News Release

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State of Georgia's Only Dental School Gets New Home Providing Family-centric Care Environment, Updated Equipment and Fulfilling Need to Educate More Dentists In-state

Sustainably designed building pursues LEED Silver certification; features warm, embracing design

AUGUSTA, Ga., April 12, 2012 – The State of Georgia's only dental school – the Georgia Health Sciences University (GHSU) College of Dental Medicine (CDM) – has a new $112 million home that features a warm, embracing, family-centric care environment, provides state-of-the-art equipment for both students and dental practices, and fulfills a need for the university to educate more dentists.

Designed by architecture firm Lord, Aeck & Sargent (LAS) in collaboration with Francis Cauffman as consulting dental architect, the five-story, 269,000-square-foot building features a host of sustainable design elements and is targeting LEED Silver certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

The natural light-filled building, whose dominant exterior design element is a gentle curve that spans the length of building's 1.68-acre footprint, was developed in response to patient and student input that called for an environment that was anything but institutional.

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"I think we are one of the first, if not the first dental school in the world to solicit building design input from a Patient and Family Centered Care committee," said Connie Drisko, CDM dean at GHSU (formerly the Medical College of Georgia). "The committee members told us that they wanted a patient-friendly building. And moving to this building from a box-like structure with not a lot of windows, I personally told the architects, 'Don't give me a box.'

"Lord, Aeck & Sargent translated into reality a building that fits our vision and needs. It's a building that has a really spectacular outer appearance, an interior that flows, and LEED features to help lower our maintenance costs," Drisko added.

Design sets tone for new section of campus

The new CDM building is the first structure to be completed on a GHSU 25-acre site that adjoins the existing campus. As such, the design was intended to set the tone for the site's future medical, dental and associated research buildings.

"We wanted to design a building that would be a catalyst for the new site and that spoke about modern healthcare," said John Starr, LAS principal in charge of the project. "And at the same time, we wanted to respond to the existing campus context by using a warm red brick characteristic of the university's historic buildings mixed with areas of dark gray iron spot brick as a counterpoint. To emphasize that this is a thoroughly modern healthcare environment with the latest dental technologies, we added extensive areas of glazing – in some areas three to five stories in height – along with sculpted metal canopies at three entrances and crisply detailed metal plates slicing into the brick around each punched window."

The building design was a response to its two distinct sides. One, which faces a new public parking area, is used for patient entry, while the other, which addresses the future campus quad, is for student, faculty and staff entry.

"The defining exterior design element on the patient entry side is the gentle, welcoming, embracing curve that responds to the patient and administration feedback we received," said Aaron Wilner, LAS project designer. "The generous amount of glazing brings natural light to nearly every area of the building, including the 316 operatories (dental treatment stations), the practice and simulation labs, all the faculty offices, the faculty, staff and student lounges and of course, the main lobby."

This three-story public lobby and two-story patient sky lobby above it – both glass enclosed – feature rich brown wood paneling and bright white terrazzo floors with accenting zinc strips, which reinforce the geometry and character of the building.

What's inside

The first floor patient-entry side of the building includes three entries, one for the Faculty Practice Group, another for emergency oral and maxillofacial surgery, and the main central entrance used by about 85 percent of patients. This entrance opens into the three-story main lobby where patients are greeted at a reception desk and directed for registration to the appropriate business office on the first through fourth floors.

One of the most specialized areas on the first floor is the oral and maxillofacial surgery clinic, which includes a surgical operatory equipped with a high-definition camera for recording and broadcasting procedures to other locations within the College.

The second floor includes operatories for orthodontics, pediatric dentistry and several other dental residency programs, while the third floor houses the senior clinic; a simulation lab with 100 simulator workstations, 200 desktop monitors and seven large displays; a practice lab with 22 simulators and 25 workstations; and a wet lab.

The fourth floor is for the junior clinic, while the fifth combines dental administration offices and a mechanical penthouse.

Altogether, the building houses 316 dental operatories; a central sterilization center; a dispensary area on each of the first four floors; six student, faculty and staff lounges; 15 conference rooms; 10 support labs; and state-of-the-art equipment for students and dental practices, including 83 intra-oral radiography units and six panoramic/cephalometric x-ray machines, all but one with 3-D imaging capability.

“Designing and building a dental school is extremely complicated, even more so than a hospital because each operatory as well as the laboratories, must have air, suction, gases and plumbing brought in,” Dean Drisko said. “Everything requires very small tolerances, so it was important that Lord, Aeck & Sargent and (construction manager) KBR work closely together to ensure that everything came together as it should within the required dimensions.”

Green features aimed at reducing costs

Drisko also praised the building’s green features, especially the natural daylighting, which travels from one side of the structure to the other.

“We also like the floors in all of the clinics because they just have to be cleaned and buffed a little but not waxed, so over time the cost of maintenance will be very low. And we love that all the flooring, including the terrazzo floor, is made of recycled material.”

Wilner noted some of the building’s energy- and water-saving features.

“With so much dental equipment, the building is an energy hog, so we tried to offset that with the combination of natural light, automated shading on the patient side of the building in the public spaces, and programmable lighting control systems in certain areas of the building. At night, setbacks shut the lights off or down to the minimum required.

“As far as water is concerned, in the old dental school, each operatory had its own canister of purified water, and any left over at the end of the day was thrown out. But in the new

CDM, we have a system that delivers water to each operatory only as needed, so the College saves on water this way and through the use of low-flow fixtures," Wilner said.

Other sustainable design features include a reflective roof to reduce the heat island effect and porous paving in the new parking area to reduce the need for storm water detention.

Building grew from need to educate more dentists

The CDM grew from the need to educate more dentists within Georgia.

"The state is fast-growing, and we haven't been able to keep pace by providing enough graduates for the number of new dental licenses granted in Georgia each year," Drisko said. "We're only providing about a third of the dentists licensed here annually, so the new College of Dental Medicine will allow us to expand class sizes well into the future to meet the oral health needs of Georgia's growing population."

Drisko said that the old building, still used for classroom space, was originally built to hold 54 students per class and then, following earlier renovations, up to 70. The new CDM, however, was able to accept 80 first-year dental students in August 2011 and is designed to accommodate 100 new students by 2016.

Construction began on the CDM in August 2009 with substantial completion in June 2011.

The Project Team

The Georgia Health Sciences University CDM project team included:

- Lord, Aeck & Sargent (Atlanta office) – architect
- Francis Cauffman (Philadelphia office) – consulting dental architect
- Davis Design Group (Augusta, Ga.) – landscape architect
- KSi/Structural Engineers (Atlanta office) - structural engineer
- B&E Jackson & Associates (Atlanta) – civil engineer
- exp (Atlanta office) – MEP/FP engineer
- Gleeds USA (Atlanta office) – program manager
- Hillsman (Atlanta) – interior design
- Waveguide Consulting (Atlanta office) – audio-visual consultant
- KBR Building Group (Atlanta and Nashville offices) – construction manager

About Lord, Aeck & Sargent
LAS is an award-winning architectural firm serving clients in academic, historic preservation, scientific, arts and cultural, and housing and mixed-use markets. The firm's core values are responsive design, technological expertise and exceptional service. Recently, the firm has appeared twice on *Architect* magazine's "Architect 50" ranking of U.S. architecture firms based on profitability, sustainability and design quality. In 2007, Lord, Aeck & Sargent was one of the first architecture firms to adopt The 2030 Challenge, an initiative whose ultimate goal is the design of carbon-neutral buildings, or buildings that use no fossil-fuel greenhouse gas-emitting energy to operate, by the year 2030. Lord, Aeck & Sargent has offices in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Atlanta, Georgia; Austin, Texas; and Chapel Hill, North Carolina. For more information, visit the firm at www.lordaecksargent.com.

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