October 2020

The Clark Enersen Partners

THE NAUTILUS

The Nautilus—the name for our newsletter, is the focal design element in The Clark Enersen Partners' logo. It represents a mathematical ratio that can be found in nature, as seen in the shell's structure. This ratio is closely related to the Fibonacci Sequence and is known as the Golden Ratio, which describes an intuitive, natural balance between two proportions. The external circular shape of the nautilus shell represents wholeness, but its continuous motion—an infinite spiral—empowers and inspires future growth and change. Internally, the cross-section depicts how all pieces seamlessly fit together in meaningful partnership. Collectively, as one, that's The Clark Enersen Partners. In everything we do, we strive to empower and inspire through partnership in thoughtful design.

October 2020

CAREER PATHWAYS

written by
JEFF CHADWICK AIA, LEED AP
Architect, Senior Principal

INSPIRING THE NEXT WORKFORCE GENERATION

As the 21st century rolls on, the world around us continues to evolve at a rapid pace. PK-12 schools and higher education institutions find themselves searching for the answers to many tough questions, including how to prepare students for a world that we cannot predict. These institutions have realized teaching hands-on skills that can be easily translated into the workforce is the most effective way to move forward. They advocate for Career Pathways—profession-based programs and learning facilities designed by teachers and industry leaders that emphasize real-world learning in a flexible environment. As research has shown, hands-on, real-world, and project-oriented approaches in all levels of education have demonstrated increased performance in students.

Career Pathways design takes on many different forms in order to provide a broad foundation for technical and professional careers, whether students are planning to go directly into the workforce upon high school graduation or pursue degrees in higher education. The driving concept behind these facilities is that they will support their local communities by providing students that are workforce-ready as soon as they graduate, cutting down on the amount of time needed for on-the-job training.

Here are five of the most common forms of Career Pathways design schools are utilizing to prepare their students.

1. INTEGRATED HANDS-ON LEARNING

The pedagogical shift toward active and project-based learning environments has resulted in measurable benefits for students of all ages. Active learning environments require different design considerations than more traditional forms of learning, including area requirements, furniture selection, information-sharing capabilities, and technology requirements. While these space types align more intuitively with certain educational focuses (CTE, STEM, STEAM, STREAM), fully integrating them into the educational facility will create opportunities for innovative learning in other focus areas as well. These spaces must embrace adaptive learning concepts and utilize the latest technology for hybrid curricula, instant feedback, and immersive simulation environments. The best design solutions provide flexibility for unforeseen future advancements, new workforce demands, and support the current understanding of how best to accomplish learning intentions and outcomes.

2. PARTNERSHIPS

Local and national businesses are working with schools more than ever, using their combined resources to train students in specific trades where there is a known need. In West Point, Nebraska, we worked with Northeast Community College to design a new Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center in partnership with the City of West Point and Pathways to Tomorrow, a consortium of 8 local school districts. The partnership provides college-level credit programming as well as business- and industry-customized training opportunities in areas such as truck driving, safety, and entrepreneurship and leadership. The collaborative effort between the institutions is focused on establishing unique career pathways for students in various fields, resulting in access to CTE that is not available in the surrounding school districts. Additionally, the new center will help spur economic development and support employment opportunities in east-central Nebraska.

3. DESIGNING FOR MULTIPLE PEDAGOGIES

Learning environments should be able to accommodate a variety of teaching methodologies, as multiple tactics for imparting knowledge may be employed in the same learning session. Additionally, pedagogy will continue to evolve, and spaces should be designed for flexibility. For example, power distribution infrastructure below the floor and in the ceiling allows for more flexibility to support future growth and easy reconfiguration. This “behind the scenes” technology infrastructure approach provides accessibility and necessary space for easy maintenance, equipment changes, and increasing power to support current and future needs.

4. INFORMAL LEARNING

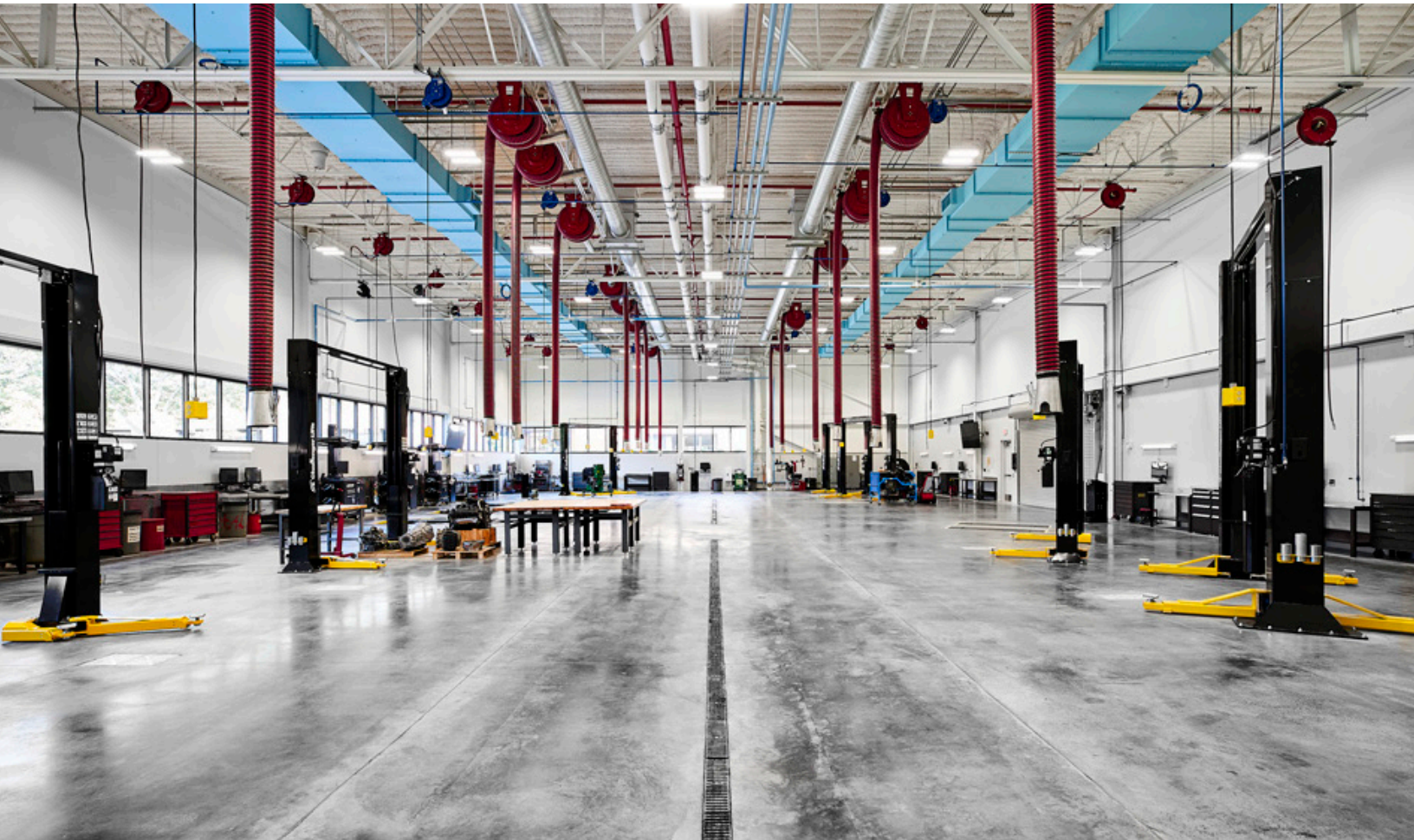
Learning takes place in both a classroom setting and within informal settings where an instructor may or may not be present. Spaces should be designed throughout an educational facility that are engaging and allow for individual learning, student-to-student interaction, and opportunities for unstructured learning communities to develop. Additionally, visual connectivity between spaces is important, especially as innovative pedagogies often rely on the use of multiple spaces in the same learning session. Visibility into learning environments needs to balance transparency with security and acoustic considerations. The new Acklie Hall of Science at Nebraska Wesleyan University showcases a number of these informal learning ideas, including multiple breakout study areas that cater to these types of learning.

5. INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

The 21st century workforce requires students to develop robust skillsets, thrive in interdisciplinary teams, and adapt to new project demands because of the rapid pace of change in technology. Educational facilities must be designed to provide students with exposure to multiple learning styles and educational opportunities. Given the same problem, students from different disciplines will approach it differently and bring unique perspectives on how to solve it. By creating an environment that allows the different disciplines to work toward the same end goal simultaneously, students learn how to collaborate to find answers. One way to accomplish this is through the use of "Innovation Zones" which use flexible furnishing and electrical equipment that allow learning environments to be easily rearranged.

As we continue to move forward, Career Pathways will play a vital role in not only how we educate and train students for successful careers, but also how local economies deal with the rapid pace of change in technology and business. We understand how meaningful these projects are to the schools and communities they serve, and as they continue to evolve, so does our practice and desire to create educational facilities that withstand the test of time. We strive to work with each of our partners to create future-ready education facilities that have a positive impact for generations to come.

See our portfolio of education projects at **clarkenersen.com/projects**



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

KARA HINRICHS
Interior Designer, Associate

Q: HOW HAS THE FIRM IMPACTED YOUR LIFE?
A: I started as an intern during college, and then was hired full-time upon graduation. Because of this, every ounce of my professional growth has been influenced by, or connected to, the firm. I am extremely grateful for the opportunities I am given to grow as a designer, colleague, and friend.

Q: FAVORITE PLACE TO VISIT/BEST VACATION?
A: For fun – Disney World, hands down! We are one of those weird Disney-obsessed families and not ashamed. For relaxation – Rocky Mountain National Park. We love hiking with our girls and being truly disconnected from our phones while we are there.

JAKE BECK AIA, NCARB, LEED AP
Architect, Associate

Q: HOW HAVE YOU SEEN OUR FIRM MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS?
A: I appreciate that TCEP always puts our clients first. We're always willing to put in the little bit extra to make sure our projects are successful, and I think that is something our clients really appreciate.

Q: FAVORITE SPORTS TEAM?
A: I'm a lifelong Cubs fan. My family is all from Illinois, and we moved back and forth a few times when I was a kid.

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