



FACILITIES &
MAINTENANCE

Smarter Bathrooms, Lower Costs: How Colleges Are Upgrading a High Use Space

BY BESTBATH

Campus housing expectations are shifting fast, and durability, accessibility, and efficiency have become non negotiable. We sat down with Ross Ravenhorst of BestBath to explore how innovative bathroom solutions are helping private colleges and universities meet rising student demands while reducing maintenance burdens and long term costs.

From ADA compliant design to installation efficiencies and customizable options, he offers a practical look at how forward thinking institutions are reimagining one of the most heavily used spaces on campus.

What are the biggest trends you're seeing in university housing bathroom design and construction today, particularly in terms of durability and student expectations?

We're seeing a strong shift toward durability paired with elevated aesthetics. Universities want spaces that feel more like modern apartments than institutional housing, while still holding up to heavy, multi-year use. There's also a growing emphasis on low-maintenance materials, and accessibility-forward design.

Students expect clean, contemporary finishes, while facilities teams prioritize longevity and ease of upkeep—so solutions need to deliver both.

How do your bath and shower solutions address the high-traffic, heavy-use demands typical in residence halls?

Our products are built using high-grade composite materials with fully reinforced walls and bases designed specifically for institutional environments. Unlike traditional tile and cultured marble type products there are no joints or grout lines to crack, stain, or harbor mold, which significantly improves durability. The surfaces are impact-resistant, easy to clean, easy to maintain, and

engineered for long-term performance, even in high-turnover, high-use settings like dorms.

Universities are increasingly focused on accessibility—how does Best Bath support ADA compliance while maintaining a modern, appealing design for student housing?

We've been manufacturing showers since 1969, so we were already at the forefront of accessible design when ADA standards were established in 1990. Today, we offer a comprehensive range of ADA-compliant solutions, including barrier-free and low-threshold showers, along with integrated safety accessories. What truly differentiates us is that accessibility isn't treated as an add-on—it's built into the design from the start. Our products combine full accessibility compliance with modern aesthetics, featuring clean lines and customizable finishes that fit seamlessly into today's student housing environments

What are the advantages of prefabricated or modular bath systems compared to traditional tile installations in dormitory settings?

Prefabricated systems offer several key advantages over traditional tile installations, particularly in dormitory settings. Because they are manufactured in a controlled environment, they provide consistent quality and performance across every unit. Installation is significantly faster, reducing on-site labor time and helping projects stay on schedule. With fewer seams and no grout, there is also a reduced risk of leaks or long-term failures. Over time, these benefits translate into lower lifecycle costs through decreased maintenance and fewer repairs. In a dorm environment, where scale and repeatability are critical, prefabricated systems help ensure every unit performs reliably and consistently.

Can you speak to installation timelines and how your products help minimize disruption during renovations, especially in tight summer turnaround windows?

Speed is critical in higher ed, especially with tight summer renovation windows. Our

systems are designed for quick, efficient installation, often reducing install time significantly compared to traditional tile. Because units arrive pre-engineered and ready to set, crews can install multiple units in a single day, which dramatically accelerates project timelines. With fewer trades involved, contractors can move faster and more predictably—helping universities stay on schedule and reopen buildings on time with minimal disruption.

Slip resistance and safety are critical in student housing—what features do your products include to help reduce accidents and liability concerns?

Safety is built into our designs. We offer textured, slip-resistant flooring that meets or exceeds industry standards along with options like integrated seating, grab bars, and low-threshold entries. These features help reduce fall risks while maintaining a clean, modern look—supporting both student safety and liability reduction for the institution.

How do your solutions contribute to long-term maintenance savings for facilities teams compared to conventional bathroom systems?

Our systems are designed to minimize ongoing maintenance and deliver long-term value. Without grout lines, facilities teams spend far less time dealing with mold, mildew, and repairs. The durable, non-porous surfaces resist staining, cracking, and damage, which reduces the need for frequent replacements. We also stand behind that durability with a 30-year warranty, giving facilities added confidence in the product’s longevity. Over time, this translates into lower labor costs, fewer work orders, and a significantly longer lifecycle compared to traditional tile systems.

Sustainability is a growing priority on campuses—what environmentally friendly materials or water-saving features are incorporated into your products?

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long-lasting, high-performance materials that reduce the need for replacement and minimize waste over time. Our fiberglass composite construction is inherently durable and lightweight, which lowers transportation impact and extends product life—both key

sustainability advantages. Our systems can also be supplied with WaterSense and CALGreen compliant low-flow fixtures and water-saving technologies, helping campuses reduce water consumption. Additionally, our manufacturing processes are designed

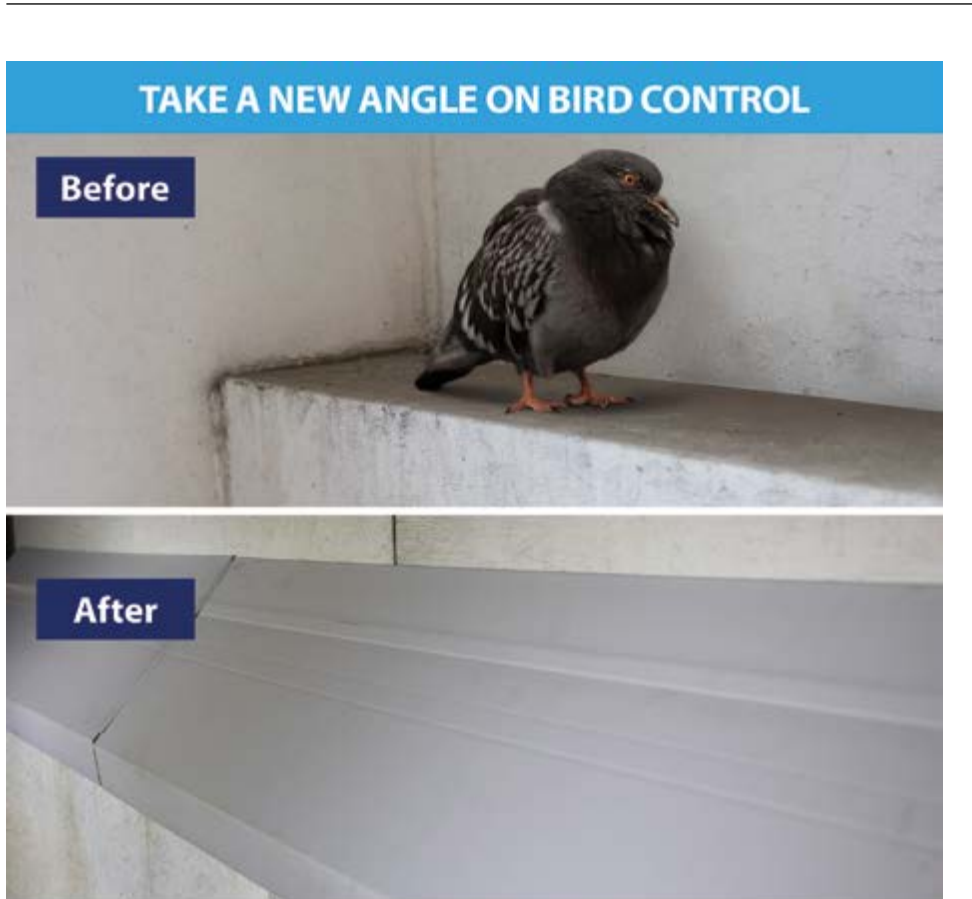
to minimize material waste, and the overall durability of our products contributes to a smaller environmental footprint across the building’s lifecycle.

Customization can be important for branding and student experience—what design flexibility do you offer universities in terms of colors, configurations, and layouts?

We offer extensive customization, including a wide range of colors, finishes, sizes, and configurations. Whether a university wants a consistent standard across campus or unique designs for different residence halls, we can tailor solutions to fit their vision. This flexibility allows schools to build their brand and enhance student experience while maintaining performance standards.

Can you share a case study or example of a successful university housing project where your products significantly improved performance, efficiency, or student satisfaction?

While specifics can vary by project, we’ve worked with numerous universities where transitioning from tile to our prefab systems resulted in faster renovation timelines, reduced maintenance calls, and improved student satisfaction due to cleaner, more modern bathrooms. In many cases, facilities teams report significant reductions in maintenance and long-term repair costs, which validates the investment in a more durable, prefabricated solution.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Bestbath is a family-owned, U.S.-based manufacturer of innovative, accessible bathing solutions. For over 50 years, we’ve designed safe, stylish, and durable tubs, showers, and accessories—engineered for performance and ease of installation. Proudly made in America, our products deliver comfort, dignity, and long-term reliability, backed by an industry-leading 30-year warranty.



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