

Whittier College: Science and Learning Center

Whittier, CA



Whittier College is a liberal arts institution named after Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier and founded in 1887. The school of approximately 1,600 undergraduates is in Whittier, California in the Greater Los Angeles area.

During a master planning effort in 2012, Steinberg Hart helped Whittier College envision a complete renovation of their 1966 Science Building. The master plan identified four goals for the project: Serve as a campus hub, showcase science, foster collaboration, embody a sense of “wow”

The new Science & Learning Center meets all the original goals and now houses the departments of biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, environmental sciences, kinesiology and nutrition science, and psychological sciences. Transparency was built into the building's flexible classrooms, and all labs and classrooms feature at least one glass wall to reveal student endeavors. Large open lounge areas and group study spaces create opportunities for interactions and collaboration beyond the classroom, and indoor/outdoor classrooms on the rooftop contribute to the learning process.

Vantage was engaged to assist in planning the all technology within the shell of the existing science building. One of the major challenges was to maintain the aesthetic integrity of the facility during the renovation while incorporating the latest technology. We added interactive audiovisual classroom technologies throughout the building in both general classrooms and laboratory spaces. The roof top “penthouse” extends classrooms out into a terrace to accommodate both indoor and outdoor experiences including an area to be used for astronomy observations.

The large lecture colloquia includes support for distance education with room cameras, multiple presentation screen and presenter microphones to facilitate lectures and live streaming of remote speakers.

Photos courtesy of Steinberg Hart

Client: Whittier College
Architect: Steinberg Hart
Facility: STEM Learning Center
Project Size: 88,000 sq ft
Completed: September 2019

Services:

- Infrastructure Design
- Installation Oversight
- System Design
- Laboratory Planning Coordination

Technologies:

- Audiovisual Systems
- Emergency Notification
- IT Infrastructure
- IT Systems
- Low Voltage
- Paging
- Security Systems
- Telecommunications
- Unified Communications
- Wireless Network

Benefits:

- Reimagined STEM learning with collaborative interdisciplinary learning centers, flexible classrooms, lounge areas and group study spaces
- Designed the technology for the lecture colloquia space to accommodate live streaming and broadcasting
- Coordinated with the lab planner for the integration of technology into sophisticated laboratory learning spaces