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Ocean and Coastal Studies Building



©WHR Architects, Inc./Carlo Macaione, photographer

Ocean and Coastal Studies Building 110,000-sf Waterfront Facility Fosters Interdisciplinary Marine Sciences Research Texas A&M University System

Published January 04 2011



Not even Hurricane Ike could prevent the new \$53-million Ocean and Coastal Studies Building (OCSB) from opening on schedule and within budget at the Texas A&M University in Galveston. Flood waters from the hurricane inundated the excavation site a few months after groundbreaking, but the new three-story, 110,000-gsf research and teaching facility opened as planned in July 2010 and is now home to 40 faculty researchers, approximately 100 graduate students, and undergraduate students studying in multiple science majors.



The university's primary objectives in constructing the facility were to reinforce its position as a leading marine education and research institution, promote interdisciplinary teaching and research, and exceed sustainability standards by earning the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) recognition.

"The OCSB is a fantastic new building with wonderful instructional spaces for our students and a way to facilitate

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collaboration across departmental boundaries," says University President R. Bowen Loftin. "The way the building is designed enhances the ability of our faculty and students to work together in ways that are not typical."

The OCSB unites all of the university's oceanic and coastal science researchers on a single campus to foster collaboration. The cross-shaped building features a wing for the laboratories and a wing for office and teaching functions. A main lobby, which intersects the wings, is highlighted by an open staircase that connects all three floors. Interaction lobbies are located on each floor with meeting rooms and break areas to serve as gathering places. Murals, constructed of recycled glass by artist Dixie Friend Gay, will adorn the walls.

"The university wanted a place that would foster interaction among scientists and students, as well as the community," says Jill Harmon Bard, a principal at the Houston office of WHR Architects, which designed the new facility. "The OCSB accomplishes these goals with a centralized plan separating office and laboratory functions, while maintaining the proximity and access required for informal student and faculty interaction."

Bard says the space planning approach addresses the needs of a research building located in a humid coastal environment. Open office planning in the office wing minimizes floor space and circulation. The lab wing features modular planning and a racetrack corridor featuring labs on the perimeter with support and service spaces on the interior. Having separate wings increases the efficiency of the heating/ventilation system, limiting the 100 percent air exhaust to laboratory spaces only. More efficient re-circulated air systems, including enthalpy wheels, are used in the administrative and classroom wings.

Bard notes that the design increased ventilation by 80 percent in the labs and 30 percent in the offices (compared to ASHRAE Standard 60.12004) and reduced energy consumption by 20 percent (below ASHRAE Std. 90.1 2004), while potable water use decreased by 41 percent from the water-use baseline originally calculated for the building. In addition, 89 percent of construction waste was diverted from landfill and recycled.

Project Information

Building Owner: Texas A&M University System

Building Location: Galveston, Texas UNITED STATES

Project Type: New Construction

Principal Building Function: Interdisciplinary teaching and marine research

Project Cost: \$53,000,000

Construction Cost: \$43,000,000

Cost Per Sq. Ft.: \$390

[About These Cost Figures](#)

Building Information

Project Includes: Education
Education: Classroom
Education: Life Sciences

Total GSF: 110,000

Project Team

Architect [WHR Architects Inc.](#)
 Builder Vaughn Construction
 Construction Management Vaughn Construction
 Consultant - Code Rolf Jensen & Associates
 Consultant - Interior Design [WHR Architects Inc.](#)
 Consultant - Laboratory Design X-nth
 Cost Estimator Project Cost Resources
 Engineer - MEP Shah, Smith & Associates
 Engineer - Civil Klotz Associates
 Engineer - Geotechnical HVJ Associates
 Engineer - Structural Haynes Whaley Associates
 Engineer - Water System TJP Engineering
 Landscape Architect Clark Condon Associates
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The cost figures reported are supplied by the firms that submitted these projects for publication, which in most cases are the designers or builders. Whereas these sources are intimately familiar with their projects, they may not be fully aware of the owners' finally-realized and recorded costs. In some cases, costs are truly and completely accounted for, and in others they represent a near approximation of the final costs. Costs have not been adjusted for year of construction, nor has any attempt been made to make regional cost adjustments.

Further, costs are not comparable on any kind of detailed standard costing model. Hence, it is possible for the cost of one building to include a steam boiler, while the cost of a comparable building might not include the boiler, if steam is being supplied from an already existing campus grid. Or, in another case, a building might include excess boiler capacity to supply steam to another building. Some submittals include fees or unusual site improvements as part of the construction costs, which others do not.

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Ocean and Coastal Studies Building

Labs

Fig. 2



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Lobby

Fig. 3



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Meeting Spaces