Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Instructional Space Utilization Analysis
Worcester, Massachusetts

Project Information

Completion Date
March 2019

Services Provided
Instructional Space Utilization Analysis

In light of upcoming enrollment growth and plans for a new academic building, Rickes Associates was engaged by Worcester Polytechnic Institute to perform a campus-wide utilization assessment of classrooms, computer labs, and Robotics labs.

Worcester Polytechnic Institute is a private research university in Massachusetts. The four-year academic program centers on the instruction and research of technical arts and applied sciences, with a focus on project-based problem solving. Current enrollment is 6,400 graduate and undergraduate students. The urban campus consists of over 70 buildings, including residential, occupying a hill overlooking New England's second-largest city.

Rickes Associates was engaged to review utilization of classrooms, computer labs, and scheduled Robotics labs. The impetus for this study was twofold: first to understand overall utilization patterns and needs as a whole, and second to determine the quantity, size, and type of instructional spaces that should be considered for inclusion in the new academic building. Forty-three Registrar-defined classrooms were analyzed for this study as well as 10 Registrar-identified computer labs.

In order to address projected classroom need, it was determined that the Institute should consider creating up to five active learning classrooms in the new academic building to resolve the calculated deficit and enable a transition to more interactive pedagogy. Additionally, one 40-seat classroom and two 50-seat classrooms would provide a greater array of classroom capacities in the new building while simultaneously addressing campus-wide needs. In addition, analysis showed a current need for up to three additional computer labs.

The creation of an appropriate array of classroom capacities brings with it the opportunity to remove from service underperforming classrooms elsewhere on campus. These rooms could then be re-purposed to meet other institutional needs and/or permit targeted buildings to be taken offline for renovation. Finally, recommendations pertaining to scheduling policies and utilization targets were also suggested.

Rickes Associates
Futuring Higher Education®