



Case Study Highlights

Product Focus™ Cachet® Swing-Away

Quantity 1,674 sittings in 11 auditoriums

Location Andrew G. Clark Building,
Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO

Architect SLATERPAULL Architects

Contact www.colostate.edu

American Seating Helps Colorado State University Complete A Transformation

New Seats Help Meet Design, Comfort and Green Needs

In 2008 Colorado State University undertook the unique challenge of renovating one of the busiest buildings on its main campus, the Andrew G. Clark Building. Originally built in 1964, the Clark Building is located in the middle of campus and used for a wide variety of teaching purposes across a number of different academic disciplines. The building spans more than 250,000 square feet and is comprised of 11 auditoriums ranging in class size from 100 to 350. All told, the building and its 11 auditoriums can seat more than 1,600 students. Because of its size, location and multi-purpose academic use, most students attending CSU will take at least one course in the Clark Building during their tenure at the university, whether it is in math, science or psychology.

The main goal of the \$6 million Clark Building renovation was to create an interior environment that better reflected the university's position as a world-class research institute, while also supporting the university's statement as "The Green University." The total renovation included everything, from replacing outdated mechanical and electrical systems to installing new seating, flooring, lighting and wall treatments.

"The building was constructed at a time when a lot of baby boomers were starting to go to college and it had not been updated or renovated since," said Gene Leach, CSU Project Manager who oversaw the Clark Building renovation. "Because of this, the aesthetics were dated and it was very utilitarian." Most notably, the classrooms contained limited lighting, fixed and freestanding seating and concrete walls, which created poor acoustics. With few design elements, this combined to create a less-than-ideal teaching and learning environment.

The Challenge

Leach and his architect partner team from SLATERPAULL Architects were challenged with creating a new, more aesthetically appealing environment, working around busy class schedules and integrating sustainable products and processes for the renovation.

"When we came on board, the look of the building was pretty institutional and cold," said J. Nate Drinkwine, project manager at SLATERPAULL Architects. "The finishes and the feel of the classrooms were just not there."

Leach knew that selecting the right seating solution would be a key driver to the overall success of the project, since the seating product is such a prominent part of the overall environment. Leach also knew he would need to get student buy-in on the seating product, as part of the renovation was funded by students through a hike in their fees.

"We asked for a qualification statement from a number of different seating manufacturers and representatives. We assembled a group of students and people from across the university to sample and rate the products. In the end, the students and our faculty rated American Seating number one," said Leach.

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A

Project Partner List

- Gene Leach, Architect, LEED AP
Owner's Rep/Project Manager
CSU Construction Services
- J. Nate Drinkwine, LEED AP
Project Manager
SLATERPAULL Architects
- Michael Joseph
American Seating Sales Representative
Denver, Colo.

A: End detail of single swing-away arm and chair/table assembly.

Cover: *Focus™* helps create a world-class training environment and contributes to CSU's reputation as "The Green University."

The Results

The product selected was American Seating's *Focus™ Cachet® Swing Away*. According to Drinkwine, no other product came close to *Focus's* comfort. "It was pretty apparent that the American Seating product was what they wanted. There wasn't even a close second," Drinkwine said.

Unlike the building's old chairs, the majority of which were upholstered and thus required a lot of cleaning and repair maintenance, the non-upholstered chairs provide a smooth and comfortable seating experience, especially during hot summers or cold winters when upholstered fabrics can adhere to clothing and add to a user's discomfort. What's more, students also commented on the uniquely contoured seat and seat back, which creates an even more enjoyable seating experience.

Beyond its comfort, Leach and Drinkwine say that *Focus* also provides great design adaptability. The chair's 360° seat rotation can facilitate increased student interaction, and the accompanying table top can be customized to meet the specific design of the classroom. Additionally, as a fixed seating solution, the room is now ADA compliant and seating is maximized in each classroom.

With comfort, design adaptability and other benefits accounted for, Leach and Drinkwine knew that the project would not be a complete success unless they met their ultimate goal of creating a world-class learning environment and furthering CSU as "The Green University."

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C



D

C: Combination of *Focus* with and without laminate modesty panel.

D: *Focus* Fixed lecture installation with freestanding chairs for ADA accommodation. (foreground)

The Transformation

"It's a tremendous advantage that not only is the *Focus™ Cachet®* comfortable, it's also very modern-looking," said Leach. According to Leach, the chair and table top's modern look greatly contributed to the building's overall transformation from a spartan 1960s design to a warmer and more sophisticated look and feel.

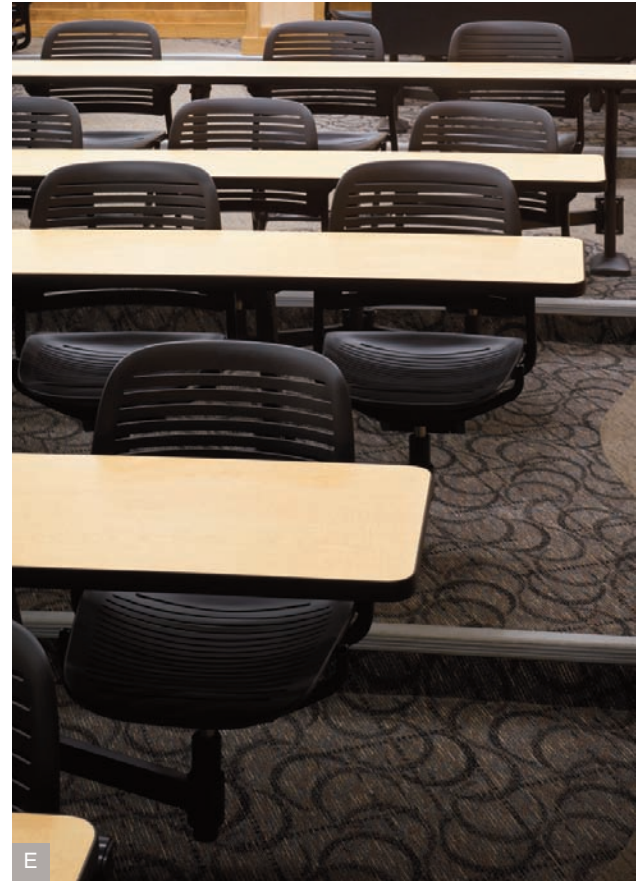
From a sustainability standpoint, *Focus* provides a number of benefits. Because of its industry-leading durability, the system has an exceptionally long life cycle. This means the product can remain in use for years, thus reducing the cost, energy, resources and materials needed to repair or replace a product of lesser durability. A product with a longer life cycle can also reduce the burden on landfills. In addition, *Focus* can contribute to multiple LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) credits. American Seating can provide FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council) Certified cores and accessories, and no added UF (Urea-formaldehyde) resins. The *Focus* product also contains more than 10 percent recycled content.

"We're glad we could help Colorado State transform this important building into one that truly reflects the needs of both the students and the administration," said American Seating Sales Representative Michael Joseph. "I think the keys were getting them the right product, at the right time and at the right price. American Seating did a great job in delivering a chair that meets the existing codes, provides maximum seating and still gives the university and the architect the look they were trying to attain."

Indeed, Leach has been impressed with American Seating's on-time delivery and service. "With everything else going on in the rest of the building, it was imperative that they got the product there on-time." Leach added, "We have a really good warranty program with American Seating and their support has been really good too; I have no complaints at all."

Drinkwine added, "We've heard really strong feedback from people. *Focus* is definitely an upgrade from what was in there."

After two years of intense work, all 11 auditoriums are now outfitted with American Seating's *Focus* product, accounting for a total of 1,674 sittings. By completing the project in the summer of 2010, American Seating and Colorado State University were able to usher in a new school year with a new look for the venerable Clark Building while also helping the university continue to meet the needs of its ongoing campus expansions and green ambitions.



E



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E: Aisle view showing easy user accessibility and an orderly appearance.
F: Auditorium on the cover prior to the renovation.