

Wertheim Laboratory for Engineering Excellence Wins CMAA Florida Chapter 1 Project of the Year Awards

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Engineers utilize science, mathematics, and technology to solve problems. They are transformers of the global community. As society faces daily challenges, engineers are needed to help devise solutions. But first, they need a place to develop, innovate, and design.

The H. Wertheim Laboratory for Engineering Excellence is such place. The new building has recently secured multiple honors for the 2021 Construction Management Association of America (CMAA) Project Achievement Awards. The CMAA Florida Chapter 1 voted the engineering facility as “Project of the Year” and “Best Project for Higher Ed Over \$25M.”

The CMAA does not hand out such rewards lightly. Vincent Testa, President of CMAA Florida Chapter, states that “Our awards program highlights the best of the best, those projects that serve as an example to the industry and are true pinnacles of excellence and innovation.” The fact that the H. Wertheim Laboratory for Engineering Excellence secured two rewards speaks volumes about the dedication and passion that has gone into the project. According to Testa, it also “showcases the best work to the entire industry.”

The Wertheim transformation, as the department website calls it, has been long in the making. The project manager for this award winning facility was University Architect, Cydney Mcglothlin. She mentioned that one of the main goals for the H. Wertheim Laboratory for Engineering Excellence was putting engineering design on display for all of UF to see. By designing the Freshmen Design Lab location to be in the front of the building and surrounded by glass, the University community would be able to look in and see engineering at work. Another design goal in place for this project was to create a living room. “Prior to the Wertheim Building, the College of Engineering had no living room – when you asked someone to meet you at the Engineering school there wasn’t a good place to gather. One of the goals for this building was to create a heart for the college,” said Mcglothlin. This

building not only has a heart within, but for engineering students this facility will become the heart of campus.

“From the beginning, the building was designed to create a place for interdisciplinary research by not only housing different research institutes in the building, but by creating communal spaces for faculty and students to interact and collaborate,” said Mcglothlin.

Thanks to the generous contribution of benefactors Dr. Herbert and Nicole Wertheim, the University of Florida has been able to secure a \$300 million public-private partnership to fund the development of the Wertheim College of Engineering. Since 2015, efforts have been made to transform the college into a suitable research and educational environment for the future engineers.

By building the H. Wertheim Laboratory for Engineering Excellence, UF is transforming the heart of campus into the perfect home for engineers. The department website states that it will be the flagship building of the college: “an 84,000 square foot state-of-the-art research and educational environment.”

Winning the Project Achievement Awards illustrates just how dedicated the University of Florida is to the future. Student engineers are the leaders of tomorrow, and by developing the H. Wertheim Laboratory for Engineering Excellence, the school is not only giving them a place to work, but also a place to grow.

“I am so proud to have been a part of this transformational project. Working with the College and seeing the amazing research happening within the building – it makes me feel like I contributed to their research by helping to provide a space for them,” mentioned Mcglothlin.

For more information about the H. Wertheim Laboratory for Engineering Excellence, please visit the home page at: <https://www.eng.ufl.edu/about/new-buildings/herbert-wertheim-laboratory-for-engineering-excellence/>