

Washington State University

Compton Union Building Pullman, Washington

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Crestron QuickMedia® Provides Dramatic Savings for WSU Student Union Renovation

Designing a college student union building can be an overwhelming project filled with challenges and surprises. It was no different on the three-year renovation of the Compton Union Building (CUB) at the Washington State University (WSU) campus at Pullman. The \$86 million project transformed an outdated facility built in 1952 into a bright, popular space featuring state-of-the-art sound and video technology.



Green Initiatives Plus Control Technology Helps CUB Attain LEED Certification

“The big goal of the renovation was turning the CUB into a facility that students would always want to use,” says Travis Duncan, CUB Operations Manager, who also worked with Integrus Architecture of Spokane and Pfeiffer Partners of Los Angeles to manage the transformation. “We brought in better food venues, modern lounge space, and more things students like to do. We also made it as wide open as possible, with as much natural light as we could pull in.”

The result is a gorgeous and energy-responsible multi-use facility that was awarded a Silver Level LEED certification - the first building on campus to earn the prestigious eco-friendly designation.

A major part of the project was the addition of 38,000 square feet of much needed meeting space, which is used by student organizations, staff and the community. The newly designed CUB also boasts two ballrooms, a senate room, eight meeting rooms, and a 489-seat auditorium, each outfitted with high performance projection systems, large screen displays, and big time sound systems. Most public spaces include distributed audio zones for background music, digital signage and video distribution.

The multi-purpose rooms serve a variety of uses, including staff and community meetings, concerts, and weddings. “Some student groups host dances, others will bring in big regional or national conferences,” said Duncan. “In our senior ballroom we’ll do anything from a smaller 200-person seminar to a big concert.”

“During the three year renovation, the worldwide price of copper skyrocketed. As WSU began to select AV integrators, they realized the project was significantly over budget. That’s where Crestron came in.”

“The challenge with a student union building is to create AV systems that serve many different functions, in different types of spaces, using a unified system design approach. And then you have to connect all of these spaces, and complete the project, on a reasonable budget,” explains Rick Wells of Los Angeles, CA-based Multi-Media Consulting (MMC). AVI-SPL of Seattle was retained to provide the professional integration services necessary for a project of this magnitude.

Crestron audio/video control technology provides streamlined distribution, touchpanel control and seamless automation of all AV systems throughout the 240,000 square foot facility.



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Bands typically bring in their own stage equipment, but the CUB is now equipped to handle concerts and can provide digital snakes, a sound mixing console, complete house sound and video projection systems - all services they could never provide before the renovation.

Facility-wide Audio Video Redesign

"We designed the CUB in what we call a split package," Wells explains. "We released the infrastructure designs, but then waited until a good portion of the building was completed before we submitted proposals for the AV systems. This way, WSU could take advantage of the latest technology available at that time."

A major unforeseen challenge during the project was a sharp increase in the price of copper cable, which threatened the plans for the new audio and video systems. Construction began in 2006, and during this timeframe the worldwide price of copper skyrocketed. As WSU began to select AV integrators, they realized they were significantly over budget. "That's where Crestron came in," said Wells.

MMC had originally planned to use Crestron control systems, including RoomView remote management software, but the cost changes also prompted a reevaluation of the signal switching/distribution plan, and for good reason. "To be able to eliminate an RGB run across a 240,000 square foot building, that was huge," Wells emphasized.

By switching to the QuickMedia® cabling solution, the budget-strapped project was rewarded with a dramatic reduction in cabling and labor costs, in addition to requiring fewer matrix switchers. AVI-SPL executed the revised specifications flawlessly, and completed the implementation under budget, noted Wells.

Combined savings for the project totaled approximately 30% of the original cost of the AV system, providing a much needed windfall for a state university with an ever-tightening budget.

The completed facility features:

- A large AV room with an AAS-4 Adagio Audio Server, MPS-300 Media Processing System - which combines a control system, 11 x 7 matrix switcher, and 8-channel mic mixer, QuickMedia Receiver with built-in stereo amplifier, Digital Signal Processor (DSP), and room controller - all in a single rackmount device, and a QM-MD16X16 QuickMedia matrix switcher.

Seamlessly integrated, this smart configuration controls projection systems and distributes all types of audio into the Junior and Senior Ballrooms. A TPS-12G-QM touchpanel provides interactive touchscreen control of the complete system.

- An MPS-400 Media Processing System and TPS-12G wall mount touchpanel automates and controls video projection and all media sources for the auditorium.
- A CP2E control system with TPS-3000 touchpanel enables seamless control of sound, projection and media sources in the Senate Room
- Eight QM-RMCRX-BA Room Media Controller and QuickMedia Receivers provide integrated distribution and control of all audio, video, projectors and LCD displays in each of the small meeting rooms.

"We've had a lot of success," concludes Duncan. "The building is being used exactly how we want it to be used. We've had roughly 9,000 people a day through here, and on game day weekends, upwards of 15,000. It's definitely become the place to be on campus again, and that's what we were shooting for."