

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Environetics Designs School of Education at The College of New Jersey;  
New Building Supports Campus' Northeast Quadrant in Reaching Best Potential**

*--- Balancing high-design and high-efficiency scheme yields a flexible, purposeful learning environment ---*

**PHILADELPHIA, PA (May 30, 2013)** [Environetics](#)<sup>®</sup>, an architecture, interior design and engineering firm with locations throughout North America today announces the completion of the [School of Education](#) building at [The College of New Jersey](#). Planning for the \$33.4 million project occurred within the context of an active strategic planning update and a campus master plan update, which placed the new facility for the School of Education at the start of a phased-continuum of development activities extending to 2021. During this period, the northeast quadrant of the Ewing, N.J., campus is a primary focus of growth, and the design and placement of the School of Education supports the quadrant in reaching its best potential as envisioned in the master plan. The building design effectively aligns four major departments, administrative offices and a variety of allied programs in an unexpected permeable space that meets the School's needs today, yet is supportive of its future.

The School of Education focuses on challenges in education, from addressing urban issues to assistive technologies that allow people with disabilities to be fully engaged in education. Along with new flexible classrooms, lecture halls and faculty offices, this new 79,000-square-foot facility houses special areas for hands-on science-teacher training, science pedagogy research, group dynamics observation and learning in model classroom settings. A two-story entry lobby anchors one end of the building, affording access to administrative and departmental office suites. At the other end, a cafe enlivens the pre-function space for lecture halls and multipurpose rooms.

"The new building establishes a true home base that fosters a sense of common purpose and celebrates the importance of the work being done to prepare our future educators so they may affect the quality of life for all, particularly the underserved and other-abled students," said Lynda Kane-Rothermel, Campus Architect and Director of Planning at The College of New Jersey. "To effectively create this shared home base, the Environetics team collaborated with leaders from the School of Education departments to first consider vision, and then to work communally to search for opportunities for common and shared activities and spaces only after carefully exploring specific departmental needs for faculty and teaching space – this ultimately allowed them to gain the trust of users and to design a shared space with longevity."

With a relatively fixed square footage and specifically fixed budget, efficiency was of utmost importance to the project's success. The Environetics planning and design team continuously measured performance against goals with respect to square footage and openly shared that information with all stakeholders to develop a sense of teamwork in achieving efficiencies through new approaches and shared space. According to John C. Kohlhas, AIA, Principal, Environetics, a scheme with usable spaces single-loaded along an expansive common space against the building perimeter, while desirable and frequently used today, would not yield the required efficiency. "Instead, our design returns to a traditional double-loaded concept, but maximizes transparencies – in both public and private areas of the building – pulling natural light and views through to internalized public spaces and creating strong connections between the order of the building and the order of the adjacent campus. The result is a very open and inviting building that is also highly efficient," said Kohlhas.

Key design considerations include:

**Purposeful Architectural Expression:** The College of New Jersey's Collegiate Georgian Campus would have traditionally imposed limitations on the School's accessibility, transparency and other objectives. In

response, Kohlhas and his team refined four traditional design elements to convey commonality with the Collegiate Georgian campus and also achieve the welcoming openness the School desired: 1) The most traditional “Georgian” element is the large-windowed brick wall modulated into well-proportioned bays, typically used at faculty office areas; 2) schoolhouse-style brick gable ends symbolize the function of teacher education and relate to the relatively narrower mass of older traditional buildings; 3) cast-stone-trimmed window-walls at prominent exposures indicate communal spaces; 4) and white wood-trimmed bay windows are carefully aligned to preserve exterior views far into the building. This specific relationship of external elements with interior purpose results in an open and inviting feel that is uncommon to neo-Georgian buildings.

**Accessibility:** To allow the most convenient access to the School’s collaborators, particularly those with disabilities, the Environetics team reconciled entryway prominence with accessibility, resulting in a no-stair solution that elegantly engages the campus landscape.

**Departmental Identity and Flexibility:** Multi-departmental buildings typically struggle to balance department identity with inter-department collaboration space. To address this challenge, Environetics organized the building in a “dumbbell” formation that allows both ends of the building to be used for identity, while the center of the building allows departments to merge, leaving the departmental perimeters flexible for expansion, contraction and collaboration and results in a greater sense of collegiality.

**Integration of Building and Landscape:** An art selection committee composed of 17 members, including Environetics, faculty, staff, students, the campus architect, gallery director, New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the Board of Trustees, selected [Tom Nussbaum’s “Building Up”](#) sculpture to adorn the outdoor space adjacent to the main entrance. A play on the building’s gable ends, the sculpture references the Early American one-room schoolhouse and the history of education and may ultimately be the terminus for an “arts walk” that would trail through the campus. Beyond the sculpture, a study pergola and a third-floor terrace that overlooks a future quad help integrate the building with the landscape enabling the School to act as an anchor on the northeast corner of campus.

In addition to the above design elements, the School of Education building was also designed to LEED Silver level requirements. The building reduced its water consumption by 30 percent with low-flow and dual flush fixtures; solar powered flush valves and solar powered hands-free faucets were also installed. Specified native plant species reduced irrigation needs and also contributed to reduction in water consumption. To reduce energy usage, lighting fixtures with integral occupancy and daylight harvesting sensors were installed, and a sophisticated lighting control system utilizing touch screen controls in classrooms also enhanced efficiency. A Chilled Beam System with Dedicated Outdoor Air System (DOAS) was installed, supplying pure outside air to chill beams and reduce total airflow to the building by 50 percent compared to standard air systems. The DOAS also used energy wheels and wrap-around heat pipes to exchange heat between outside and exhaust air streams, providing 75 percent effective energy transfer efficiency. Additionally, 95 percent of construction waste was diverted from landfills.

The Environetics team included Architects John Kohlhas, Steve Kopp, Derek Smythe and Jon Hicks; Interior Designer Amy Gallagher; MEP Engineers Michael Sidlo, Jeffrey Smith, Nayan Patel and Jeff Ohlinger; and Structural Engineers Steve Devine and Eric Yanovich. Audiovisual, IT and acoustical support was provided by Shen Milsom & Wilke. The Environetics team has been designing for The College of New Jersey since 2000.

**Editor’s Note:** An interview with representatives from Environetics and The College of New Jersey and high-resolution photography are available upon request.

**About Environetics®**

Collaborating with clients, whose values they share, Environetics seeks to create environments that make a positive difference in the lives of their users and for the community. Environetics is a full-service architecture, interior design, engineering, and planning firm specializing in the corporate, academic, healthcare, industrial, hospitality and retail markets. With independently owned offices located in Philadelphia, New York, New Jersey and Los Angeles, and over 90 staff the alliance can access a broad geographic area and knowledge base to better serve our clients. Learn more at [www.environetics.com](http://www.environetics.com).

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