CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY
Julka Hall, College of Education and Human Services
Cleveland, Ohio

Cleveland State University’s Julka Hall creates a collaborative space for teachers and learners to connect with each other—and the city they serve.
Cleveland State began a $500 million campus master plan, “Building Blocks for the Future,” to change the face of both the campus and downtown Cleveland, while creating a vibrant living and learning community in the heart of the city. Julka Hall, which serves future front line professionals such as teachers, administrators, health educators and nurses, is a significant component of this plan.

**design BREAKTHROUGH**

NBBJ’s building design decreases the distance between teacher, learner and citizen. The design of Julka Hall integrates new learning settings both within and beyond the classroom to better enable today’s students. While the majority of the campus’s buildings face inward, Julka Hall acts as a beacon, sitting directly on the avenue to connect with the city.

**organizational VALUE**

With enrollments up 20%, the eight departments that comprise the College of Education and Human Services, once scattered throughout the campus, are now located in one building. With this building, the College has a physical identity that projects a strong statement about the University’s commitment to improving education within Cleveland.

**springboard INSIGHT**

When a learning environment supports lectures, group discussions, and team project work, it not only supports new pedagogies, it also makes better use of real estate, furniture and technology.
Cleveland is Ohio’s second most impoverished city, with a manufacturing employment base that has steadily eroded over the past three decades, and 30% of the population living below the poverty line. Cleveland State University is a key force in transitioning the workforce to the knowledge-based economies Cleveland seeks to grow.

Proclaiming “the city is our campus,” Cleveland State is seeking to enrich the bidirectional, dynamic relationship between the metropolitan area and the university. The city serves as a laboratory in which faculty explore ideas, test hypotheses and harness artistic potential. It is the backdrop for teaching, as students apply knowledge gained in academic settings to the world of everyday life.

Like many urban universities built in the 1960s, Cleveland State’s original campus design followed the planning philosophy of its day: dissociating learning environments from the urban condition. That paradigm has fallen away, and CSU’s Engaged Learning Campaign is the result. The College of Education and Human Services building is the University’s first opportunity aimed at integrating with the city.

The University’s pledge is an engaged learning experience in the real world, for the real world, among a diverse student body. The students at CSU consider the entire city as their campus for study, practical experience and recreation.
Cleveland State's original campus buildings were designed along an internal central axis, facing away from the city.

NBBJ's plan connects the University to the city in ways that benefit both the University and the City of Cleveland.

**TURNING THE CAMPUS “INSIDE OUT”**

The Cleveland State campus covers more than 85 acres, the largest footprint in downtown Cleveland, with over 40 buildings for teaching, research, housing, administration and recreation. As the primary entry to Cleveland State University, Euclid Avenue is an important part of the identity of the campus. NBBJ conducted a study to evaluate the relationship between the edge of campus and Euclid Avenue, and made recommendations to enhance the University’s “front door.” The resulting plan, called the “Euclid Ribbon,” integrates several of the University’s newly completed projects, including Julka Hall, along the city’s main artery. Euclid Avenue is transformed from a congested thoroughfare to a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood with improved lighting and wayfinding, new landscaping, public art and water features that activate the edges of campus.
“The University used to have a gulag feel to it—it was heavily brick, and had its back to the city. Now everything we do looks outward to the city.”

– RON BERKMAN, UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT
To kick off the design process, NBBJ sponsored a two-day work session with the University to highlight goals, discover opportunities and explore challenges. Since the College had been working on the program for Juka Hall for nearly a decade, the design team’s job was not only to analyze the plan—in the context of a rapidly changing educational environment—but to find ways to make meaningful connections between elements of that plan.

NBBJ engaged the College Deans, the University Architect and Facilities Management in a productive dialogue about the future. The framework generated during a two-day summit set the tone for nearly every future meeting, work session and decision-making exercise during the design phase—ultimately creating common ground for innovation at all levels. The vision sought to connect distinct components in new ways, facilitating collaboration between students, faculty and the community.

By classifying the college’s components into first, second and third places, the team mapped how learning zones (above) could be intermixed and optimized. The building reaches both out to the city and into the campus, while a layered interior creates connections between the many departments housed in the building. Spaces are organized to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration among the students, faculty and researchers from the multitude of programs housed within.
A three-story atrium is the main organizing feature of Julka Hall. “The Forum” connects classrooms, faculty offices and labs. Coffee bars are located on the “bridges,” while clerestory windows at the fourth level admit daylight deep into the wedge-shaped space.
“Many of CSU’s students take classes in the evening, after teaching during the day. We found them in parked cars and at bus stops, eating take-out and sandwiches between work and classes. To make their time here count, every space must be as hard-working as they are.” —Andy Snyder, Lead Designer

An essential component of facilitating learning is understanding the learners. Demographic trends for today’s students show that more are attending college part-time than in previous years; a higher proportion are women; and more students are over the age of twenty-five. As a result, colleges and universities are transforming their teaching methods, reconsidering how they use tools and technology, and rethinking the spaces where education happens.

This is certainly the case for Julka Hall, the University’s new College of Education and Human Services. Here, the student body includes both undergraduate and graduate students, but is weighted toward graduate education. The “typical student” is a 31-year-old female who arrives at 4:30 pm and takes classes in the evening after having taught all day. Undergraduate education and nursing students follow a more traditional class schedule and utilize the building during the day.

Throughout the design observation phase, the project team found students in parked cars and at bus stops, hastily eating meals before classes. To the team, this was a desperate call for a new “home.” Intermixing first, second and third places in Julka Hall addressed the needs of this specific student body and supported evolving college curricula and teaching methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Age</th>
<th>29% UNDER 24</th>
<th>26% OVER 35</th>
<th>45% 25—35</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Gender</td>
<td>25% MALE</td>
<td>75% FEMALE</td>
<td>65% FULL TIME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td>20% PART TIME</td>
<td>15% UNEMPLOYED</td>
<td>65% FULL TIME</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOLVING FOR NEW STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
Evolving research around the “future learner” suggests that the boundaries between teacher and learner are much more diffuse than they used to be. As a result, learning has become more of a “knowledge network” rather than a traditional “knowledge transfer” between a student and a teacher.

College students today play a much greater role in the learning process. They spend almost three-quarters of their class time in group discussions and nearly a quarter of their time in group work.

At Julka Hall, teachers and pedagogies vary, so classes might employ a lecture mode, group set-ups or individual work—from one class to the next, or even during the same class period. Since traditional classrooms make working in groups and other new modes of learning a difficult task, flexibility in furniture, technology and space enables transitions between different modes, classes and teaching styles.

The diagram below shows a traditional learning hierarchy—knowledge as a commodity—in a one-way transfer from a single teacher to a group of learners. Advances in technology and facilities organization are shifting the boundaries between the teacher and learner, allowing both to work together in a network of innovation-oriented learning.
The first floor includes a tiered classroom, a seminar room and learning centers used by several academic departments.
In "The Great Good Place," urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg described the importance of public gathering places called "third places" where people can connect with others outside their formal roles at home and work. Within learning environments, "third places" help like-minded peers of the various undergraduate and graduate programs gather where dialogue, debate, reflection and other integral knowledge exchanges are facilitated and encouraged.

Julka Hall makes better use of real estate by equipping in-between spaces. Planned public spaces for group work were placed outside computer labs and classrooms to attract students before and after class. Wi-fi, power outlets, writing boards, lounge seating with tablet arms, small tables and task chairs create intimate spaces within a larger environment. Multiple student lounges, wide corridors and informal gathering spaces provide opportunities for interaction and collaboration.
All five building entries are designed to be highly visible and incorporate glass, copper panels and multi-story spaces.

Julka Hall brings together eight departments that had previously been scattered throughout the campus. The College of Education and Human Services is the region’s major producer of a diverse, urban-focused workforce of 400 teachers and 100 nurses annually. It also plays an important role in incubating new programs to prepare urban teachers who work in the city’s schools by conducting research into the best practices in urban education and healthcare.

To accommodate the flow of different groups of students through the building, five entrances were designed to welcome distinct users. Commuting students use the parking entrance.

Two entrances face the CSU campus for those who live on campus. The Euclid Avenue and Fenn Plaza entries encourage the use of College resources by the community outside the campus. All five entries are designed for high visibility, with copper panels, glass and multi-story spaces.
Each circulation space ends with a full-height glass wall overlooking the campus green. Hallways are filled with natural light, and the landscape creates a backdrop that contrasts with the neutral tones of the interiors.
A GREEN ADDITION

Cleveland State has invested in sustainability initiatives campus-wide. By 2014, these overall efforts are projected to save $62.9 million and reduce energy consumption by 39%. Julka Hall has been awarded LEED® Gold certification, making it the highest rated building on the University’s campus, and one of the most sustainable new projects in Cleveland.
“We feel a sense of accomplishment each day, not only because we have more energy that has helped us be productive, but also because we have been able to live our values of collaboration, communication and community connection.”

– DICK HURWITZ, INTERIM DEAN, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES

CLIENT
Cleveland State University

SIZE
100,000 SF / 9,000 SM

COMPLETION DATE
2010

COMPONENTS
Science/math/computer labs, classrooms, instructional design studio, counseling tutoring clinic, faculty offices and simulation lab

NBBJ SERVICES PROVIDED
Programming, full architectural services, interior design, landscape architecture, environmental graphic design

AWARDS
AIA Ohio, Honor Award, 2011
AIA Columbus, Honor Award, 2011
AIA Columbus, Merit Award, 2008

SUSTAINABILITY
LEED Gold
ABOUT NBBJ

NBBJ is an award-winning global design and architecture firm focused on helping clients capitalize on the relationship between people and the design of physical space to enhance organizational performance.

From academic research and university medical schools, to simulation centers and campus planning, NBBJ is a global leader in creating performance-based learning environments. Consistently recognized by clients for our creative and professional design process, NBBJ has partnered with 12 of U.S. News & World Report’s Top 25 Universities, including Harvard, Stanford, Duke and the California Institute of Technology. Our expertise encompasses multiple disciplines, with architects, lab specialists, economists and sustainability experts working together to design innovative centers for learning.

NBBJ’s network of offices enables us to deliver quality projects that are regionally and locally appropriate. It allows us to act as a single creative force—leveraging the latest thinking from NBBJ colleagues in other locations, bringing a rich blend of expertise to each project.

NBBJ SERVICES

Architecture  Land-Use Planning
Change Management  Lighting Design
Construction Administration  Master Planning
Interior Design  Programming
Facility Planning  Project and Cost Management
Financial Analysis  Retail Planning and Design
Graphic Design and Signage  Space Planning
Laboratory Design  Workplace Consulting