

FROM COMMUTER TO COMMUNITY



Sicomoro Hall and Secoya Hall — the Spanish names for the sycamore and sequoia trees — with Centerpointe Dining Commons in the foreground

Executive Summary

How does a university go from a commuter school to a community-centered destination? It gives its students a home, and the student housing and dining commons does just that. One of the biggest drawbacks of a school where many first-year students commute is the struggle to socialize and Cal Poly Pomona needed a radical shift from its commuter school reputation toward an inclusive polytechnic university that inspires and embraces its students.

Placing first-year housing and a dining commons at its front door is a bold first move for a campus whose persistent goal is to create a residential community that feels like home. Phase I Housing and Dining is an investment in student engagement. Each building and open space is designed to visually engage the campus as a vibrant student-focused front door to campus. Cal Poly Pomona's goal is to build upon its vibrant on-campus community through increased student housing that helps students thrive. The intimate housing environment, coupled with its placement at the campus' front door, reinvents the university's residential culture and encourages students to become part of the Cal Poly Pomona community.

“Learning can take place anywhere on campus, and on-campus housing is one of the most important settings for students to grow.”

-Soraya M. Coley, University President

112

SOCIAL SPACES

32

STUDY SPACES

16

FLOORS



Scope of Work

- / Two 153,000 GSF, eight-story residential buildings
- / 980 beds, 22,000 ASF of community space, four staff apartments, main housing, and administrative offices
- / A 35,000 GSF dining commons area
- / All-you-care-to-eat and retail services, indoor and outdoor dining, and six healthy and internationally inspired food platforms
- / Realignment of major campus arterial road
- / Improvements to the Arabian horse farm

274,500 | 9

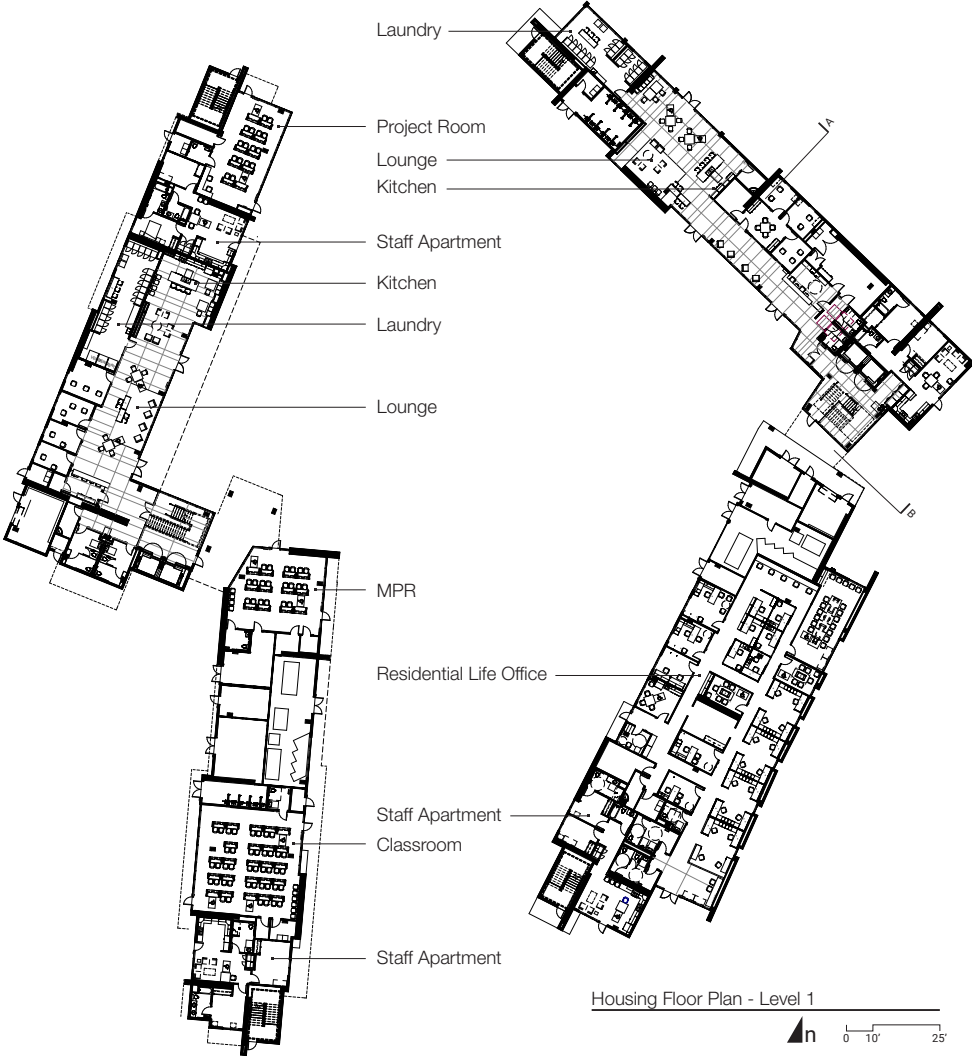
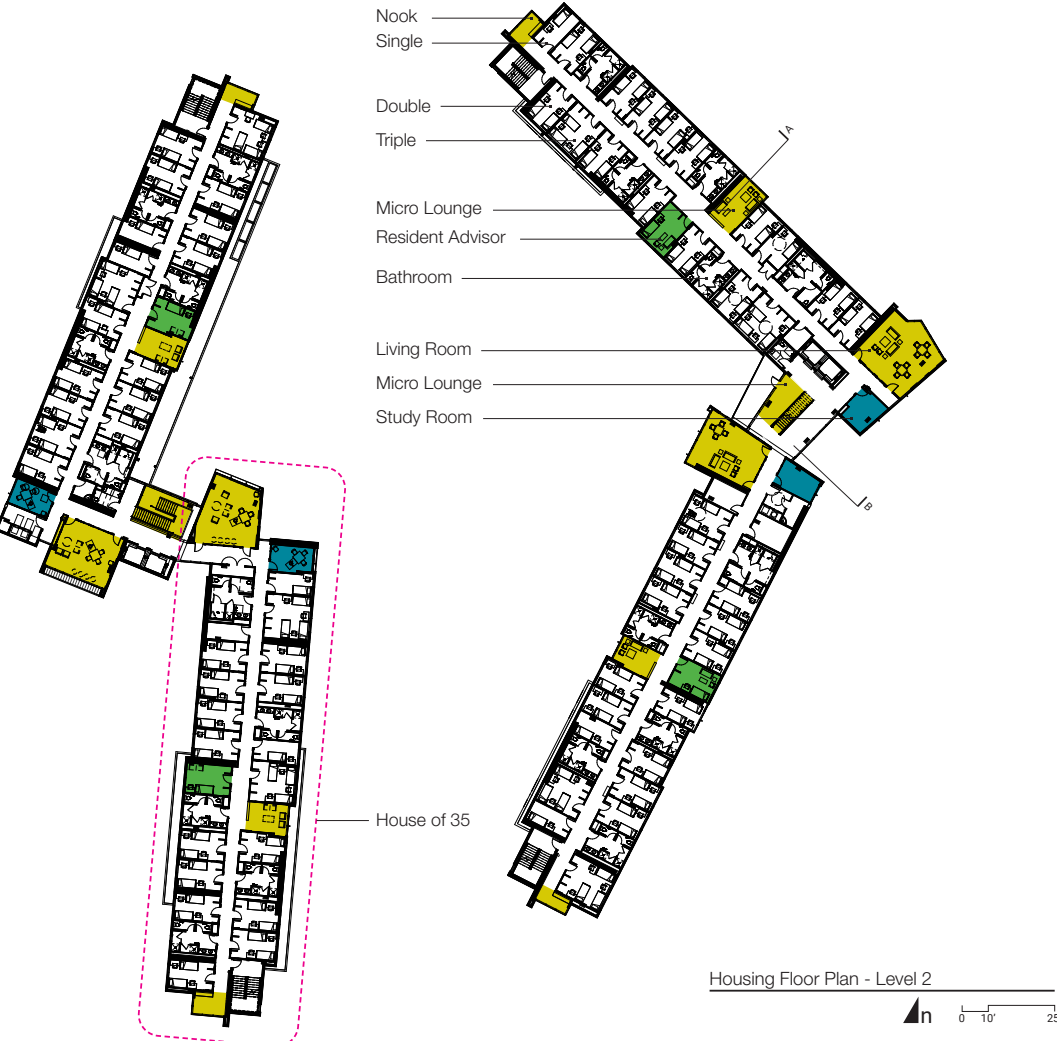
SQUARE FEET

ACRES



Budget

The budget was determined through a proforma and market study to determine reasonable rates for students. **The construction budget was \$156 million and funding was sourced by a revenue bond.** The project was completed in January 2020, with 14 acres of total impacted area.



SICOMORO HALL AND SECOYA HALL

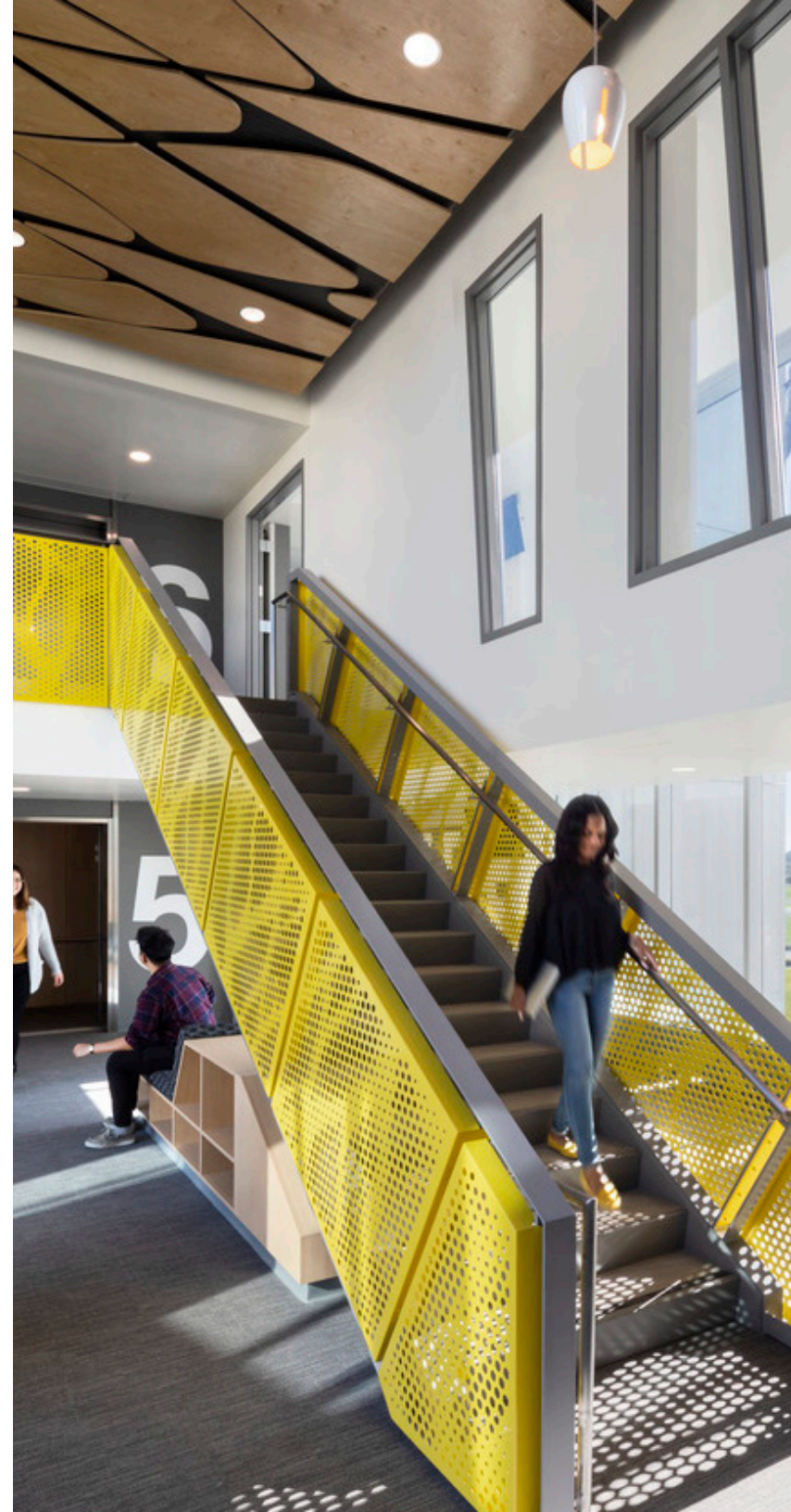
Every floor has two 35-student households, providing many places to congregate, socialize, and study. A diversity of connections between indoors and outdoors is a defining feature. Balconies on the fifth floor connect students living on upper floors to the outdoors, while living rooms and lounges use full-height glass to queue students into the social activities happening inside. Bedrooms feature abundant natural light while hallways end in views toward the campus and capture amazing views of the San Gabriel Mountains.

School and Community Engagement

Cal Poly Pomona is a 24,000 student campus nestled in the hills along the western edge of Pomona Valley. The campus is predominantly an undergraduate institution that serves a demographic of first-generation college students. **Community has always existed at Cal Poly Pomona, but it didn't always have a home. The housing and dining commons creates that home base and has become a community destination**, symbolizing the university's dedication to student life and welcoming a diverse blend of students and residents.

Due to the protracted nature of the 10-year planning process, the stakeholder group evolved over time. We conducted visioning sessions with two distinct leadership cohorts. The stakeholder group consisted of a broad swath of campus leadership, housing, and support staff that included:

- / President Coley
- / All Vice Presidents
- / Students
- / Resident Life Staff
- / Campus Facilities and Maintenance
- / Campus Safety, Parking, Grounds, and Accessibility





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“It’s beautiful. I would have had a way better freshman year if I had lived here”

- Alexandra Wilder, a fourth-year Journalism student

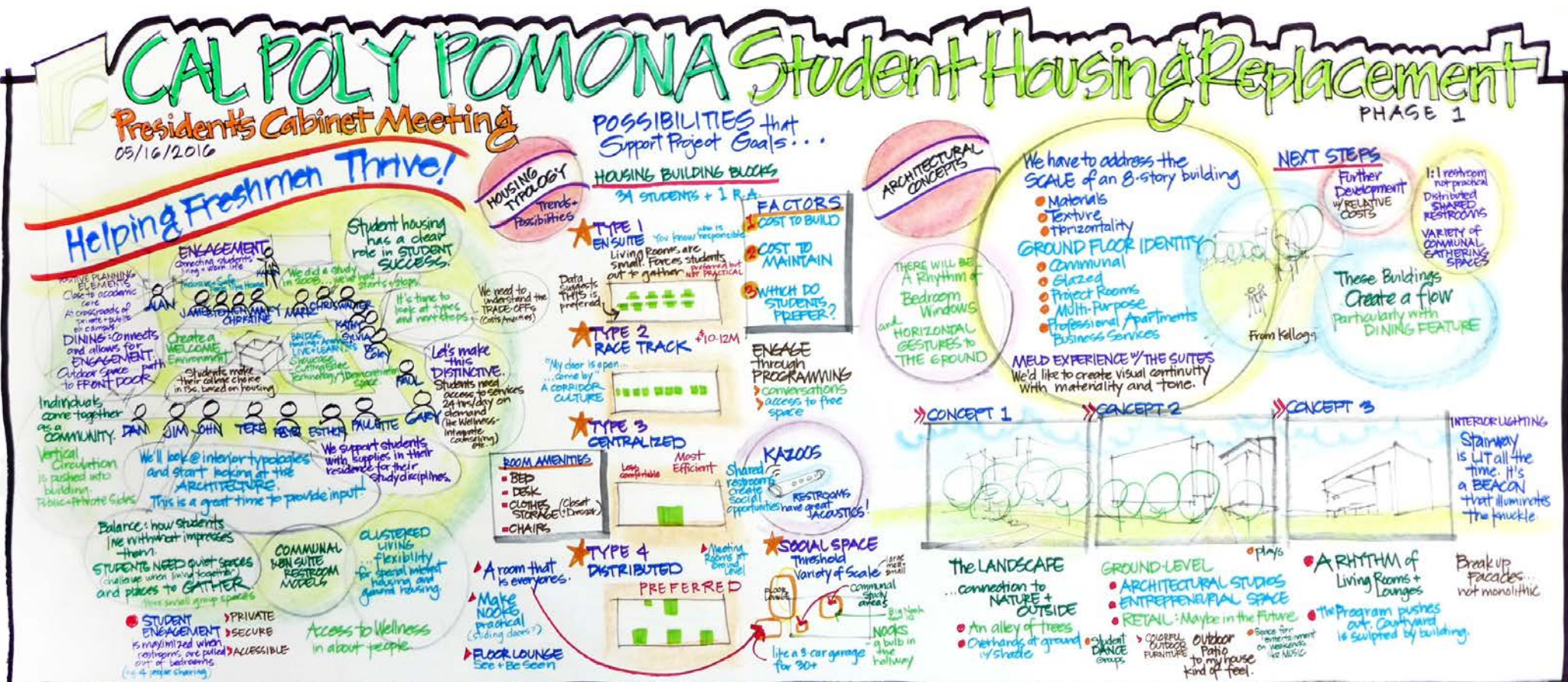
School and Community Engagement: Challenges and Solutions

The Challenge

Campus leadership feared that mid-rise towers would create an institutional environment that dissuaded engagement and a strong student life program. The design team researched the psychological impact of living in tall buildings and structured sustainable strategies around ways to mitigate possible feelings of anxiety and disconnection. These strategies include abundant natural light and views to the horizon, operable windows, wide hallways with clear lines of sight to exits, and natural materials and organic motifs to connect people to nature. These design solutions address campus concerns and create a new type of learning environment that students actively enjoy.

The Solution: Trust the Process

Due to the duration and several iterations of the project, the planning process extended over many years. The success of the project began by listening to the campus' needs, building trust with the user group, bringing a wide lens of housing expertise to the table, and keeping solutions tightly knit to specific housing needs. This resulted in a project that instilled pride in those who were a part of its inception, and the first-year students who call it home.

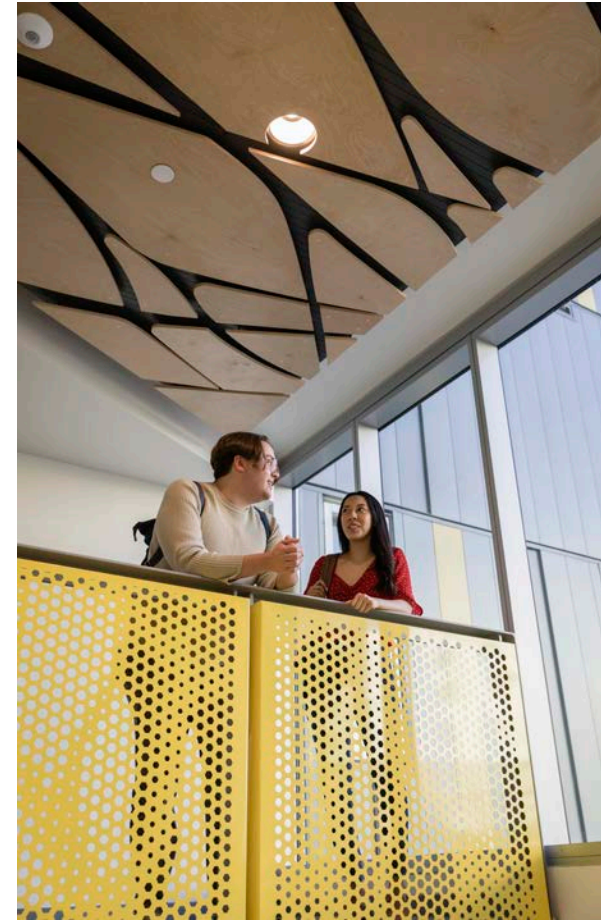
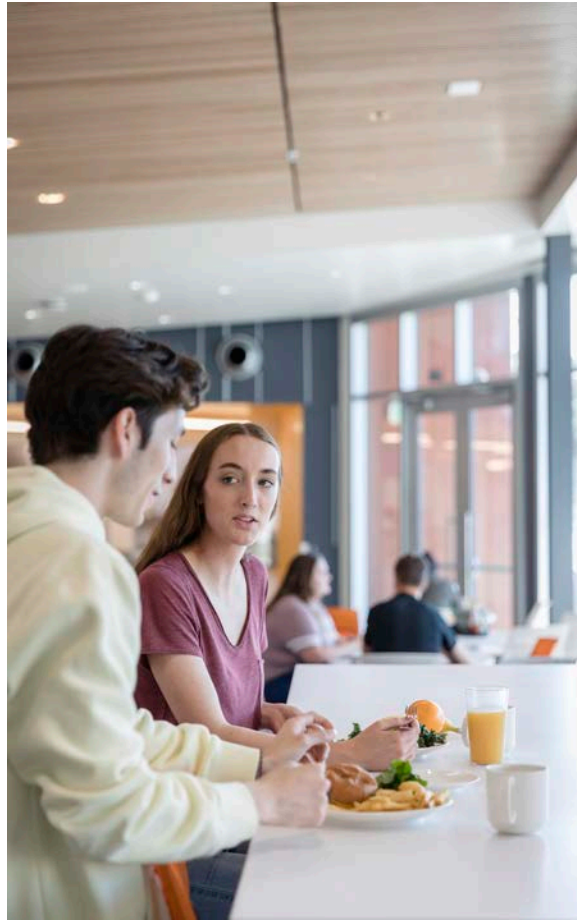


School and Community Engagement: Recognizing Community Impact

During construction, a student liaison between the team and campus was selected from the university. The team hired Vache, a then Cal Poly Pomona student, to work in the field. Vache subsequently became a licensed drone pilot and led the drone on site, which became a vital part of real-time as-built documentation during concrete pours.

Overall, the team had a goal for California State Certification DVBE of eight percent, which they exceeded by achieving 11 percent; representing **over \$17M in work to local DBVE companies.**

Additionally, the project is located adjacent to the Campus Childcare Center, and the team partnered with the university and the Center to provide a construction equipment demonstration event for the children and their families to show off the equipment and introduce our team who would be working as their “neighbors.” The team later donated paint for Childcare Center improvements.



Educational Environment

President Coley's vision was to redefine the campus as a "metropolitan destination" with a global view on recruitment. The campus needed a "wow" statement at its front door, a distinctive student experience that could appeal to prospective and future students. The new student housing project is a radical shift in housing typology for this suburban campus. It elevates campus pride and identity, gives students intimate environments to keep them on campus, and encourages them to feel part of a community and ultimately build life-long connections. The project is a dramatic step forward for the campus' brand and student experience.

Campus goals were developed through an iterative approach that sought to provide the best value for the dollars spent. Performative thinking aimed to see the highest purpose of the project beyond its physical representation.

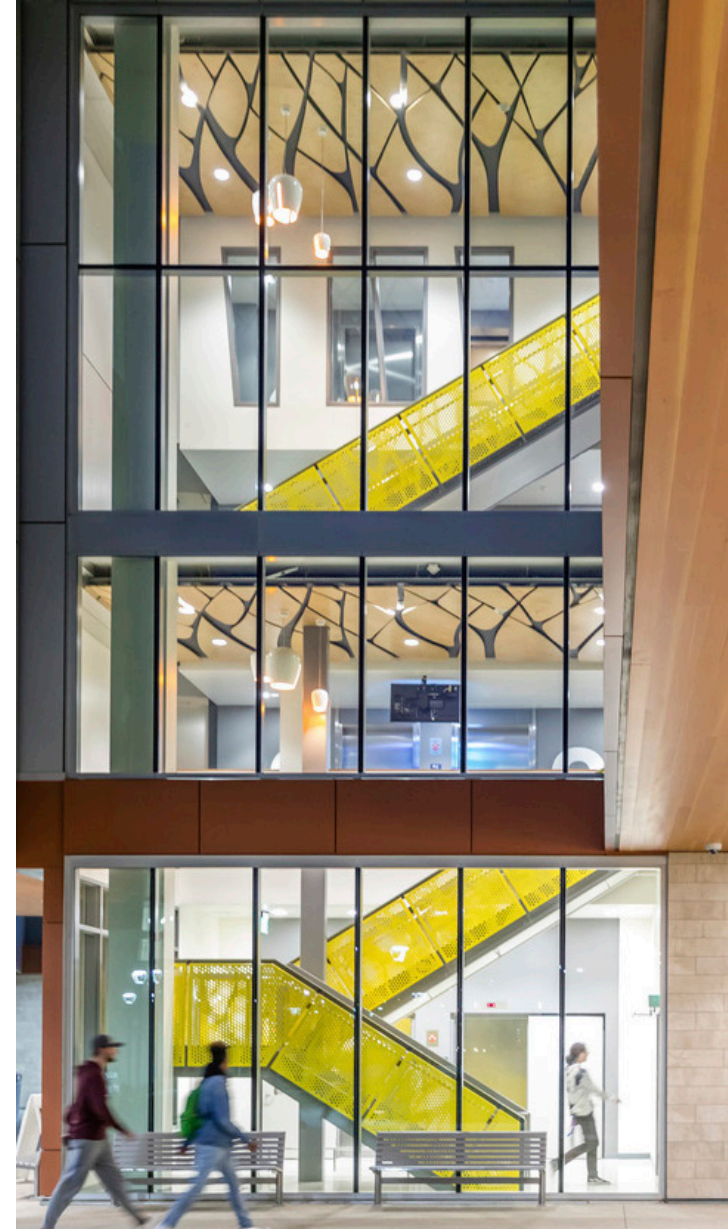
As a student's first home away from home, the team sought to define emotive experiences to connect people to place.





Campus Goals

- / Bridge housing with academic mission
- / Continue strong connection to landscape and history
- / Wow factor, “I want to live there.”
- / Do not change the defining characteristics of CPP with this project

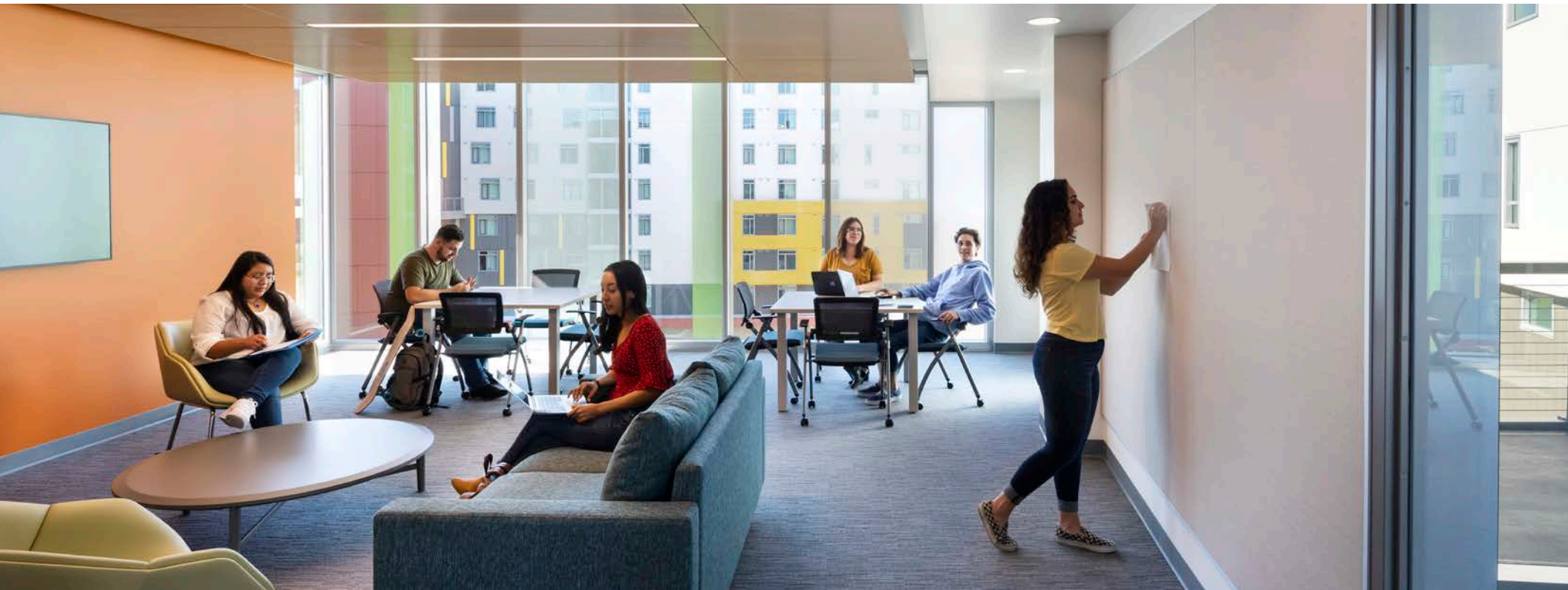


Housing Goals

- / Feels like home—comfort, ownership, safety
- / Layers of community—multiple scales of space
- / Appropriate levels of privacy

An Environment that Supports Curriculum and a Variety of Teaching and Learning Styles

Given budget constraints, dedicating space for tutoring and multiple classrooms to support live-learn communities posed a challenge. To address this, **the team designed flexible, ground floor learning spaces to support a variety of learning modalities.** These included a classroom, multipurpose room, project room, and several outdoor spaces, each with unique teaching amenities. Each residential floor has nine uniquely scaled spaces that serve a dual role as social and study space. These spaces were designed to adapt over time by not being prescriptive in how they should be used. Audio-visual support, lighting, pin up space and markerboards are provided throughout to encourage multiple uses, which provide students the space to work independently and in small and large groups.



Physical Environment

Paying Homage to the Campus Surroundings

Cal Poly's history of agriculture and Arabian horse pastures couple with extraordinary mountain views to create a breathtaking setting for this 82-year-old suburban campus. The juxtaposition of open fields and tall buildings delivers an impactful impression as one leaves the city and enters campus. The low-lying dining hall and slender eight-story housing towers emerge from the fields, connecting students, staff and visitors to the campus landscape around them.

An Inspiring and Motivating Environment

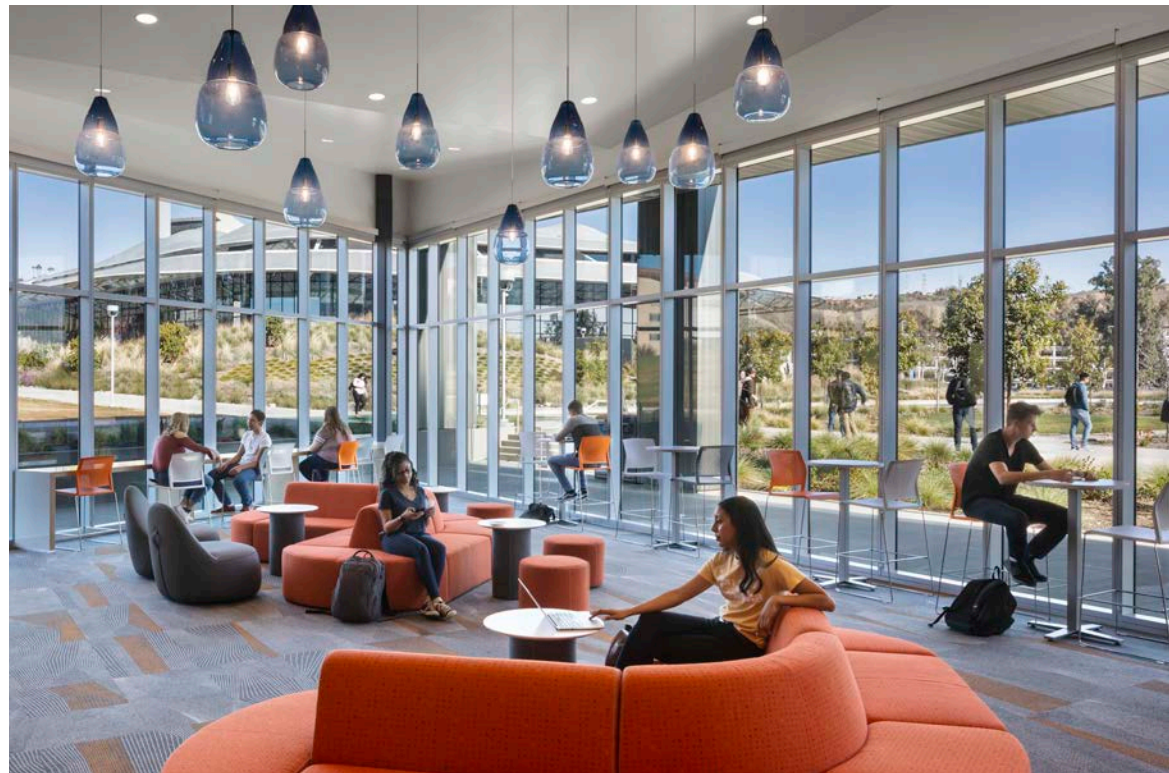
The connection to the outdoors is remarkable. Each wing has a unique setting for residents. Massing shifts provide unique experiences from floor to floor. These characteristics reduce the feeling of anonymity and build pride in community. Bedrooms are intentionally small to motivate students to engage with each other in one of nine social/study spaces per floor, or 63 spaces per building, excluding the ground floor. Ground-floor amenities are connected to outdoor spaces, promoting socialization and wellness. Balconies on the fifth floor connect students living on upper floors to the outdoors, while living rooms and lounges use full-height glass to queue students into the social activities happening inside. The project addresses the campus' goal to further the academic mission by leveraging every opportunity to create an engaging atmosphere.

“It is exciting to watch students use the view as part of their experience”

- Dr. Megan Stang, Director of Housing



What is now the green wooded expanse of the university was originally the winter ranch home of W.K. Kellogg, of breakfast cereal fame. Cal Poly Pomona has carefully preserved many features of Kellogg's hilltop Arabian horse ranch, including rose gardens, avocado groves, stables and, of course, the award-winning Kellogg Arabian horses, featured in horse shows on campus. Nestled in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains Cal Poly Pomona was established in 1938 with 110 students. Today, the 1,438 acre campus supports about 24,000 students and 2,600 faculty and staff in inland California.



High-Performance Design

The design draws from extensive research to create a setting with the comforts of home. Spaces are permeated by natural light, which studies show can improve comfort, sleep, mental and physical health, test scores, comprehension, and matriculation rates. Fresh air from operable windows and high-performance HVAC can be rejuvenating and has been linked to higher cognitive functions, while lowering energy consumption. Virtually every space offers views of the rolling hills and mountains, and this kind of connection to the outdoors can have significant benefits for mood, productivity, and general health. Students have direct access outdoors to walking paths, gardens, and greenscapes. Consistent with the university's commitments to ecological conservation, **the site is irrigated with 100 percent greywater.** All materials are Red List free. Native or drought-tolerant plants are used wherever possible. The garden opposite the entry to dining is maintained by students to cultivate herbs and vegetables. **The project achieves a 17 percent reduction in baseline EUI and is pending LEED Gold certification.**

-  Gender Equity
-  Community
-  Water Conservation
-  Energy Conservation
-  Native Planting
-  Fresh Air
-  Natural Light
-  Thermal Comfort
-  Increase Density
-  Food Creation
-  Red List Free Materials



Results of the Process and Project: Achievement of Goals

Bridge Housing with Academic Mission

Achieved through focus on engagement and providing spaces to accommodate a variety of teaching and learning modalities.

Continue Strong Connection to Landscape and History

Achieved by making the view part of the student's experience.

Wow Factor, "I Want to Live There."

Achieved through its unique scale, location at the front door to campus, and high supply of amenity-rich spaces.

Do Not Change the Defining Characteristics of CPP

Although unique in scale, this project is symbiotic with how the campus values the landscape as part of the learning experience. This project connects to the outdoors at every moment possible.

Feels like Home

Ownership is derived by small scale communities. Every bedroom has an operable window and control of its own temperature. Feelings of safety and comfort are derived from spaces with distant views and a plethora of light. Every residential bathroom is designed specifically by and for non-binary gendered students.

Layers of Community

Each wing has four dedicated social/study spaces, each a different size.

Appropriate Levels of Privacy

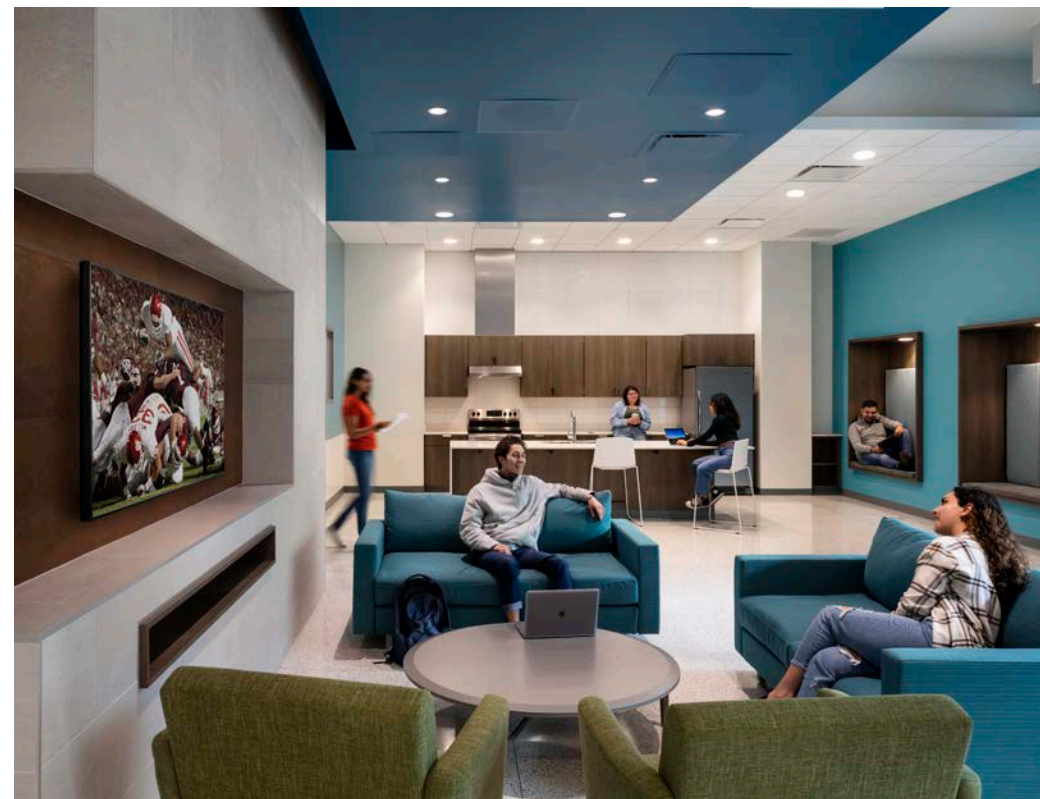
All residential spaces are above the ground floor. There are seven residents per shared bathroom. Each bedroom door is outfitted with a magnetic hold open to encourage corridor culture, but culture but is easily turned off for privacy.

Connection to Outdoors

Every space is designed to engage the sensory experience through light and air.

"The architects beautifully addressed our vision for student success"

- Christi Chisler, former Associate Vice President of Student Affairs



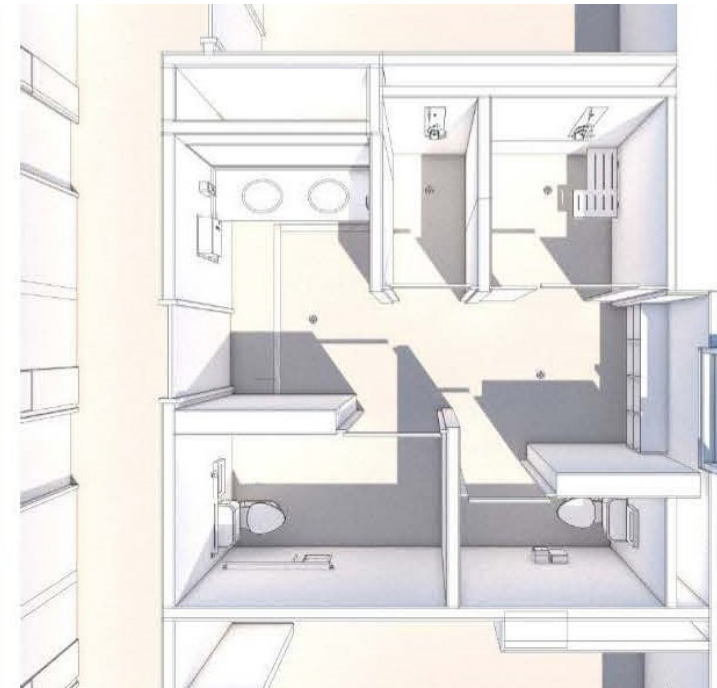
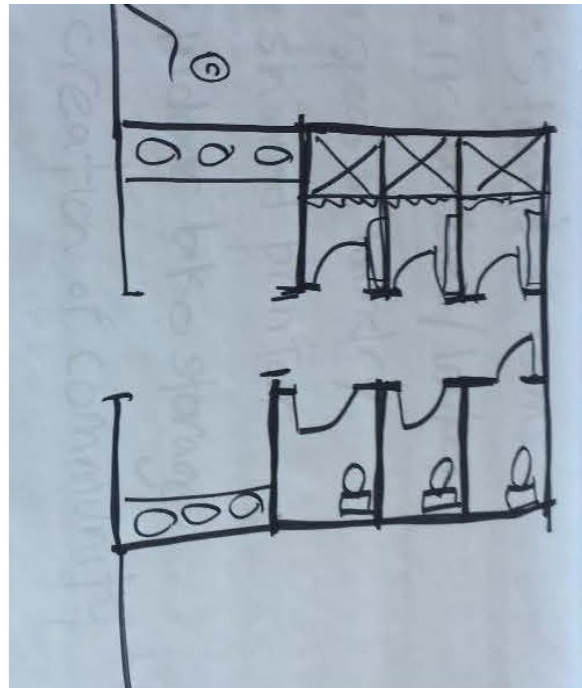
Results of the Process and Project: Unintended Results

The inquisitive visioning process was inclusive from the start, and yielded many unexpected results, including a gender-neutral bathroom solution, seeing the transformational benefit of tall buildings on a suburban campus, and having high-performance building strategies align so closely with behavioral outcomes.

A crucial “ah-ha” moment occurred when a group of non-binary gendered students described their feelings of being unsafe in housing during one of the team’s “pizza nights.” They offered specific suggestions on how to design shared bathrooms for all genders, even drawing and showing the team what a safe shower looked like. **The design team was then able to bring the students’ vision to life, implementing the safe shower 250 times in the final project.**

“These amazing new residence and dining halls are writing the next chapter in the legacy of this great university.”

-Soraya M. Coley, University President



Results of the Process and Project: Unintended Results

The project inspires students in ways we did not expect. The team designed the building to mitigate fears about living up high, but it turns out the students love the height! They sit in the nooks and take in view of the valley, horse pasture, campus, and mountains. This overwatch bonds them to the university because they feel safer seeing the entire campus all at once. **They also love that they are the only ones who get this rare view.**



“As the campus continues to grow, and all of the concerns about climate, sustainability, and technology increase, we don’t always get an opportunity to answer these concerns. **These buildings have answered so much of what’s been missing.** We are very proud of this project. Students are using the buildings in expected and unexpected ways.”

- Dr. Megan Stang, Director of Housing

