



PROJECT OVERVIEW

SEMINAR II is the first significant project constructed since the campus was opened to students in 1970. Moreover, the 168,000 SF general instruction building is the only facility designed to promote the College’s interdisciplinary educational model while supporting its environmental values.

CONTEXT: The Evergreen State College is a progressive, public liberal arts and sciences college known for its collaborative, interdisciplinary undergraduate education with a focus on environmental advocacy and social responsibility. The campus core, consisting primarily of cast-in-place concrete buildings, was built in the early 1970’s amid 1,000 acres of second growth forest on the southern edge of Puget Sound in the Pacific Northwest. The location is primarily a heating climate with temperatures ranging from 44 to 77 °F. The site receives over 51 inches of rainfall per year.

CONCEPT: Connection to the natural environment, both physically and emotionally, is embedded in the design of Seminar II. Five interconnected interdisciplinary pavilions emphasize the interplay between building and nature to maximize the campus edge condition, creating multiple distinctive exterior places within a natural palette of materials.

PROGRAMMATIC AND SITE SOLUTIONS: Located on the last un-built area within the campus core, the semi-wooded 3.8-acre site was selected to increase density by infilling an area bisected by the main campus utility tunnel and nestled between the main plaza, three buildings, a forested zone and a parking lot. To safeguard the site’s ecology, Seminar II is broken into pavilions and fingered into the landscape, saving stands of mature trees and replanting forest to restore these gaps. As landscaping matures, unique and intimate views of the forest from the building’s interior will emerge. The project provides environmental





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connections combining daylight and fresh air together with views into the landscape from every occupied space.

The semi-independent pavilions contain flexible spaces to accommodate changing academic programs and support smaller communities of learning. Each pavilion supports four interdisciplinary academic programs with faculty offices, student “homerooms,” seminar rooms, break-out spaces, workshop and lecture hall. These spaces are organized vertically with a central open volume which enables daylight, natural stack ventilation and visual connections within the community.

The pavilions and their connecting exterior walkways respond both to the campus grid and cardinal directions, creating a variety of exterior spaces and views. The system of walkways, stairs and bridges ties levels together and surrounds a post-glacial landscape running through the center of the project. Stormwater runs in surface runnels through the centralized landscape, culminating in an open rock garden serving as detention pond. Outdoor classrooms extend from each lower level into the landscape.

**SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS:** Eighty percent of the building is naturally ventilated. A daylight factor of 2% is available in 86% of all teaching spaces (only 5 lecture halls do not meet this criterion). The average lighting-power density for the building is 0.90 W/ft<sup>2</sup>. Energy usage is 38.5 kBtu/sf (a 68% reduction from 2003 CBECS EUI site energy of 120 kBtu/sf for college level buildings). Forty percent of the roof area is vegetated, and a surface stormwater conveyance and detention feature is designed to celebrate rain.

Every product, including furnishings, was scrutinized for harmful off-gassing. Ventilation rates are increased to 30 CFM/person in all mechanically ventilated spaces utilizing an under floor distribution system. Naturally ventilated spaces have individual controls utilizing both trickle vents and operable windows.

Materials are intentionally left as elemental as possible to focus attention on the setting, and simultaneously simplify cleaning



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and maintenance. Exposed interior concrete surfaces naturally assist with comfort, are both durable and cleanable, and limit the amount of finishes within the building. The structural and exterior closure material is concrete, containing 4% fly ash. This system creates a 100-year building, offers thermal mass for natural ventilation effectiveness, and provides the final exterior and interior finishes on walls, ceilings and floors. Inside and out, sustainable wood products provide a strong contrast to the concrete.

Significant effort was made to specify materials and systems both from the region and with recycled content. 37% of all the materials used in the building were manufactured locally (within 500 miles), with 38% of those materials being harvested from the region. Cork, 100% recycled carpet, reclaimed wood and 100% recycled rubber were used as flooring finishes in addition to retro-plated concrete. Maple flooring was reclaimed from a recently demolished local gymnasium, and all wood veneers are from the fast growing NW native alder tree. Walls finishes are predominately structural concrete, wood paneling and acoustic panels made from recycled fabric. Gypsum wallboard, paint and color have been kept to a minimum. Furniture is constructed of sustainably harvested alder, and upholstery utilizes wool, recycled seat belt strapping and recycled polyester in support of the project's strict sustainable goals. 80% of all construction waste was diverted from the landfill.

**POST OCCUPANCY EVALUATION:** The project received Gold LEED certification in 2006. In an online survey conducted by The Center for the Built Environment, Seminar II scored higher in user satisfaction than the average LEED building and far higher than a conventional building. Significantly higher satisfaction ratings were recorded for the building in the categories of general workspace and thermal comfort.