had four main phases so the college could remain open and W.E. O'Neil could efficiently complete classroom and library renovations during scheduled semester breaks. Cathy Rock, Project Manager for Red Rocks Community

College expressed, “What made W.E. O’Neil professional was they were very good at working in an occupied facility filled with students and employees. They were always proactive with solutions and worked well on behalf of ownership. They watched out for the best interests of the school.”

The team’s diligent planning and follow-through kept everyone safe while completing the project in the middle of an operational college campus. There were 26,000 worker hours on the job with zero OSHA recordable incidents and zero lost time accidents. The team created as much physical separation between the operational campus and the active jobsite by creating physical barriers with applicable wayfinding signage.

All personnel who performed work on the jobsite took part in the project specific safety orientation program to achieve a safe work environment. During the safety orientation we reinforced some additional safety rules required for an active campus such as interaction rules with faculty and staff as well as an additional badging system in order to identify all additional personnel arriving on campus for the construction project.

When construction work had to take place within rooms that were being used by school faculty or students W.E. O’Neil enacted a “second shift” to be able to work at night safely within those areas, cleaning every night to allow the campus to continue to function.

We count the Red Rocks Community College Community Room Renovations project as a success not only because of a smooth running project and a happy client, but also because of the long-lasting contribution this project will have on the community. We are glad to have been a part of building a gathering place that is safe, beautiful, and of great use. We are glad to see a place that serves not only the students of Red Rocks Community College but also supports many programs in the Lakewood community that help people grow, learn, and come together.











