

Salisbury University Patricia R. Guerrieri Academic Commons

Location: Salisbury, Maryland

Category: Institutional Architecture

Project Synopsis

The new building allows the university to bring all of their academic support programs together in combination with a state-of-the-art library, classrooms, cafe, 400-seat assembly space, and the Nabb Research Center—a special collections library dedicated to the history and culture of the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Common ground for all of the university's academic disciplines, the Academic Commons fully supports all modes of study and learning, from individual contemplative study to collaborative, technology-rich group engagement. The building was designed and constructed in accordance with LEED Gold certification requirements and has been certified.

Site

A critical challenge of the project was siting the building. Its location at the historic crossroads on campus required strategies to knit the building into the existing fabric and diminish the impact of its 226,000 square feet. The building also mediates between very different scales and characteristics on campus. To the east the building faces onto Route 13 and the community of Salisbury, requiring a civic expression and a more monumental scale, as the building serves as a gateway and point of arrival for the community. To the west, the building frames Red Square, the iconic student square and gathering space for the university, requiring a much more informal and intimate scale and expression.



Program

The program elements are arrayed around a dramatic four-story learning commons with each floor dedicated to a specific type of learning. The ground floor is devoted to staff-supported collaboration. The second floor contains program elements focused on teaching and learning skills, the third floor is dedicated to individual reflective learning, and the fourth floor, which contains the Nabb Research Center and a 400-seat assembly space, facilitates engagement with original sources and supports learning through public dialogue.

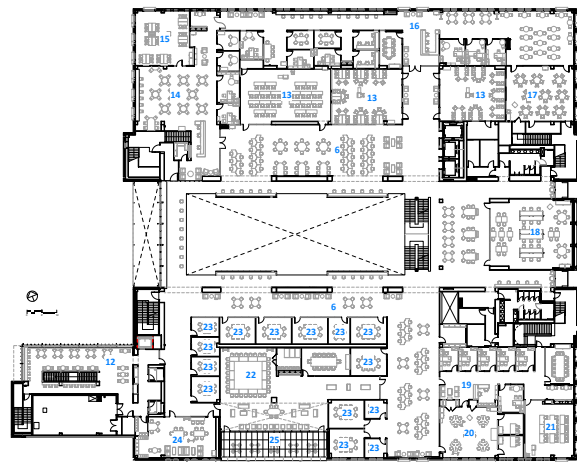
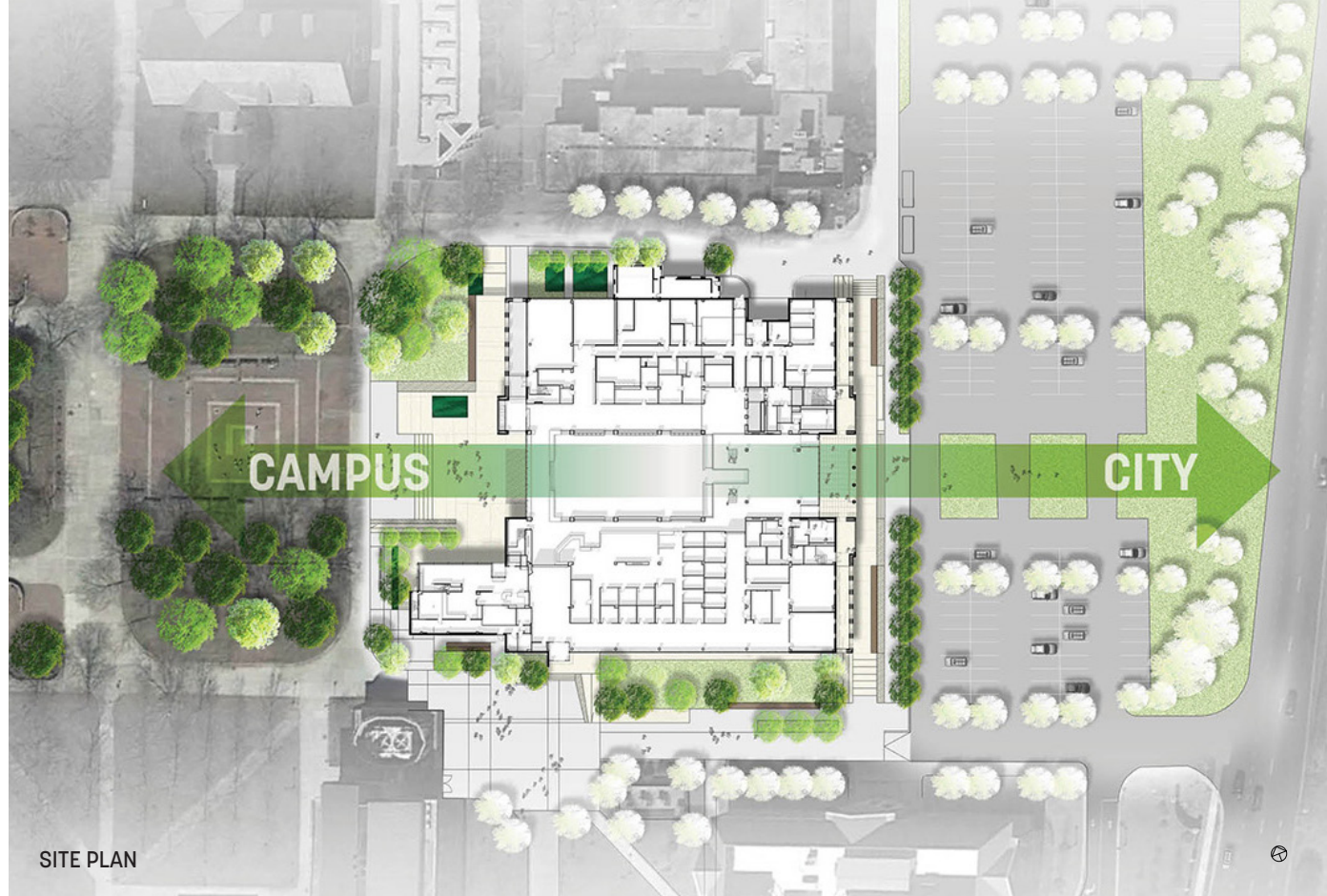
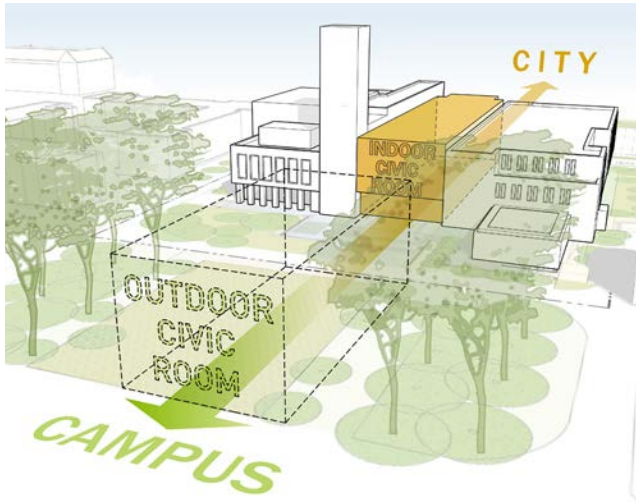
Solution

Working closely with university leadership, the team created interior and exterior spaces that transform learning and engagement on campus. The organization of the Commons supports Salisbury's new pedagogical initiative: A campus of active and engaged learners with a dedication to lifelong learning. The intersection of all university library services and collections, academic achievement programs, faculty excellence in teaching initiatives, instructional spaces, and campus community assembly spaces enables student and faculty engagement and success.

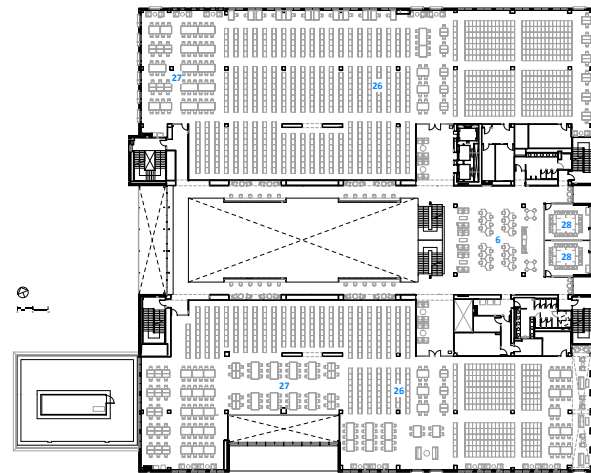
Strategically located at the core of the campus, Salisbury University's new Patricia R. Guerrieri Academic Commons significantly transforms how teaching and learning occurs on campus.



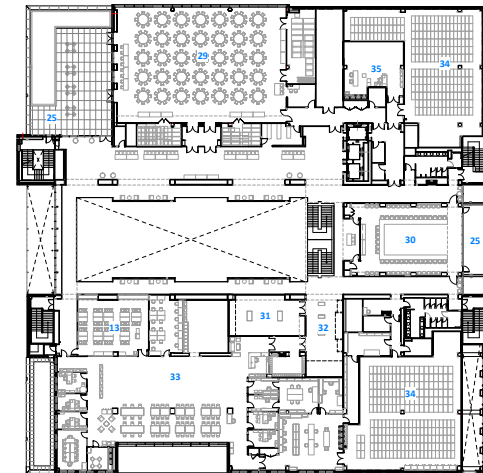
The building serves as a gateway and point of arrival for the community. The ground floor contains staff-supported, technology-intensive collaboration spaces; the second floor develops teaching and learning skills for students and faculty; the third floor supports individual, reflective learning; and the fourth floor houses spaces for public engagement, research and dialogue.



Second Floor

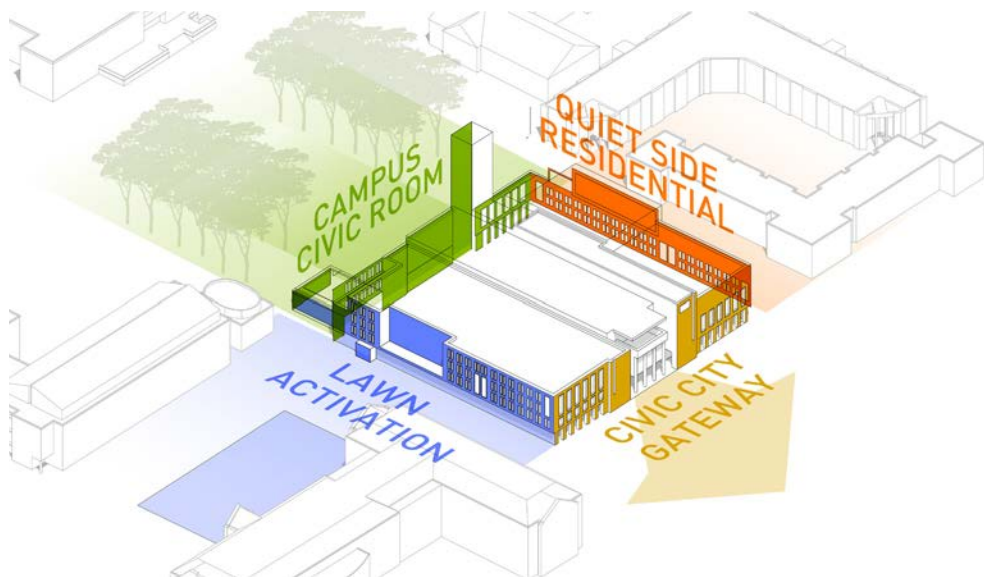


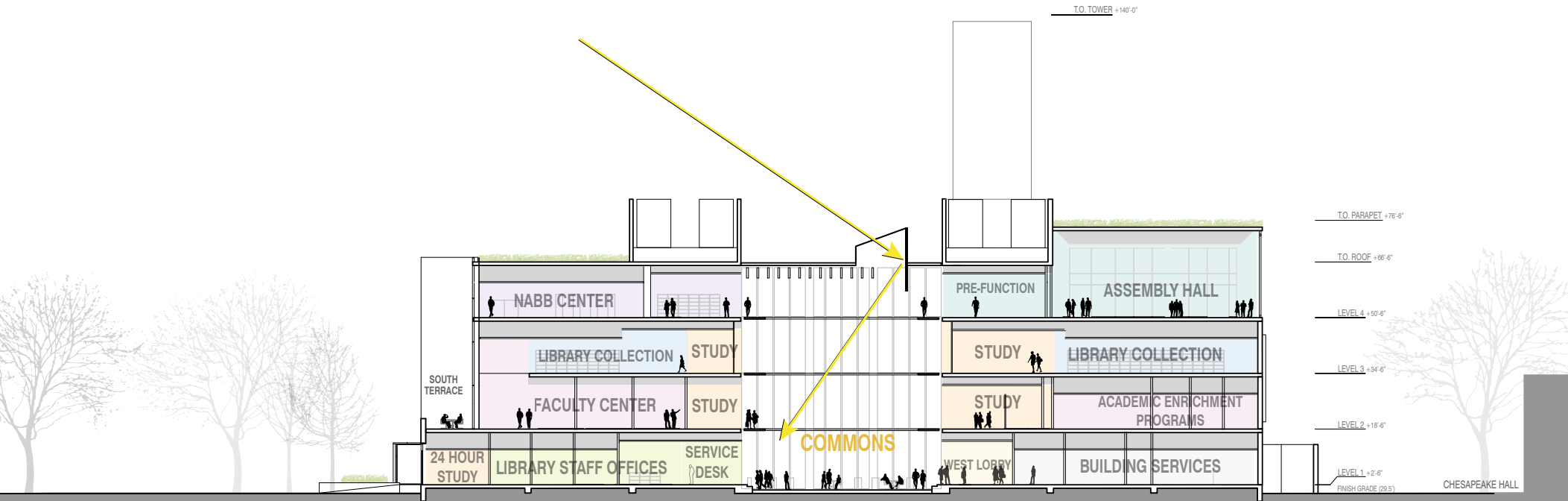
Third Floor



Fourth Floor

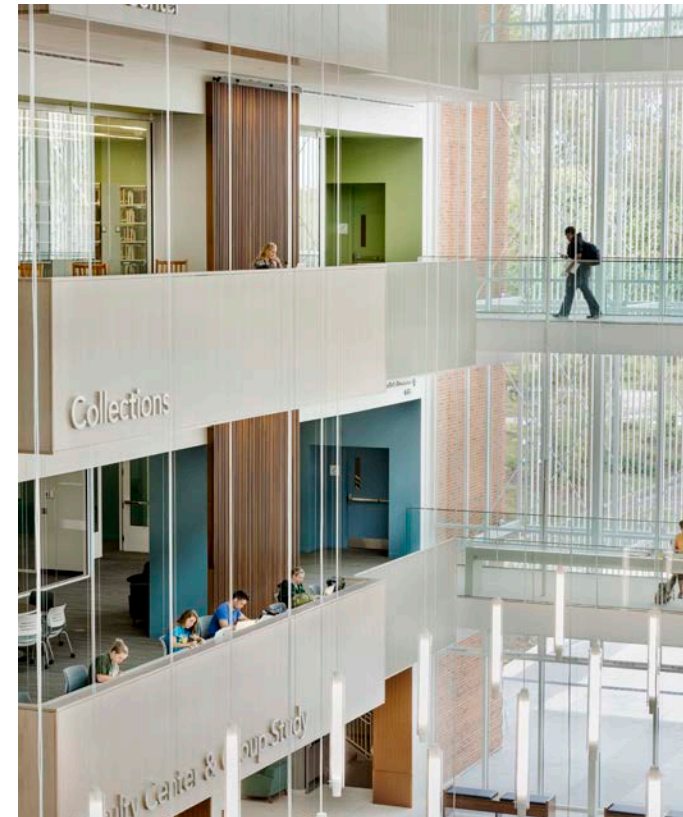
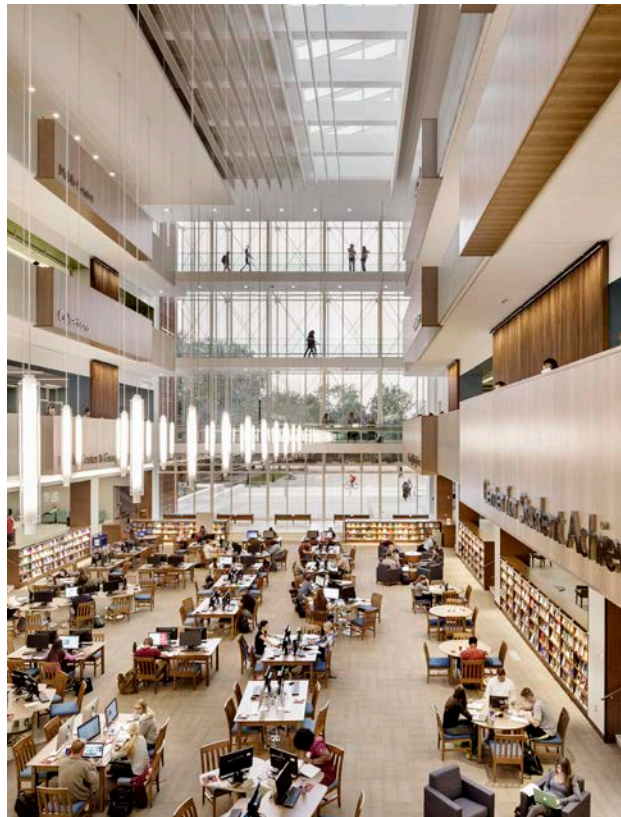
- 1 Library Lobby
- 2 Collaboration Commons
- 3 Dean's Suite
- 4 Circulation Desk
- 5 Library Staff
- 6 Open Study
- 7 Media Lab
- 8 Mini Lab
- 9 Flex Research/Project
- 10 Library Tech Services
- 11 Computer Instruction Lab
- 12 Cafe
- 13 Classroom
- 14 Writing Center
- 15 Writing Lab
- 16 Academic Support Suite
- 17 Academic Support Lab
- 18 Math Emporium
- 19 Instructional Design & Delivery Suite
- 20 Faculty Dev. Studio
- 21 Presentation Room
- 22 Faculty Center
- 23 Group Study
- 24 Graduate Commons
- 25 Terrace
- 26 Collection
- 27 Reading Room
- 28 Seminar Room
- 29 Assembly Room
- 30 Board Room
- 31 Exhibit Space (Temporary)
- 32 Exhibit Space (Permanent)
- 33 NABS Center
- 34 Archive Storage
- 35 Archaeology Lab
- 36 Catering Kitchen





BUILDING SECTION

Layers of program space radiate from the main commons. Light, both natural and artificial, is one of the most important elements of the Commons. Large floor plates demanded thoughtful day-lighting strategies to ensure access to natural light from all points in the building. A main light scoop that runs the entire length of the building in the east-west direction, along with strategically-placed large apertures on the north, south, and west elevations, provide continuous access to daylight and views outside.





The building houses over 2,000 study seats, 17 programs and departments, 14 classrooms and several major assembly spaces. The main study space serves as an organizing device for the building, with each program component containing an "address" onto this space.

DIRECTORY

4

Assembly
Boardroom
Nabb Center

3

Collections
Book Periodicals
Development Database
Reading Rooms

Seminar Rooms

2

Computer Lab
Center for Student
Achievement (CSA)
Group Study
Cafe
Faculty Center

Instructional Design
& Delivery (ID&D)
Math Emporium
University Writing
Center
Graduate Commons

1

Library Services
Classrooms
IT Help
Accessibility Room

Library & IT Offices
Security
Cafe
Research Commons

New types of program adjacencies are created, such as the Center for Student Achievement, Math Emporium, Writing Center, Graduate Center, Instruction Design & Delivery, the Faculty Center, multi-purpose classrooms, and open study areas all clustered in close proximity on the building's second floor.



The west entry plaza provides performance space and serves as a stage for Red Square, the main student gathering space on campus. A cafe pavilion is placed on the plaza and serves as a 24 hour study venue when the Commons is closed. The highly-transparent cafe overlooks Red Square.

A large focus for Salisbury University was to increase energy efficiency. Energy efficient glass and glazing was used throughout the building's exterior envelope. Lighting controls such as occupancy sensors prevent fixtures from being left on unnecessarily; daylight sensors auto-dim a fixture if enough natural light permeates the space to reach the desired threshold.





The brickwork on the Commons is a blended mix that matches the brickwork on Holloway Hall, the original campus building. An interplay of vertical elements and facade details provide a human-scale to this large building.

The building is respectful of its neo-Georgian context yet authentic to its time. All four sides of the Commons respond to unique conditions, ranging from civic and monumental to intimate in scale and casual in its composition.





PATRICIA R.
ACADEMIC

The south elevation faces an academic mall and establishes a “garden wall” to the Henson Lawn. Careful attention was given to how the Commons engages the ground plane of the campus, with the intention of spreading the footprint of study and engagement spaces.