

Facts & Figures

Owner: Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Cordova, TN

Type of Project: A new multipurpose facility on a new campus

Architect: Fisher & Arnold, Inc., Memphis, TN

General Contractor: Linkous Construction Co., Inc., Memphis, TN

Size: 132,000 square feet (including the physical plant)

Cost: \$17.22 million

Construction Time: March 2005 - August 2006

The Need: A new facility at a new campus to house all the seminary's functions (except for housing) under one roof

The Challenge: Keeping the project within budget constraints, completing the work by a firm deadline, and dealing with unsuitable soils and weather delays

Supportive Team Member

Omega Consultants, Inc.
Sound/Lighting/Video Systems



Photos courtesy of Wes Bramlet

Cordova, Tennessee

Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary

Completed in August 2006, the first new facility on Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary's new campus in Cordova, Tenn., houses an entire university campus for 1,000 students.

The new building houses a worship center, a nursery, a computer laboratory, two preaching chapels, a full-service kitchen with dining rooms, administrative offices, a bookstore, a library, an 1,100-seat auditorium, and a gymnasium featuring an elevated track, as well as men's and women's exercise rooms. In addition, the facility features 16 faculty offices, 10 regular classrooms and four seminar rooms, which are all equipped with audio-visual systems and Internet access. The project also included a separate 3,700-square-foot physical plant, which houses two chillers, three boilers and a maintenance shop.

The new facility is located on a 30-acre site that provides room for future student housing. "The traditional layout of a college campus would have placed the various functions as a community of smaller buildings in a park-like setting," said Jordan Northcross, AIA, of Fisher & Arnold, Inc., the project's architect. However, the administration at the seminary wanted all functions

under one roof in a building that evoked the traditional style reminiscent of the colonial origins of the Baptists in the United States.

To that end, the facility's design employs a simple metal stud-brick veneer wall system with fiberglass and pre-finished metal architectural components, according to Northcross. Those features helped achieve the desired appearance while adhering to the owner's strict cost request of no more than \$117 per square foot, he added.

In keeping with the owner's desires, the building presents prominent architectural features at each facade and has a significant presence when viewed from the interstate highway, even though the main entrance is oriented to the secondary road frontage, said Northcross. Additionally, parking areas were distributed around the site to provide easy access to the facility's multiple entry points and also reduce the visual effect of a large parking lot.

One of the project's biggest challenges involved the budget, but value engineering among the team members ensured the project stayed within the budget constraints, according to Rusty Linkous, director of business development

for Linkous Construction Co., Inc., the project's general contractor. In fact, thanks to a series of pricing exercises with input from qualified subcontractors and vendors, Linkous was able to provide the owner with more than \$1 million in value engineering options.

Additional challenges such as numerous weather delays, unsuitable soils and a firm completion date coinciding with the seminary's Founder's Day also plagued the project. Beginning the site work prior to completion of the building plan allowed the construction to be expedited to help meet the deadline. "We have concluded that Linkous Construction was able to successfully complete the project approximately four months ahead of schedule when considering the delays the project was subject to," said Linkous.

The dedication and teamwork displayed by the project's team members allowed the seminary to move to its new campus on time. Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary now has the facilities necessary to serve current and future needs. ■

— Ian McClure