

CAMPUS RENOVATIONS

Beginning in June 2017, the College began the largest renovation project in its history—with a two-year comprehensive restoration of the iconic Commons building, which exemplifies, through its design, programming, legacy, and name, the core ambitions and mission of a Bennington education.

Upon its completion in Summer 2019, Commons will house ADA-accessible classrooms and other learning spaces, expanded and modernized dining facilities, a new north entrance, a new bakery and cafe, bookstore, post office, and additional social spaces.

To ensure and enhance the quality of the lived experience for Bennington students during this period, the College has undertaken a series of additional renovations — creating several new facilities through the revitalization and adaptation of existing buildings.



COMMONS

Schedule of work: June 2017-Summer 2019

The storied history of Commons is imprinted with the best of the cultural and intellectual life of the 20th century: It housed the birth of modern dance through the work of Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Hanya Holm, and Charles Weidman; served as a crucible for pioneering and inspired teaching—lectures by Peter Drucker and W.H. Auden, critiques by Paul Feeley; and served as a crossroads for some of our nation's most creative thinkers—John Dewey, Zora Neale Hurston, Buckminster Fuller, E.E. Cummings, Ralph Ellison, Jules Olitski, and many others.

For some time, however, Commons has been in urgent need of renovation and restoration. The primary mechanical systems and core spaces have not been replaced or updated since it was built in 1932. For the past twenty years, the entirety of the third floor of nearly 15,000 square feet has been closed due to fire code and ADA accessibility non-compliance. Reclaiming the currently dormant third floor will result in a net gain of 15 additional classrooms and learning spaces, and will provide a home for the humanities.



Photo: Todd Norwood

STUDENT HEALTH CENTER

Completed: Summer 2017

In mid-December 2016, we began the work of renovating one of the original farm structures on the Bennington Campus—a building which has hosted multiple functions throughout the years, including offices and faculty apartments. Now, through a comprehensive addition and adaptive renovation, we have breathed new life into this idiosyncratic, special, and often overlooked building. It now serves as the new home for Bennington's Health and Psychological Services. The building, which preserves the vernacular character of the original structure while incorporating modern, energy-efficient systems, includes offices and support facilities for both programs, along with the offices for Student Life's Director of Health Promotion, a shared reception area, and waiting spaces.



STUDENT CENTER RENOVATION AND ADDITION

Completed: Summer 2017

During the Commons renovation, all campus dining is being provided through facilities at the Student Center. In order to expand both the cooking capacity and dining seating capacity of the building, the project entailed modifications to the existing building, and the construction of a significant addition off the west side that now provides the majority of dining seating area. The addition includes ample daylight as well as glass roll-up doors on the south side, opening onto an outdoor seating area.



PARAN CREEK APARTMENTS

Completed: Summer 2017

The College now offers a new off-campus residential facility in North Bennington. The apartments are in a renovated historic mill that spans the river, and are connected to campus by a walking/cycling path from the soccer field. Each apartment houses three to five students and offers a full kitchen, a large living room, and two private bathrooms. The building also has laundry facilities and a spacious common room with a pool table.