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Rotunda classrooms at the University of Utah—which feature high, sloped ceilings—proved challenging.



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Since the two rotunda classrooms in question each seated 200 students and hosted a variety of important lectures on a daily basis, the quality, energy efficiency, and ease of use of the lighting systems were of paramount importance to students, faculty, and especially University of Utah Construction Manager Craig Erickson. His electric shop was typically called on weekly to fix sockets or replace any of the rooms' outdated 200W halogen recessed cans as they burned out.

This was a proposition made more difficult and time consuming not only by the classrooms' sloped ceilings, which ranged in height from 10' to 22', but also because the school required the lighting upgrade to be completed quickly before the start of the new semester so as to avoid any disruption to classes or campus operations.

Working with MaxLite's rep agency DMA Total Lighting Concepts and Crescent Electric's Salt Lake City branch, the university replaced each of the two classrooms' 40 halogen lights with low-voltage switch relays and thirty-six 50W 2x2' direct-lit LED flat-panel models with surface-mount kits from MaxLite.

Additionally, twenty-three 11W PAR30 LED lamps with a spot beam angle were installed in front of each of the classrooms to help highlight the chalkboard. Both the fixtures and the lamps were dimmable and were installed with Lutron GRAFIK Eye lighting control units and occupancy sensors to drive additional energy savings, extend the life of the LEDs, and enable enhanced controllability.

Working jointly with DMA's Bob Willardsen, "We developed lighting layouts and selected MaxLite LED fixtures based on the clean design of their flat-panel displays and their ability to work with the control system used," said Gabriel Arzate, former account manager at Crescent Electric and current member of DMA's outside sales specification team.

"We helped educate the university team and its contractors on the energy-saving and maintenance-reducing ben-

LED upgrade earns high marks

Crescent Electric Supply, DMA Total Lighting Concepts, and MaxLite get an A+ on a lighting install at the University of Utah. by Susan Bloom

As students returned to the University of Utah in Salt Lake City in August 2012 to begin the fall session, they experienced more than just the usual round of new teachers and classes—they also found newly upgraded lighting in two large classrooms within the campus's James Fletcher building. Thanks to a successful LED upgrade by Crescent Electric Supply and lighting rep agency DMA Total Lighting Concepts involving MaxLite LEDs and Lutron controls, the 30,000-student university enjoyed a welcome crash course in the benefits of energy efficiency, cost savings, and maintenance reductions.

efits of LEDs as well as how to use controls with the LED panels. We were also diligent about managing the product orders to ensure they arrived on time given our tight timeline for completion.”

HIGH MARKS ALL AROUND

Compared to the outdated and inconsistent light cast by the previous halogen recessed can fixtures, the LED flat panels and PAR30s in 4100K and 3000K correlated color temperatures, respectively, provided high-quality general lighting throughout the classrooms. They also delivered over 70% greater efficiency than their predecessors—to the tune of a 690,100kWh reduction in energy consumption and \$87,572 in energy and maintenance cost savings throughout the life of the LEDs—while producing twice the light.

Erickson was thrilled with the switch to LED technology, for both its financial and aesthetic benefits. “Thanks to the clarity and dimmability of the lights, students can now see more clearly and have an easier time taking notes from the overhead projectors,” he said.

“We wanted to go with LEDs mainly because they last longer, but even we were pleasantly surprised at how well they worked; everyone loves them,” Erickson shared. “In addition, Crescent and DMA were great to work with and provided outstanding support in identifying the optimal fixtures for our needs and designing a lighting layout that would ensure we had the right amount of light for the space. They were instrumental in encouraging us to consider LEDs as an option in the first place, and now we definitely plan to use MaxLite products again and make this lighting our standard across campus wherever we can.”

Since upgrading two additional classrooms and several other locations across campus with LEDs, “I feel that LEDs are the future and that their higher up-front cost is worth the investment when you consider the maintenance cost reductions along with the energy savings,” Erickson said.

For his part, Arzate couldn’t be hap-

pier for the University of Utah or for the future of the positive, seven-year partnership Crescent Electric has had with the renowned school.

“Since upgrading to LEDs and raising the classrooms’ CRI to 85+, the seats, the chalkboard, and the colors of the brick can be seen much more sharply,” he noted. “At Crescent Electric, our specialty is to have what our customers want, where and when they want it. Now, in addition to the energy, cost, and maintenance savings, this 1980s classroom has truly become an inviting environment and a great place to learn.” ■

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