A New Community College Campus:
An Innovative Framework for Student and Community Engagement
PROJECT NAME: College of the Desert: New Palm Springs Satellite Campus Master Plan
PROJECT LOCATION: Palm Springs, California
PROJECT BUDGET: NA
PROJECT DATE: Master Plan Completed 2020
PROJECT SIZE: 308,000 gsf / 27 acres
SITE CONDITIONS: Urban, brownfield site; Previous shopping mall
PROGRAM: New Community College Satellite Campus with Signature Programs in Digital Arts, Sustainability, Health Care, and Hospitality + Tourism

Celebrate the region's majestic landscape and unique architectural heritage
Master Plan Goals:

Leadership + Innovation:
• Sustain College of the Desert’s excellence long into the future
• Promote collaboration and interaction
• Foster innovation for a new 21st Century learning model

Sustainability + Stewardship:
• Design consistent with the District’s 2020 Strategic Plan and 2020 Environmental Impact Report
• Embody a sustainable campus philosophy that features best practices and stewardship of the environment
• Integrate demonstrable sustainability features for hands-on learning

Place + Identity:
• Frame views towards the heart of campus, and outwards to the San Jacinto Mountains
• Respect and celebrate the unique heritage of Mid-Century Modernism in Palm Springs
• Celebrate the campus’ unique adjacency to downtown Palm Springs and spectacular setting

Campus + Community:
• Shape new campus gateways to strengthen campus and student identity and connectivity to the community
• Enhance visibility of academic and associated infrastructure to the community
• Create a safe environment for pedestrians and bicycle riders at the campus perimeter with managed service and vehicular access
• Foster a sense of campus community by enhancing campus zones and linking them through pedestrian promenades to adjacent community assets

Identify project values to guide the master planning process

LEADERSHIP + INNOVATION:
shaping institutional vision

SUSTAINABILITY + STEWARDSHIP:
building a resilient future

PLACE + IDENTITY:
enhancing student experience

CAMPUS + COMMUNITY
fostering inclusive engagement
Envision the campus as a bridge that connects students to industry through multi-modal means.

The region’s diverse population, graphically depicted as one dot per person by ethnicity, depends upon multi-modal means of transportation. Being centrally located in Palm Springs between downtown and the PS International Airport, the new campus serves the community through ease of access by bus, bike, car, or foot.
**User Typologies: Community + Guest + Students**

**Profiles**

1. **Young adult**
   - Full-time student
   - Studying to enter professional world of hospitality

2. **Age 40+**
   - Part-time student
   - Going to school in the evenings for professional development

3. **Foreign student**
   - With English as second language
   - Full-time student for a 6-week specialty course

4. **Young Adult**
   - Full-time student
   - Financially challenged but strong interest in technology

5. **Part-time student**
   - Age 55+
   - Want a nice place to stay nearby when visiting their child from out of town

6. **New immigrant with English as second language**
   - Unfamiliar with the US education system and culture

**User Typologies: Learning Hotel + Convention and Event Center Guest**

**Profiles**

1. **Middle-aged couple**
   - Seeking a specialty culinary weekend getaway

2. **Young family with 2 kids + a dog**
   - Seeking a family-friendly vacation with all amenities onsite
   - Movie lovers

3. **Foreign student**
   - With English as second language
   - Full-time student for a 6-week specialty course
   - Needs a place to stay while taking short term class

4. **Single business person**
   - Seeking a nice Learning Hotel for a week-long conference
   - Desires wifi and strong phone connection throughout the facility

5. **Middle-aged couple**
   - Parents of COD student
   - Want a nice place to stay nearby when visiting their child from out of town

6. **Neighborhood young couple**
   - Looking for an evening out of good food and drinks
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
The new satellite campus will be a vital student and community asset in the heart of Palm Springs that will serve the entire Coachella Valley. The bold physical planning vision builds upon the College’s strengths and will provide state-of-the-art facilities to strategically grow their workforce programs through expansion of industry partnerships in Hospitality & Tourism, Digital Arts, Healthcare, and Sustainability.

Three main districts organize the campus plan with points of entry along the streets to the north, east, and south. The northeast quadrant serves the community with a Learning Hotel, Culinary Institute, and Convention & Event Center. The southeast quadrant serves the students with a Mobility Hub for a convenient multi-modal drop-off area, as well as modern, flexible academic facilities located in and adjacent to the Accelerator. The west district initially houses operations and maintenance facilities and surface parking, and allows for future expansion for the campus.

The building massing engages the streets to strengthen community edges, with setback foyers at the two main corners to welcome in the community. Programs are internally organized and connected by a sweeping Arc of Innovation which provides much-needed shaded walkways to traverse across the campus and dynamic views of the majestic mountains to the west.

Integrate diverse programs that serve campus and community

1 - Learning Hotel
2 - Restaurant
3 - Drop-off
4 - Convention and Event Center Deck
5 - Ramp for Parking
6 - Entry for Culinary Institute
7 - Culinary Institute
8 - Loading Area
9 - Convention and Event Center
10 - Drop-off (car/Uber)
11 - Sunken Plaza
12 - Bermed Garden
13 - Fire Truck Access
14 - Outdoor Classroom
15 - Arc of Innovation
16 - Academic Accelerator
17 - Exhibit / Presentation
18 - Aluminaire House
19 - Central Plant
20 - Mobility Hub
21 - Drop-off (Car/Uber)
22 - Parking
23 - Maintenance and Operations
24 - Service Yard
25 - Pedestrian Bridge
26 - Cultural Center
Master plan framework concepts

3 Campus Entries

3 Campus Precincts

Campus Axes

Primary Building Coverage Zone

Secondary Building Coverage Zone

Pedestrian & Open Space Framework
**Arc of Innovation:** The Arc of Innovation organizes all program elements and associated pedestrian traffic. This broad arcing line joins the campus program elements together as a singular campus composition.

**Campus Axes:** The east-west axis frames the dramatic view to the San Jacinto Mountains and serves as the entrance for the community. The curvilinear axis that runs north-south, serves as a pedestrian promenade.

**Campus Entrances:** Key buildings and open spaces frame three primary entries that mark the campus edges, and join two critical internal campus axes.

**Campus Edges:** The Arc of Innovation is complemented by the campus edges that daylight at the corners of the campus as Campus Foyers. These plazas provide welcoming entrances to the community.
Organize all campus programs around an Arc of Innovation, framing the unfolding views to the regional landscape.

Key Master Plan Metrics:

- FAR (Floor Area Ratio): 0.26
- Site Building Coverage Ratio: 17.1%
- Site Softscape Coverage Ratio: 27%
- Site Programmed Space to Paved Space Ratio: 36%
- Roof Programmed Space to Building Footprint Ratio: 14%
- Site Shaded Footprint: 15%

Variety of program that foster hands-on learning through industry partnerships

Shaded circulation connects campus as the Arc of Innovation

Rich and inviting open spaces for campus and community

Diagram showing:
- Restaurant
- Learning Hotel
- Culinary Arts
- Loading Area
- Convention & Event Center
- Outdoor Classroom
- Central Plant
- Pedestrian Bridge
- Academic Accelerator
- Arc of Innovation
Employ parametric modeling to understand circulation, movement, and thermal heat throughout the site.

Data and modeling informs key decisions. The image on the left captures an animation screenshot depicting pedestrian flow modeling—assessing how people interact with buildings, processes, and environments, and confirming the expected performance of the design. The image on the right models thermal comfort at specific areas on campus—informing building massing, overhangs, and canopy locations to adequately respond to the intense desert climate.
Embody a sustainable campus philosophy that features best practices in design, demonstrable tools for education, and stewardship of the environment.

**Energy**
- 50%+ onsite renewable energy
- LEED Gold: Hotel LEED Gold targeted

**SUNSHADE & THERMAL CONTROL**
- Reduce heat island effect and provide comfortable living environments

**Material**
- 25%+ recycled and/or sustainable materials;
- Low emitting interior materials

**Water Saving**
- Reduce potable water demand by 40% for indoor use and 50% for irrigation

**Landscape**
- 20% of the site designed for regional habitat;
- 100% native/adaptive landscape;
- <20% building footprint coverage

**Biowale**
- Convey surface water to enhance infiltration and reduce surface stormwater runoff

**Mobility Hub Integration**
- Reduce dependence on the vehicle

**Campus Central Plant**
- Maximize utility efficiency
Engage campus and community to shape their campus to meet their specific needs

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:
The College of the Desert is committed to developing a rich campus experience for their students, faculty, and the local community to use and enjoy—and that begins with Shared Governance in the planning process. In order to solicit input from all, the master planning process incorporated multiple scales of engagement, from detailed discussions with a diverse working group of College representatives to community-wide dialogues. The community interface was critical during the process and included multiple coordination meetings with the Palm Springs Architectural Alliance, open public presentations, and preliminary introductory meetings with local partners including traffic, transit, energy and water agencies.
Welcome campus and community through a gateway that frames the majestic mountains beyond
Invite interaction between campus and community with visibility and permability
Integrate student services and associated campus infrastructure as feature gateway elements to the campus.
Provide a diversity of protected outdoor educational environments that interconnect campus programs and precincts
Draw on the region’s architectural legacy to create an accessible, visible community space.
Provide shade and comfort as a reprieve to the intense desert climate while embracing the regional beauty

Arc of Innovation: Pedestrian Bridge

Convention and Event Center

Learning Hotel

Academic Accelerator
Create experiential spaces to convey the value of the people and their activities on campus.
"MRY worked effortlessly with College of the Desert leadership, industry partners, and community stakeholders to establish a physical master plan that is responsive, inspired, novel and feasible."

John O. White, Executive Director – Bond Program and Facilities Planning, College of the Desert