

Cal Poly Case Study: Increasing Occupancy and Cost Savings Plus A Big Sustainability Win

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Summary: In 2017, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo hired DCI to introduce a new design standard on campus. In the process, we helped increase occupancy (and the bottom line) by turning 390 doubles into triples, saved the school a huge amount of money on a new wardrobe, and recycled 500 metal bed frames.

A New Design Standard

In late 2017, DCI was awarded a contract to introduce a new design standard on the Cal Poly San Luis Obispo campus. The beginning of the design upgrade was gradual, starting in the summer of 2018, when the school started furnishing their new yak?it?ut?u (YTT) residence halls.

Because Cal Poly had a deep inventory of legacy furniture, they used that inventoried furniture and supplemented it with new DCI beds, desks, and pedestals.



Turning Doubles Into Triples

In early 2020, before the pandemic, Cal Poly asked us to help them increase occupancy in YTT.

Luckily, most of the YTT rooms were designed to house triples but only had double occupancy.

Our job was to map out the rooms as triples and then provide the new furniture to supplement the rooms.



In total, we added an extra set to every double and thereby tripled 390 rooms.

Cal Poly set this project in motion prior to Covid-19. And the university followed through knowing they would need the extra bed capacity down the road.

Nevertheless, during the installation we needed to pivot to accommodate the new Covid-19 pandemic context. What was the safest way to configure the room to mitigate infection?

We took our cues from the CDC guidelines and public health experts. And we made sure every desk and every bed was set more than 6 feet apart.

Fixing A Faulty Wardrobe with Enormous Cost Savings

While we were planning the triples, Cal Poly was having an issue with their standard wardrobe. A different manufacturer made it, and it was giving them trouble.

The University had a lot of these wardrobes on campus, and the housing staff was spending too much time repairing and replacing parts.

They were looking for an upgraded specification that addressed the problems they mainly were having with the wardrobe door hinges, but they also wanted any new design to match their current supply as closely as possible.



So we put our engineers on the task and they came back with a revolutionary, semi-concealed, 270 degree swing hinge featuring more durable fasteners.

In essence, it provides better functionality without compromising appearance and eliminates crippling maintenance issues that plague European cabinet hinges.

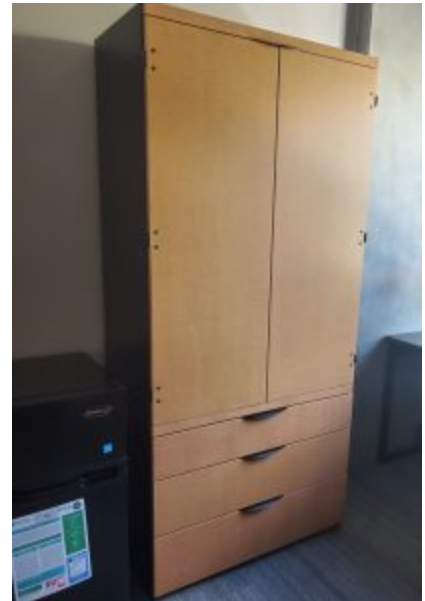
At the same time, we did this at nearly half the cost of the original wardrobe.

In the end, when we placed our new wardrobe and the old one side by side, you couldn't tell the difference. Done deal.

Why is that so important?

Because schools often commit to a certain style—for good reason—and they believe that ties them to a particular vendor. But at DCI, we specialize in customization, and that gives us the flexibility to integrate our designs with existing inventory.

This wardrobe solution resulted in a huge cost saving for the school.



Recycling 500 Metal Beds

At the same time that we were tripling rooms in YTT and engineering the new wardrobe, we were also replacing beds in the University's tower residence halls, Sierra Madre and Yosemite.

This was all part of the process of implementing the new design standard across Cal Poly's campus.

And one core element of our sustainability commitment is supporting the emergence of a circular economy through reusing, repurposing, and otherwise recycling all the used furniture that we replace.



We do this even if we didn't supply the original furnishings.

At Cal Poly, we recycled 500 metal beds from sixteen separate buildings on campus. We filled five 40-yard dumpsters with the beds. For context, that's equivalent to approximately 200 cubic yards or 1,200 13-gallon trash bags or 50,000 pounds.

Luckily, scrap metal isn't too hard to recycle. And these are all beds that would have otherwise clogged landfills.

As furniture manufacturers, it's important for us tread lightly in terms of our impact on the planet. We look for any opportunity to bolster our sustainability efforts. Especially now, as we experience the impacts of climate change from coast to coast.