



PRIVATE UNIVERSITY PRODUCTS AND NEWS

JUNE 2026
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**THE INFRASTRUCTURE
OF EXCELLENCE
WHAT THE PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT
REALLY COSTS YOUR
MUSIC PROGRAM**

**SHOWCASE OF
EXCELLENCE
2026**

Pioneering Bird Mortality Research

AT MUHLENBERG COLLEGE



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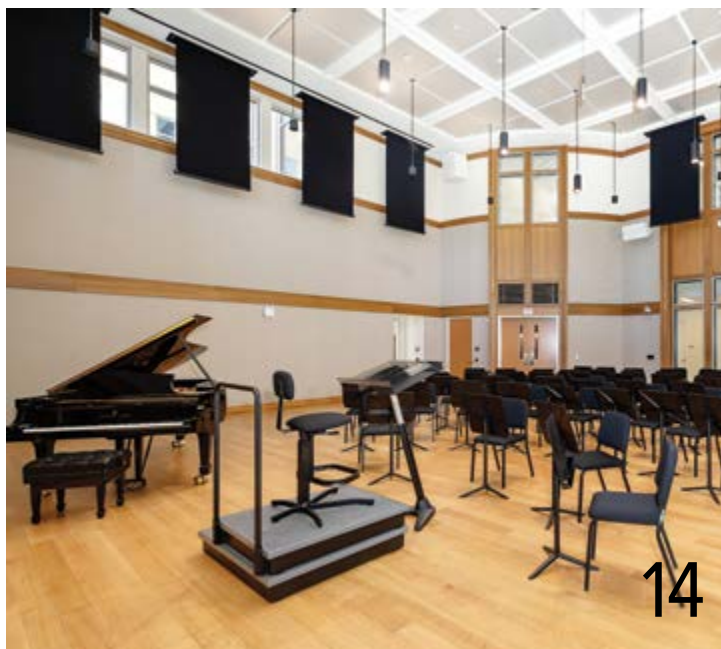


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The Infrastructure of Excellence: What the Physical Environment Really Costs Your Music Program

What students experience every day inside a music program matters more than most institutions realize. From rehearsal chairs and music stands to acoustics and instrument storage, the physical environment quietly shapes performance, health, learning, and retention. Find out why investing in music infrastructure is not just about maintenance—it is about student success, recruitment, and the future of music education itself.



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Showcase of Excellence 2026

Every June, we proudly present one of our readers' favorite annual features: the Showcase of Excellence. This special section highlights exceptional companies providing innovative products, services, and solutions designed specifically for private colleges and universities. Through engaging case studies and featured offerings, our valued partners share how they are helping institutions enhance campus life, improve operations, and better serve students, faculty, and their communities.



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Pioneering Bird Mortality Research at Muhlenberg College

Billions of birds die every year after colliding with windows and glass buildings—a hidden environmental crisis most people never notice. Discover how pioneering researcher Daniel Klem, Jr. transformed this overlooked issue into a worldwide conservation movement, influencing architecture, legislation, and bird-safe technologies designed to protect wildlife and save countless migratory birds.



Editor's Letter

JUNE 2026

As the calendar flips to June, campuses across the country begin a magical annual transformation. Parking lots suddenly fill with contractor trucks instead of student cars, the sound of drills and hammers replaces the chatter of study groups, and somewhere on every campus, a facilities director is staring at a spreadsheet wondering how three months can possibly feel so short. Welcome to summer project season in higher education.

For private colleges and universities, summer is far more than a break between semesters. It is the critical window where campuses reinvent, repair, improve, and prepare. Residence halls get refreshed, athletic facilities are upgraded, sidewalks repaired, HVAC systems replaced, security enhanced, landscaping perfected, and classrooms transformed into modern learning spaces. It's a whirlwind of activity fueled by careful planning, tight timelines, and more coffee than most people should probably consume in a single day.

That's one of the reasons this annual Showcase of Excellence issue is so special.

This feature highlights companies that truly understand the unique mission of private higher education. These organizations recognize that campus facilities are not just buildings made of brick, concrete, steel, and glass. They are recruiting tools, learning environments, gathering spaces, performance venues, and homes away from home. Every improvement made on campus helps support students, faculty, staff, and the overall institutional mission.

The companies featured in this issue understand that when a private college invests in a new recreation center floor, upgraded residence hall furnishings, improved security systems, or sustainable campus infrastructure, they are ultimately investing in student success and the future of the institution itself.

And let's be honest — the work you all accomplish each summer is nothing short of impressive. Somehow, projects that would take normal humans six years and three emotional breakdowns get completed between commencement and move-in day. It's practically a campus facilities superpower.

At *PUPN* magazine, we always enjoy hearing about the innovative ways campuses continue to evolve and improve. The creativity, dedication, and problem-solving demonstrated by facilities teams across private higher education never fail to impress us. Your work often happens behind the scenes, but its impact is visible everywhere students learn, live, compete, worship, and build lifelong memories.

As you dive into another busy summer season, we thank you for all that you do for your campuses and communities. We are also grateful that you continue to allow *PUPN* to be a small part of your journey. We appreciate your readership, your ideas, and your commitment to excellence. Now, if you'll excuse us, we're fairly certain someone, somewhere on campus, just discovered a "small, unexpected project" hiding behind a wall. Summer has officially begun.

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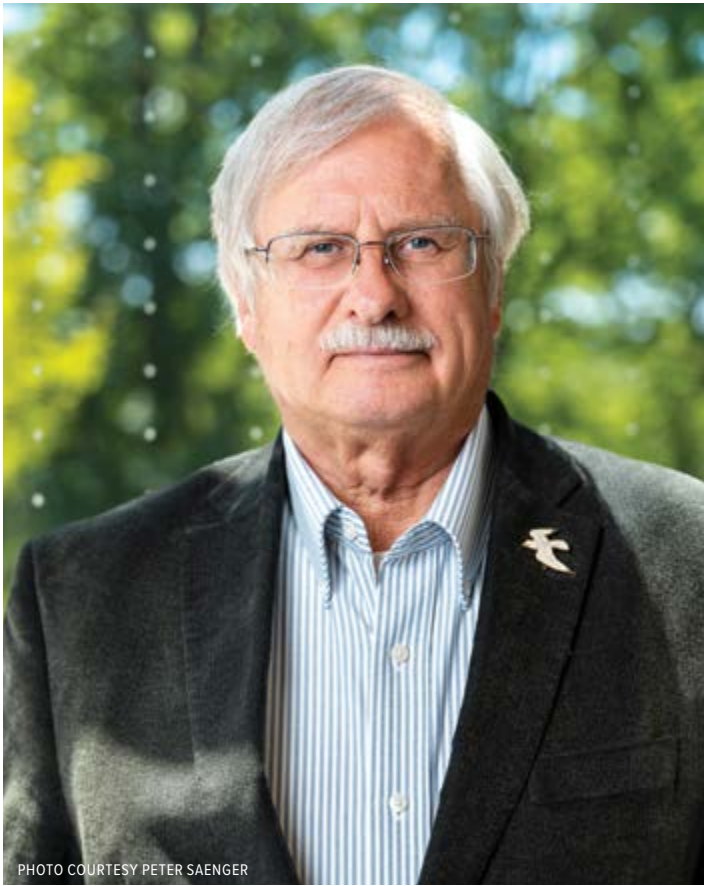


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Pioneering Bird Mortality Research at Muhlenberg College

BY CYNTHIA MWENJA, PhD

Daniel Klem, Jr., Sarkis Acopian Professor of Ornithology and Conservation Biology at Muhlenberg College, is the seminal researcher on the issue of massive annual numbers of bird fatalities due to collisions with building glass. For more than fifty years, Klem has worked tirelessly to study the scope of the problem, educate others about the devastating and ongoing impacts on wild birds, and advocate for scalable solutions with a wide variety of community stakeholders.

Pioneering Research into a Devastating Topic

Klem's path to the field of ornithology had a few twists and turns, but it stemmed from his childhood enjoyment of spending time in nature. The moment he began his doctoral research, however, he saw firsthand the numbers of birds that had been killed by building strikes on his own campus; this experience demonstrated to him the seriousness and importance of the topic. Little did he know that as he embarked on this research, he was establishing not only a new area of academic study but also a new focus for environmental activism.

Many people enjoy seeing and hearing birds in outdoor spaces. Klem notes that these beautiful and charismatic animals serve as cultural signifiers for peoples around the world. Bird watching provides an enjoyable pastime for many, and birdsong adds enjoyment to people's days. These positive connotations that birds have contrast with a stark reality: in our glass structures, we have developed efficient killing machines for the

very animals we enjoy and try to protect. Klem's 1990 estimates of the annual death toll due to bird-building strikes were between 100 million and 1 billion birds each year; these numbers were later corroborated by other researchers who joined the field.

More recent research that Klem has co-authored pushes the number much higher; the estimates are now at 1.28 billion to 3.46 billion birds each year, and even those numbers could be too low. Previous estimates were based in bird-building strikes that left evidence at the scene. Later, researchers were able to expand their understanding of the problem by assessing what happens when injured birds are taken to rehabilitation centers. These results showed that 70% of birds who are knocked out in a strike ultimately perish. From this information about birds taken to rehab centers, the research team documented a 350 percent increase of estimated deaths over on-site specimen collection alone.

The cause of these deaths is that glass is invisible to birds. In many ways, birds have

the best vision of any animal, but they do not perceive glass, and both clear and reflective glass pose problems. If the clear glass encloses a space with lavish foliage, like many atriums, birds try to fly through to the plants they see inside. In the case of reflective glass, birds think that they can access the natural space reflected in the glass, with the same result.

Most people know that birds collide with glass; this realization is not groundbreaking. What Klem, provided, however, was an awareness of the problem's magnitude. As Timothy J. O'Connell, associate professor of Natural Resource Ecology and Management at Oklahoma State University, points out, "Klem imagined the issue on a continental scale." Klem determined how many birds were affected by single buildings, on average, then used census data to project the likely numbers across the U.S. O'Connell states that "carrying that inference through put his work on the map."

After Klem joined the Muhlenberg faculty in 1979, he sought publication outlets for his



doctoral research. He had trouble getting it accepted at first because people did not believe that the subject was worth considering, so they didn't take his work seriously. After 10 years of submitting papers, Klem did finally begin to have his research accepted in ornithology journals, which began to understand that he was doing worthwhile work. Additionally, a citizen science research program called Feeder Watch corroborated his estimates, at least for residences that had bird feeders in the yard. Then O'Connell conducted research on buildings in a corporate office park; his numbers suggested that the issue was even bigger than Klem had estimated.

Throughout the 1980s, though, major bird conservation organizations did not see bird window strikes as a problem. Cornell Lab of Ornithology, which ran Feeder Watch, did not do anything with the findings they had collected on this subject. The National Audubon Society was not interested, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was unconcerned. But the American Bird Conservancy—established in 1994—took this

issue seriously from the beginning, O'Connell reports. They embraced the matter of bird strikes as important, and they sponsored research, education, and outreach on the topic.

Klem has become not only a researcher but an advocate for addressing the challenges he studies. Through his efforts—research, talks, papers, and activity in bird conservation communities—he has raised awareness of this devastating issue to become a leader in the expanding field. Klem now holds several U.S. patents relating to window design. He continues his academic research, along with a robust schedule of speaking engagements. Over the course of his career, Klem has published more than 70 peer-reviewed papers and worked with more than 100 student researchers. He also serves as a technical consultant for a wide variety of organizations, including glass manufacturers, conservation organizations, and local, regional, and national government agencies worldwide.

One example of Klem's work outside of academia is a new building at Niagara Falls
continued...

Through his efforts—research, talks, papers, and activity in bird conservation communities—he has raised awareness of this devastating issue to become a leader in the expanding field.

State Park which used Klem's bird-safe design. While the park did not credit Klem's contribution at first, they later held a ceremony and gave him official credit on the informational signage. Muhlenberg's president at the time said that this project was an excellent example of how people in the liberal arts can apply their knowledge in both meaningful and concrete ways. Another design project that Klem has been involved with was spearheaded by architect Jeanne Gang's Studio Gang. Gang has designed many famous Earth-conscious buildings, notably the bird-friendly Aqua Tower. Studio Gang asked Klem to collaborate on a visitor's center in Calumet. The Ford Calumet Environmental Center now stands on a reclaimed brownfield in this south-Chicago suburb; Klem has a chapter about this project in Studio Gang's book, *Architecture*.

Growing Momentum

O'Connell highlights the idea that Klem is "not just a guy who published. Once his ideas caught, they became huge globally in conservation circles." O'Connell points to the many bird-safe initiatives and practices directly attributable to Klem's work, including bird-safe products, lights out campaigns, and even the sharing of local radar showing bird migrations. O'Connell also notes that new careers and companies now exist based on Klem's work; for example, many non-profit organizations have been created in order to consult with building managers and product manufacturers on bird-strike mitigation.

Paul Groleau is president of Feather Friendly Technologies, which Klem calls "the most prominent producer/manufacture of bird-safe products, specifically external films." Groleau definitely credits Klem, saying that "if it weren't for him, we wouldn't have a business." Groleau appreciates Klem's

mentorship and consistent availability for consultation.

Klem points out that, as with many other environmental concerns, lasting progress needs to be made through legislation. He notes that the US already has that legislation in place; the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 outlaws the killing of migratory birds. The problem, he states, is that the law is simply not invoked for this issue; enforcing a law when everyone is guilty is near impossible. Klem does argue that enforcement could focus on bigger offenders, such as convention centers, but enforcement agencies have not yet been persuaded to do so.

Some legislative progress has been made at the local level. In 2007, Toronto became the first city to adopt bird-friendly standards. New York City and Washington, DC, have followed suit, and other municipalities and states across the U.S. are getting on board.

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In a wonderful win for birds, Madison, Wisconsin passed bird-safe building legislation, and developers sued to stop it—but the bird people won, and the legislation stands. Groleau says that awareness of the issue now extends far beyond North America; bird-building strikes have been documented in over 90 countries, involving 2,000 species of birds. Groleau was part of the team that developed bird-safe standards for Dubai.

Michael Mesure is the executive director of Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) Canada, which Klem calls “a leading advocate of documenting and promoting bird-safe practices worldwide.” Mesure reports that many more stakeholders around the world are now focusing seriously on the issue of bird-building collisions, including researchers, advocacy organizations, and businesses. Mesure stresses the importance of remembering that “this movement has depended so often on [Klem’s] work; he is *continued...*”



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the godfather of bird-building collisions,” and new research continues to affirm Klem’s results. Demand for solutions is growing, and glass fabricators in particular have relied heavily on Klem’s expertise in developing their bird-safe products.

Actions to Take

Klem states that the biggest challenge of his career has been getting people to understand the immensity of the threat to birds, then getting people to act on that understanding once they have it. To reach a broader audience, Klem authored the first book about bird strikes for the general public: *Solid Air—Invisible Killer: Saving Billions of Birds from Windows* was published in 2021. In the prologue, he says, “We humans have the power to stop the senseless death of billions of birds, and your help is needed to do so.” Campuses can take part in this important work by retrofitting current buildings with bird-safe products and making sure that new construction employs bird-safe design. As Klem interacts

with students at conferences and on speaking tours, he finds that they are very interested in working with campus administrators to make campuses safe for birds; administrators can be key players in organizing collaborative efforts to address these concerns.

Groleau points out that the issue of bird-building fatalities will not simply go away; we are losing species to these collisions, but simple, long-term solutions to the problem do exist. As O’Connell puts it, every death due to bird-building collision is “completely unnecessary mortality.” Klem is focused on getting a critical mass of citizens and influential people to move the needle further in making all buildings safe for birds; as he remarks, “We’re the only voice they have.”

Some conservation groups push for “lights out” campaigns in skyscrapers as a way to address the issue of bird strikes, particularly for migratory birds during their migrations. Klem says that these campaigns can be

helpful, but other mitigation strategies are more important because birds are killed by buildings at all times of day and throughout the year. Researcher Scott Loss has found that about 44 percent of annual bird-building collision mortality occurs in structures of one to four stories, such as single-family dwellings. More soberingly, Loss estimates that only about one percent of bird strike fatalities happen in cities at all.

O’Connell notes that, even with all the new stakeholders and worldwide momentum, challenges remain in addressing bird-building fatalities. One of these issues is that no one program exists to give grants for work in this area. Most funders are more focused on habitat protection and invasive species, which are also critical concerns. Birds hitting windows is not a problem of habitat loss per se, and no dedicated funds have been earmarked for building refurbishment—even though bird strikes account for a highly conservative estimate of well over a billion unnecessary bird deaths per year. O’Connell states that the challenge feels intractable because the issue so pervasive, even though we do have the answers; they just need to be implemented at scale.

Despite all that has been accomplished in bird-building collision research and mitigation throughout his long and distinguished career, Klem says that a great deal of work remains to be done to address this catastrophic threat to birds. His goal is to work with as many stakeholders as possible to save bird lives. Readers who are interested in remediating buildings on their campuses can begin to explore solutions at FLAP Canada (flap.org) and Feather Friendly (FeatherFriendly.com).

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dr. Cynthia Mwenja teaches Composition and Rhetoric at the University of Montevallo.



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The Infrastructure of Excellence

WHAT THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT REALLY COSTS YOUR MUSIC PROGRAM

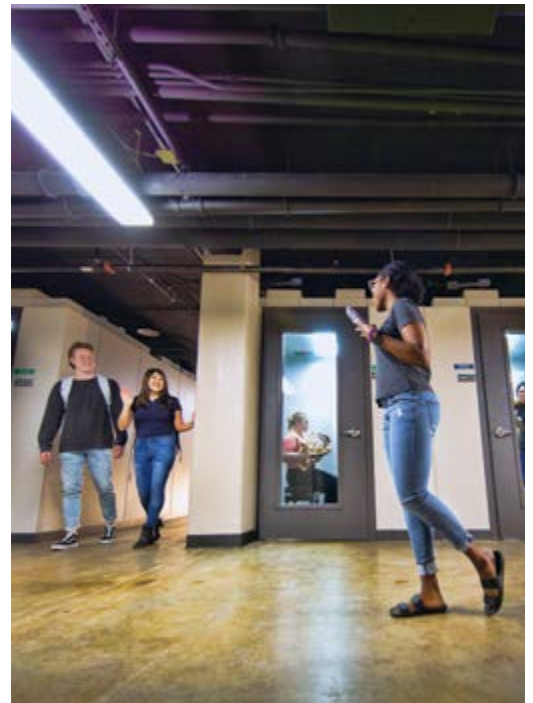
BY WHITNEY BAUER WINKELS

Music programs are often evaluated on what is easiest to measure: faculty strength, ensemble opportunities, performance schedules, and institutional reputation. Those factors matter, but they are only part of the student experience.

What gets talked about far less is the thing students interact with every single day: the physical environment.

The reality is that students can form their strongest impressions in quieter, more immediate ways. They sit in the chairs. They rehearse in the rooms. They open the storage closets. They listen to how a space responds when they play. And those physical details often shape their sense of a program more than brochures, rankings, or recruitment conversations ever do.

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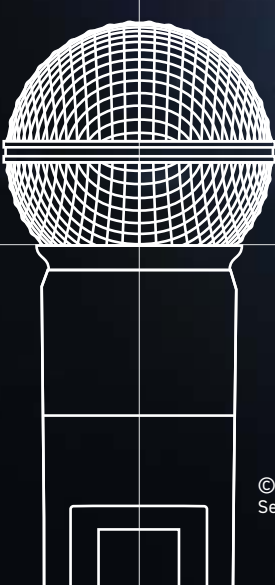
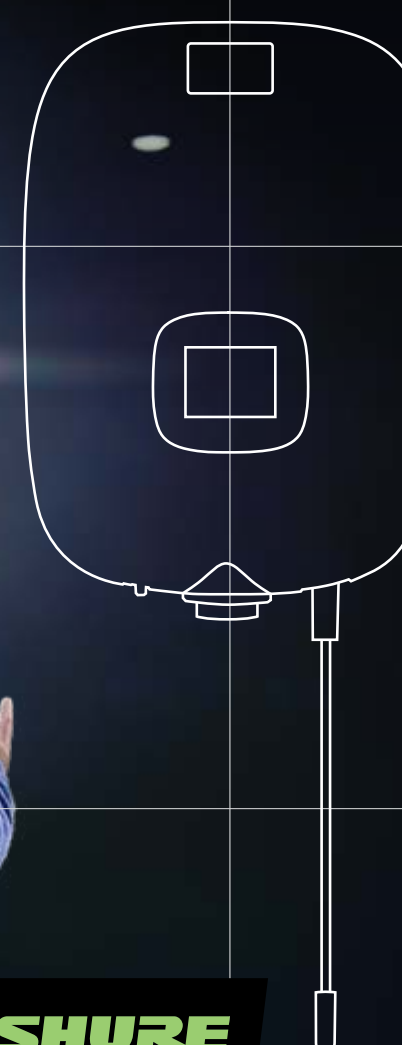
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Too often, facility conversations in higher education get reduced to line items and deferred maintenance schedules. But in music education, infrastructure is not just operational. It is instructional.

The question is not only what things cost, but what the environment communicates about the seriousness of the program, and what it enables or quietly limits in the students who move through it.

And increasingly, the case for investing in music environments is not hard to make. It is medical, pedagogical, and ultimately strategic.

The Medical Case: Music Is Physical Work

Higher education already accepts that physical environments matter for knowledge workers. Ergonomic chairs, adjustable desks, and controlled lighting are standard because institutions understand that comfort and physical support affect performance and

long-term health.

Student musicians are often left out of that logic, even though their work is just as physically demanding, and in many cases more complex.

They sit and stand for hours at a time in highly controlled positions. Wind and vocal students depend on unrestricted breathing mechanics. String players manage sustained asymmetry. Pianists and percussionists repeat precise motions thousands of times in a single rehearsal cycle.

The result, frankly, should not surprise anyone.

Research from McGill University found that 35 percent of music students reported performance-related injuries, compared with 18 percent of non-music students. Among professional musicians, that number rises to 56 percent. A 2021 study by Chang, Boone,

and Gold published in *Work* reinforces this pattern, showing that pain is not an exception in musical training environments but a consistent occupational reality.¹

Another study found that 76 percent of high-performing young musicians reported pain during or after playing, most commonly in the neck, shoulders, and lower back.³

These are not minor discomforts. They are conditions that interrupt practice, limit participation, and in some cases end academic trajectories entirely.

And yet many institutions still ask musicians to spend four, six, or eight hours a day in furniture never actually designed for musical performance.

For a tuition-dependent private institution, the implications are direct. Every student who leaves due to preventable injury represents lost tuition, lost scholarship investment, and lost recruitment cost. In smaller programs

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where each student represents a meaningful portion of the cohort, the impact is even more concentrated.

The mechanism behind these injuries is well understood. Musicians maintain static or asymmetric postures while performing highly coordinated motor tasks under cognitive and emotional pressure. Research published in PLOS ONE shows that chair design alone significantly affects posture and spinal load distribution in musicians at all levels of training.² Poor seating increases spinal pressure and restricts breathing mechanics, which affects both health and sound production.

This is not a theoretical wellness conversation. It is measurable, and over time it affects performance quality, retention, and enrollment stability.

**The Pedagogical Case:
Environment Becomes Habit**

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Programs make a promise that goes beyond access. They promise depth, refinement, and individualized development. But that promise depends on what students experience every day, not just what they are told during recruitment.

A student who trains for years in poorly designed seating develops compensatory tension patterns that are difficult to reverse later. A student who practices in unreliable acoustic spaces develops distorted internal models of sound. These are not small inefficiencies. They become part of how a musician plays, listens, and evaluates themselves.

Over time, the room itself starts teaching habits, good or bad.

Purpose-built music seating exists because the performance position is not interchangeable with standard classroom posture. Proper design supports multiple playing positions, maintains spinal alignment without

restricting movement, and reduces pressure points that affect endurance.

This is where companies like Wenger have spent decades refining products that most audiences never notice, and that is exactly the point. When seating, acoustics, and rehearsal equipment are designed correctly, they disappear into the background and allow students and instructors to focus entirely on music-making.

Well-designed music stands matter just as much. A stand that shifts, slips, or requires constant adjustment during rehearsal introduces unnecessary cognitive load. It interrupts focus at the exact moment students need stability, not distraction.

These are small details individually. But together, they shape how students learn to think about their own work.

Students may never explicitly say, “This

stand helped me rehearse better today.” But they absolutely notice, and remember, when the opposite is true.

The Acoustic Case: Practice Rooms Teach Whether We Intend Them To or Not

Practice rooms are where musicians really come into their own. It’s where technique takes shape, listening skills sharpen, and a musical identity starts to solidify.

Yet acoustics are often treated as a secondary concern.

An acoustically poor room is not neutral. It actively distorts learning. Excess reflections alter perception of tone and balance. Poor isolation introduces distractions that break concentration. Over time, students adjust to the room instead of learning skills that transfer to performance spaces.

That creates a subtle but serious problem: *continued...*

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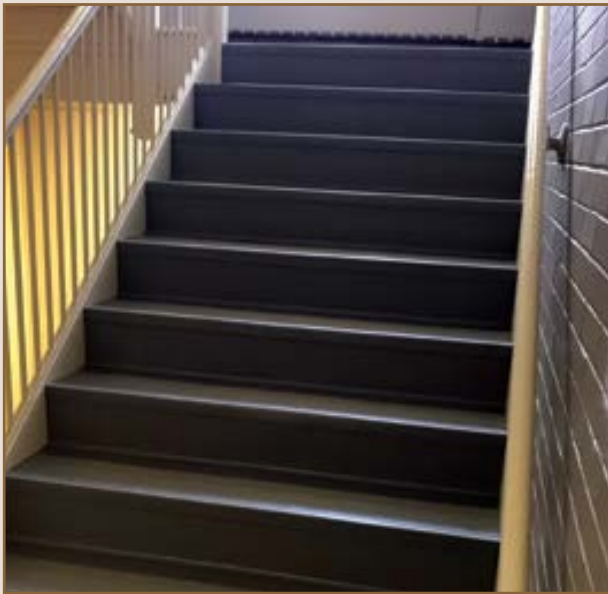
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And that matters because students don't perform in a vacuum. They perform in environments.

When a room can shift its acoustic character, it stops being a single-use space and starts functioning as multiple learning environments in one. That flexibility helps

close the long-standing gap between rehearsal conditions and real performance settings, something that previously required access to multiple specialized venues to approximate.

In a higher-ed landscape where every square foot has to work harder, flexibility isn't just a nice feature anymore. It becomes an operational strategy.

Instrument Storage as Institutional Signal

Instruments represent decades of investment, donor relationships, and institutional history. How those instruments are stored is not just a logistical issue. It is a signal.

Proper storage systems protect instruments through ventilation, structural support, and secure organization. They reduce damage, extend lifespan, and improve daily usability.

But they also communicate something less

tangible. They signal whether a program is operating with intention or improvisation.

Students notice when instruments are cared for properly. Faculty notice. Visiting clinicians notice. Donors notice.

The same is true for ensemble storage, sheet music organization, and media infrastructure. Programs that treat these systems as afterthoughts tend to accumulate friction in daily operations. Programs that design them intentionally tend to run more smoothly at every level.

Students notice the difference, even if they do not articulate it directly.

A Final Reframe

The most important investments in a music program are rarely visible in sales materials. They do not photograph well. They do not appear in rankings. They are only noticed

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when they are missing.

It can be a worn-out chair in an audition room.

A stand that will not stay in place during rehearsal.

A practice room that does not reflect real performance conditions.

Storage that feels improvised rather than intentional.

Individually, these seem like minor issues. Together, they shape perception, behavior, and outcomes.

And this is where the conversation often shifts from “expense” to “infrastructure.”

The cost of losing even a small number of students due to avoidable environmental shortcomings is far greater, and far harder to recover.

Manufacturers in this space design for long-term use, often with 10+ years of service life in mind and decades of durability as the expectation, supported by warranties that reflect that commitment. When the infrastructure is working as intended, it rarely calls attention to itself. It simply allows the program to function at its highest level without friction.

That kind of long-view thinking reflects a broader philosophy in the field: build environments that support performance, reduce friction, and quietly elevate the daily experience of students and faculty alike. That kind of long-view thinking reflects a broader philosophy in the field: build environments that support performance, reduce friction, and quietly elevate the daily experience of students and faculty alike.

Because in the end, excellence in music education is rarely built through one dramatic investment.

It is built from many quiet ones, made with the understanding that environment is not background.

It is part of the educational experience itself.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Whitney

Bauer Winkels is a strategic marketing communications leader with expertise in brand management, public relations, and integrated marketing strategy. As Senior Marketing Communications Manager at Wenger Corporation, she combines creative problem-solving, strategic insight, and hands-on execution to build impactful campaigns, strengthen brand presence, and drive meaningful audience engagement.

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Each year, we look forward to highlighting organizations that are making a meaningful impact through innovative products, services, and solutions tailored to their industries. In response to strong interest from our readers, we are proud to present this annual “Showcase of Excellence,” featuring trusted partners and standout providers dedicated to serving their communities with quality and innovation.

Throughout these pages, you’ll discover featured companies, product spotlights, and real-world success stories that demonstrate how these organizations are helping create exceptional experiences for the people they serve. Like many of you, we understand the challenge of fitting every important story into a limited amount of space. While we were unable to include every outstanding organization contributing great work in this field, we are excited to share the examples featured in this edition.

We hope this collection offers valuable insight, fresh ideas, and inspiration as you continue building environments, experiences, and opportunities that positively impact those you serve every day.



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In the competitive landscape of private higher education, the recruitment process begins long before a prospective student, donor or VIP guest steps into a lecture hall. For private universities, every touchpoint is an opportunity to reinforce a brand of excellence and personal attention. National Bus Sales (NBS) is helping institutions redefine those first impressions through a "concierge-level" approach to campus transportation.

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When a VIP guest or a top-tier recruit arrives at the airport, their university experience starts at the curb. NBS's premium transportation solutions, led by the flagship Ultra Coachliner, allow universities to provide a seamless, high-end transition from arrival to campus. Designed for more than just movement, these vehicles serve as premium transportation solutions for multiple use cases.

The Ultra Coachliner: Premium Performance

The Ultra Coachliner is specifically engineered for private institutions that require a premium appearance without the complexity of traditional full-size buses. It offers a high-capacity, high-comfort interior that bridges the gap between executive shuttles and traditional motorcoaches, making it the ideal partner for athletic recruitment and executive travel.

The NBS Difference: A Higher Standard of Service

National Bus Sales positions itself as more than a vendor; they are a long-term transportation partner. Recognizing that private universities often operate with leaner budgets and higher expectations than their state-funded counterparts, NBS emphasizes a differentiated white-glove buying experience.

This model goes beyond the initial sale, offering airport pickup and concierge-level delivery to ensure the vehicle is integrated into the university fleet with zero friction.

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- 2. Easy to clean** - Dense, upright fibers make it easier to clean (no loops or twists to trap dirt).
- 3. Soil & stain resistant** - Most spills can be removed easily, including permanent marker.
- 4. Healthy** - Dirt & allergens are easily removed with vacuuming. Flotex is the only textile flooring awarded the British Allergy Foundation's Seal of Approval. Does not contain harmful VOC's.
- 5. 100% waterproof** - Each upright fiber is sealed into the backing, making it topically impervious to dirt, soil, and liquids.
- 6. Eliminate odors** - Moisture cannot penetrate and fester in the backing, preventing bacteria growth and eliminating odors.
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From first pitch to center court to midfield, High Point University holds every part of its campus to a premier standard. Ranked the #1 Best-Run College in the Nation by Princeton Review, HPU has built a reputation for the exceptional experience it delivers to students, alumni, athletes, and visiting families alike.

When that standard extended to its athletic venues, HPU sought more than seats. They sought a partner who could deliver a unified vision across every space – one defined by exceptional performance and design, and built to help establish a legacy.

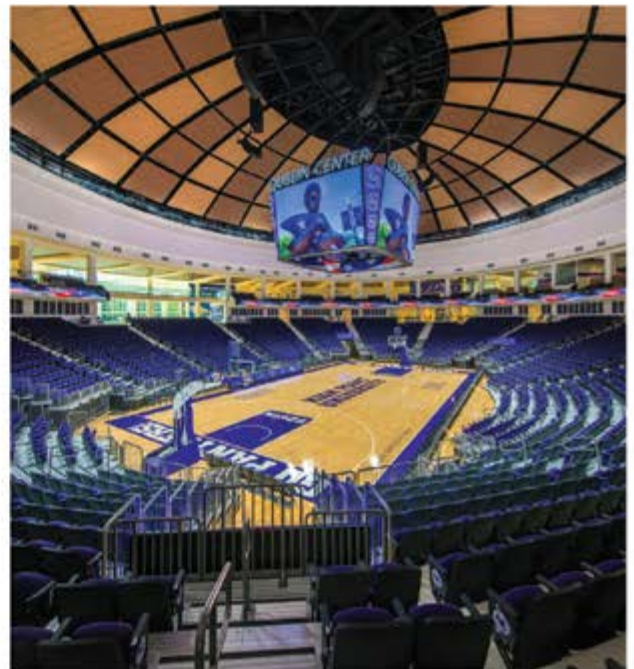
Three times, for three completely different facilities, HPU chose Hussey Seating to partner, design, and deliver.

Qubein Arena. A \$130M flagship designed to quickly convert between basketball, concerts, commencement, and campus events. Hussey delivered Quattro fixed seating for ergonomic comfort and high-traffic durability, paired with custom MXP telescopic platforms that reconfigure seating layouts for whatever the calendar demands.

Vert Stadium. A nationally ranked outdoor venue hosting Big South soccer, lacrosse, and track & field. Hussey supplied custom purple Legend chairs built for timeless design, all-weather durability, and the long arc of a multi-sport outdoor program.

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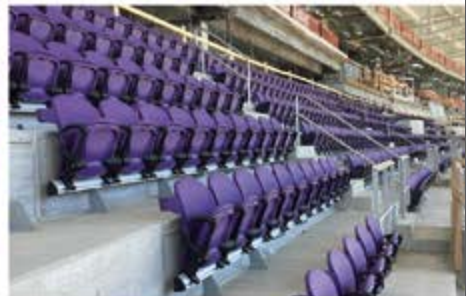
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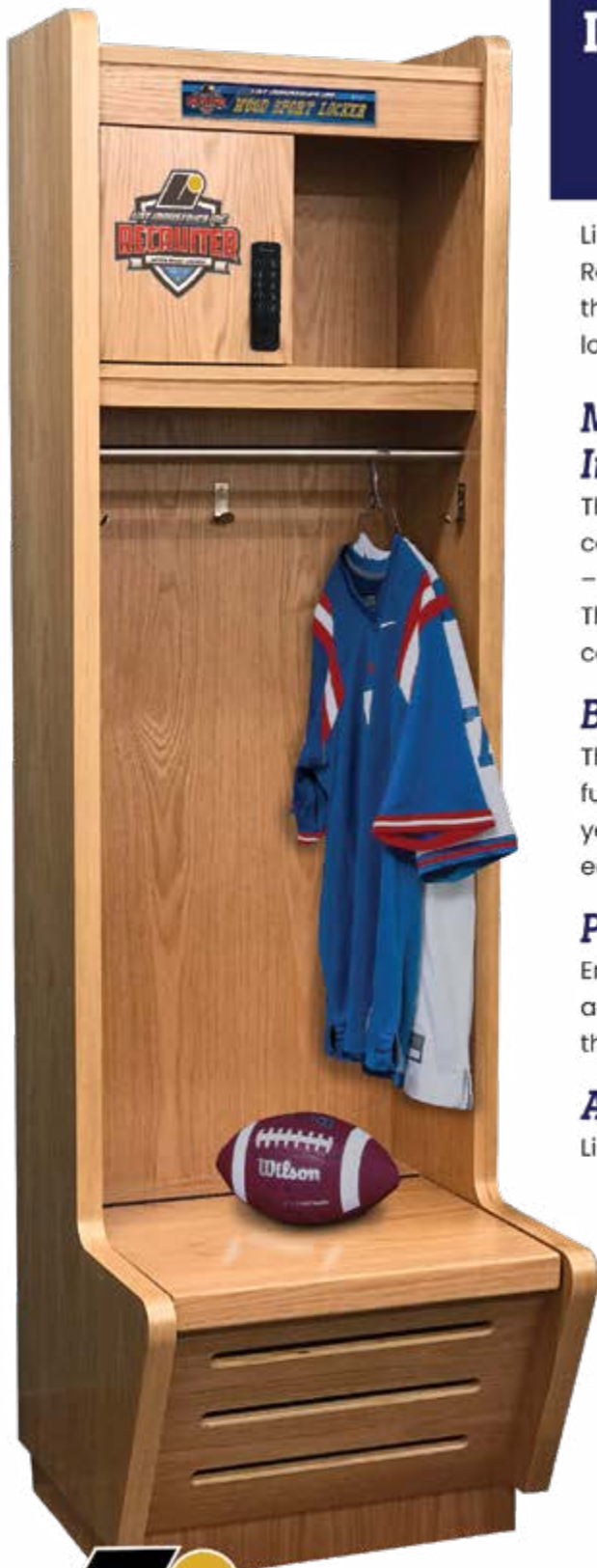


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Ecore Flooring Transforms Student Rec Center at Indiana University

When Indiana University (IU) in Bloomington, Ind., embarked on a major renovation of its Student Recreational Sports Center, the objective extended well beyond aesthetics. The vision was to create a dynamic, inclusive space that reflected the IU brand while supporting the physical and mental well-being of a diverse student body.

"At the beginning of the year, we set out to really change the branding and feel of our building," said Nick Horton, Director of Service Operations at IU. "We wanted students to feel a connection – not only to our facility and their well-being goals – but also a stronger sense of belonging to the IU campus."

Meeting Demand with Durable, High-Performance Flooring

The main student rec center renovation was driven by student demand for more strength training and functional fitness space. To meet these demands, IU selected Ecore Athletic's Performance Beast Plus flooring system – paired with Modzilla 32 ShockPad tiles – to provide a durable, resilient surface that could absorb impact, protect equipment and subfloors, and reduce risk of injury.

The facility originally had just four lifting platforms – far from sufficient. Today, there are 16 custom inlaid platforms installed over Ecore flooring, and they're in constant use.

"There was some concern early on that 16 platforms might be too many," said Brady Bowdoin, Assistant Director of Personal Training & Wellness at IU. "It turns out 16 is not enough. On peak days, we could double that and still have all of them in use."

As part of the branding initiative, IU incorporated its iconic logo directly into the flooring on each of the 16 platforms. Custom inlays featuring the IU trident were seamlessly integrated into the Ecore Performance Beast Plus surface, creating a visually striking and cohesive design that reinforces school spirit. This attention to detail not only enhances the aesthetic of the space but also helps students feel a stronger connection to the university –

a place where wellness and school pride go hand in hand.

Engineered for Performance, Designed for Well-Being

Ecore Athletic, a leader in performance surfacing, upcycles waste rubber – primarily from used tires – into high-performance flooring solutions engineered to reduce impact, manage sound and improve safety. Ecore surfaces are widely used in athletic, wellness and commercial fitness environments for their proven ability to address acoustics, ergonomics and durability.

Performance Beast Plus is a 10.5mm system featuring a 2.5mm performance wear layer fusion-bonded to an 8mm vulcanized composition rubber (VCR) base layer. The result is a highly durable, slip-resistant floor designed for heavy strength training areas, with excellent force reduction and energy restitution properties – ideal for high-use spaces like IU's main rec center.

Beneath the surface, Modzilla 32mm ShockPad tiles were installed to further enhance impact absorption and subfloor protection. These tiles, available in both 15mm and 32mm VCR, deliver superior force reduction while maintaining energy return, helping to protect both users and infrastructure. The modular nature of the interlocking tiles also supports fast installation and long-term ease of maintenance.

The IU team selected the Modzilla underlayment in part because they needed to float the new floor over an existing court they didn't want to tear up. This decision played a key role in the renovation strategy, allowing them to modernize the space while preserving the original substructure.

"The Ecore floor allows us to take the impact of any activity, protect the subfloor and keep students focused on their well-being – not on whether the floor is holding up," said Horton. "With the Modzilla subfloor underneath, we know it's going to last and support everything our students throw at it."

"This project is a great example of what can be accomplished when manufacturers, dealer partners and facility leaders are all aligned," said Ryan Clavenna, Ecore Athletics Territory Representative. "Marla Toigo and the team at Direct Fitness Solutions played a key role in helping us deliver a flooring solution that fully supported IU's vision for performance, durability and branding."

Beyond flooring and platforms, IU's operations team looked at ways to repurpose space more effectively. Former racquetball courts that sat idle for much of the day were transformed into functional training areas with turf and rubber flooring – giving students space to stretch, warm up or engage in athletic-style workouts.

"We'd heard the same feedback for years – students wanted more open space to move freely," said Bowdoin. "Now they have that flexibility, and they're using it in creative ways."

Building a Space for Everyone

Since the transformation, the rec center has seen an increase in usage and in the diversity of users. "One of the biggest changes is our user group," said Bowdoin. "Before, it was mostly traditional gym-goers. Now, we're seeing students from all backgrounds using the space. What we thought might deter some users has made the space more welcoming."

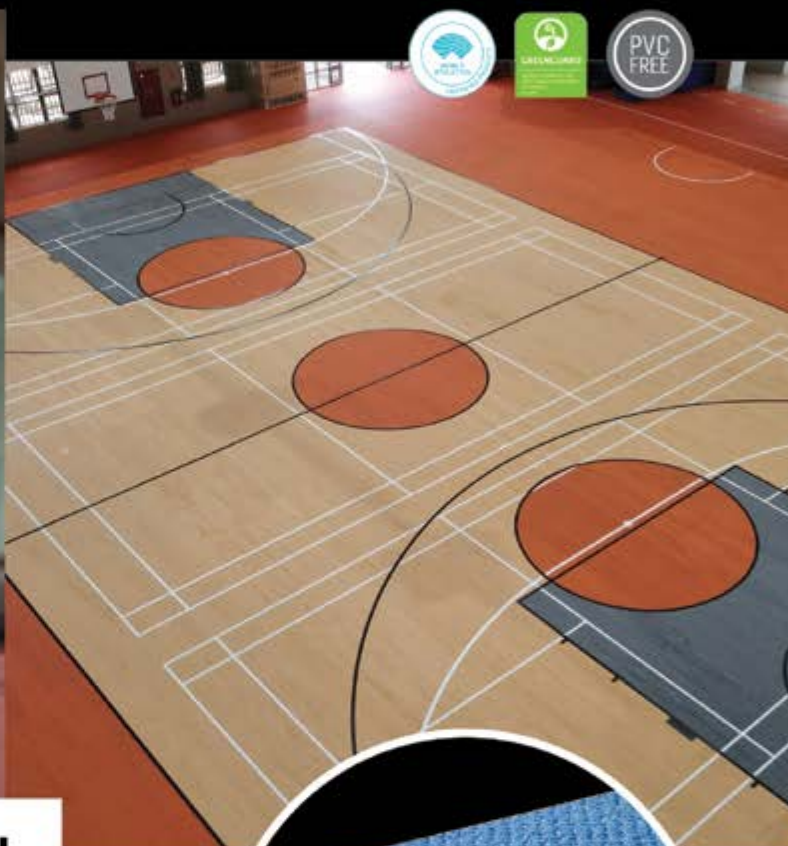
With more than one million visits annually across IU's rec facilities, the university needed materials that could handle constant, high impact use while supporting its commitment to student well-being. Ecore's flooring systems have delivered on every front, from durability and safety to acoustics and performance.

"Everything we do is about helping students feel like they belong here," Horton said. "From the IU branding on the floor to the way the space functions – it's all meant to support them, whether they're here to train, de-stress or just feel more connected to campus."



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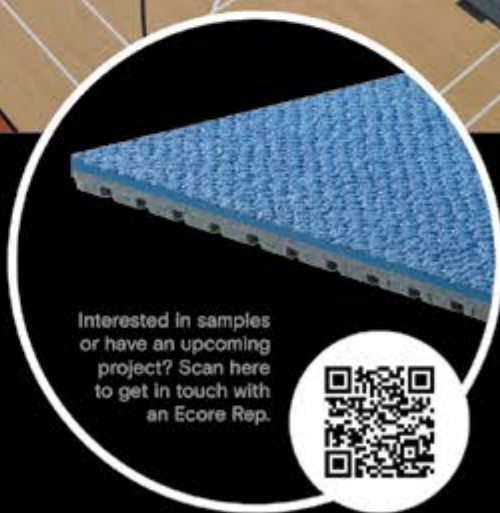


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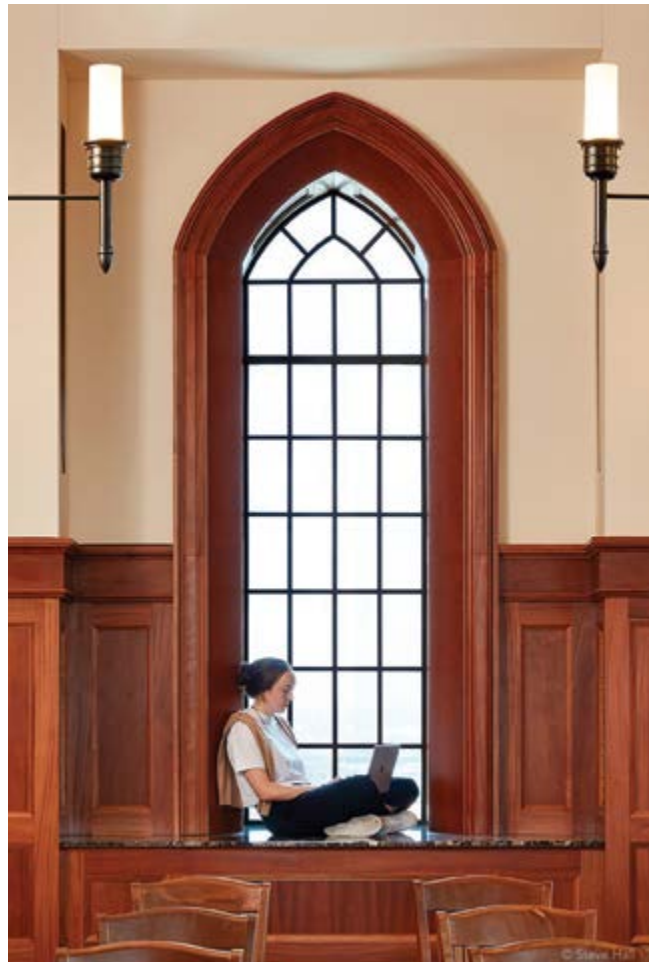
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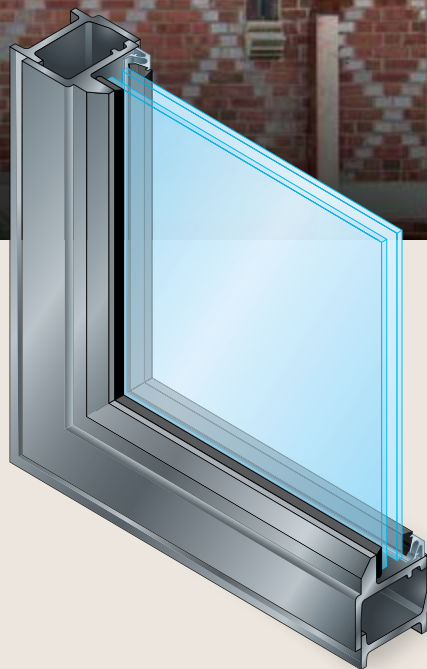
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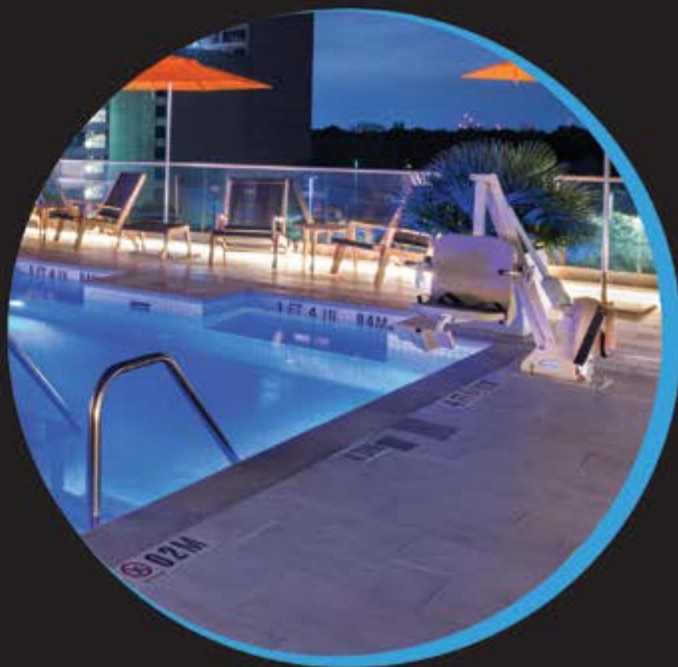
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» To be sure school solutions can be implemented asap, we created the **NAPCO School-Safe Now P.L.A.N.™**, a pilot program, enabling schools to get the security they want now, but pay later when budgets allow**. For more info contact our local sales rep. or distributor.

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NAPCO, a manufacturer & trusted singular source for schools coast to coast: From LA Unified & Beverly Hills, to Miami-Dade, Chula Vista & Houston ISD; plus universities from NYU & Bob Jones U in the East, to ASU, Pepperdine & Stanford in the West, and countless others in between. To help you act now quickly and take the necessary next-steps to safeguard your school & its occupants, we created the first-ever NAPCO School-Safe Now P.L.A.N.,™ (Pay Later Act Now) where you may be able to literally defer payments, later during your budget cycle.*



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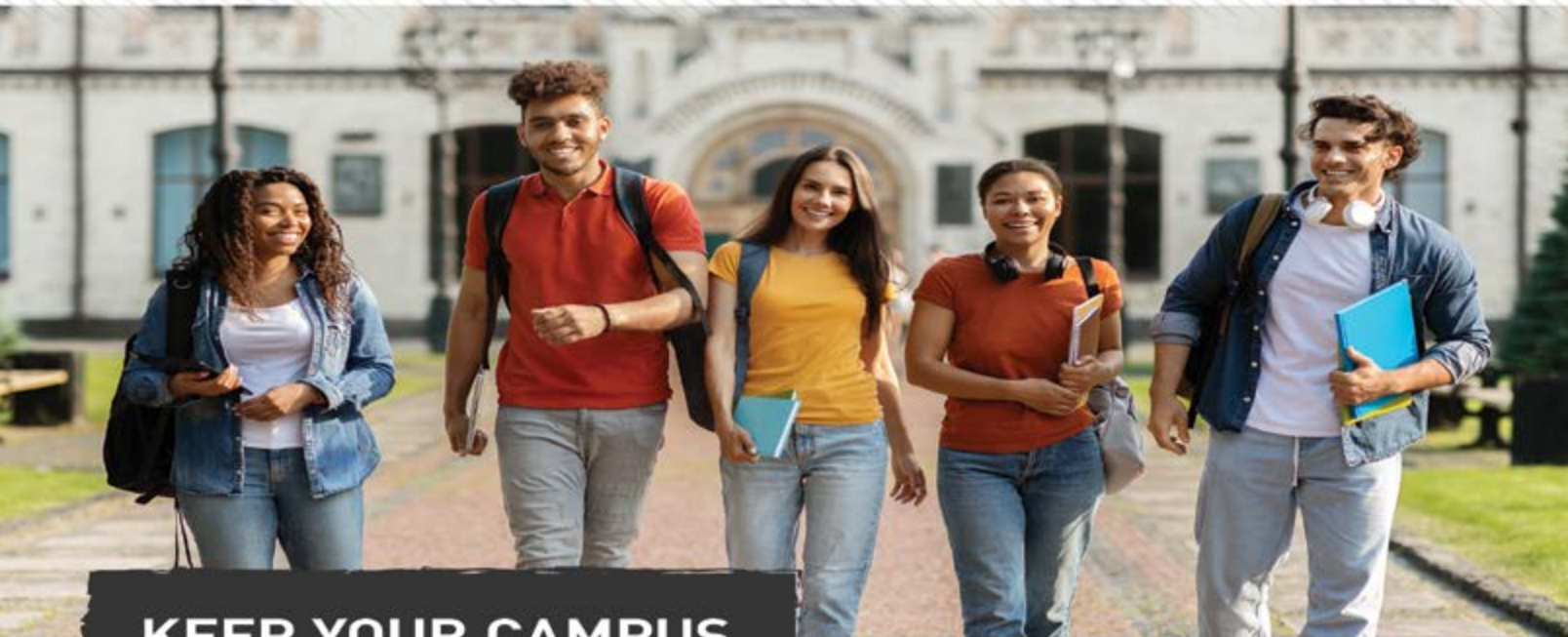


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