



**GETTING SCHOOLED**  
Clockwise from top left: Rady School of Management by HMC Architects (2012); Conrad Prebys Concert Hall by LMN Architects (2009) and renowned acoustician Cyril Harris; breezeway by Risley & Gould (1968); Structural and Materials Engineering Building by Saffdie Rabines Architects (2012); York Hall by Neptune & Thomas (1964); Medical Education and Telemedicine Building Auditorium by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (2012).

## CLASS ACT

UCSD CONTINUES ITS LEGACY AS AN ARCHITECTURAL POWERHOUSE. JUST IN TIME FOR FALL, WE PRESENT THE ULTIMATE SYLLABUS.

By AnnaMaria Stephens  
Photography by Darren Bradley

The Pacific Ocean glittered on the horizon, framed by the soaring floor-to-ceiling windows of UC San Diego's Great Hall. Some of the city's most esteemed architects milled about, waiting to pay homage to the man of the hour. After nearly three decades in service, campus architect Boone Hellmann was retiring. And his legacy was evident as far as the eye could see.

"Some of the tributes that night brought me to tears," says Hellmann, who officially departed at the end of June. He estimates that—adjusting for inflation—he oversaw \$3 billion to \$4 billion in construction, or around 12 million square feet. He was also the longest-running campus architect in the history of the UC system. "I was so lucky," he says.

Among Hellmann's biggest triumphs? The \$108 million Eleanor Roosevelt College (ERC) campus, designed by acclaimed architect Moshe Safdie, who catapulted to international fame with Habitat, his stacked-cube apartments unveiled at the Montreal Expo in 1967.

"Nor to sound biased, but the Great Hall is my favorite place on campus," says Ricardo Rabines of San Diego's Safdie Rabines Architects. Rabines and his wife and partner, Taal Safdie (Moshe's daughter), collaborated on the 450,000-square-foot project, which they completed in 2003. The ERC design features all the necessities—housing, dining halls, study areas—along with bustling promenades and a common area. Swooping architectural curves create continuity and embody the energy coursing through the campus. CONTINUED...



UCSD's expansion shows no signs of slowing. Several noteworthy projects are in the works, including the \$420 million Jacobs Medical Center, a state-of-the-art design that's heavy on soothing outdoor spaces.



**STUDY HALLS** Clockwise from top: Price Center East by Mehrdad Yazdani of Cannon Studio (2011); Price Center East/West tunnel, by Mehrdad Yazdani of Cannon Studio (2011); Galbraith Hall atrium and now auditorium by Kevin deFreitas (2013).

...CONTINUED "As an architect, to see people enjoying and interacting with the architecture as we intended is very rewarding," says Rabines, who is currently working on the Gilman Bridge at UCSD.

Safdie-Rabines' first contribution to the multi-college campus was in 1993, when the firm designed the Scripps Crossing, a concrete-slab suspension pedestrian bridge with cable stays that resembles a sailing ship. Other recent projects include the Structural and Materials Engineering Building, as well as the Orchid-winning Scripps Seaside Forum, a wood-clad, beachfront addition to the Scripps Institute of Oceanography.

"UCSD really grew out of Scripps," says Dirk Sutro, a longtime architecture critic who published a walking-tour guidebook to the campus. Irving Gill designed Scripps' first laboratory in 1910. Now known as the Old Scripps Building, it was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1982.

World-famous Scripps oceanographer Roger Revelle fought for the establishment of La Jolla's bluff-top UC outpost in the late 1950s. "The early architects who did buildings on campus shared Revelle's spirit of

innovation and experimentalism," says Sutro.

UCSD first took shape in the heyday of California modernism. Some of San Diego's most cutting-edge architects played a role, including the Frank Lloyd Wright-trained Robert Mosher, whose Muir buildings meld organic wood and windows with International Style concrete.

In the late '60s, William Pereira was tapped to design the Geisel Library, situated at the heart of campus instead of on the outskirts, as the inaugural UCSD architect Robert Alexander had proposed.

A futurist and one of the nation's first starchitects—he also designed San Francisco's iconic TransAmerica Pyramid and appeared on the cover of *Time*—Pereira knew his building was destined for legendary status. The spaceship-like library has been featured in several science fiction films and is UCSD's logo.

"As a library it doesn't work worth a damn," says Hellmann. "But it's definitely iconic."

During his long tenure at UCSD, Hellmann hired many emerging architects, not just established ones. Kevin deFreitas, who helms a small San

CONTINUED...



UCSD will never be known for its cohesive, era-defined architecture—unlike the East Coast—and that’s a huge part of its appeal.

### Smarty Plants

It’s not just the buildings that are big on campus.

Good design starts at ground level at UCSD, where the outdoor spaces are just as inventive as the campus’ famous buildings. Local firm Spurlock Poirier recently took top honors from the San Diego chapter of the Society of Landscape Architects for its landscaping at Revelle’s Charles Keeling Apartments. Among the standout features? A gorgeous green roof planted with more than 4,000 succulents and grasses. Spurlock Poirier is currently working on a \$1.5 million redesign of the university’s theater district. Also dotting the campus is the world-class Stuart Collection of public art, which includes Robert Irwin’s V-shaped fence sculptures in a dense eucalyptus grove and Tim Hawkinson’s playful granite-boulder “Bear,” which architect Boone Hellmann cited as a favorite spot on campus.

...CONTINUED Diego firm, recently took on Revelle’s Galbraith Hall, a full-gut remodel that included the addition of a 400-seat lecture hall.

“I believe an architect’s best work is the first time they engage in a particular project type,” Hellmann explains. “They’re not averse to an adventurous approach.”

From the outside, the steel column-retrofitted concrete building “looks like an armadillo wearing armor,” laughs deFreitas. Inside, it’s airy and inviting. The architect tore out a dropped ceiling to reveal original waffle slabs and built a new mixed-use interior around existing skylights that flood the space with natural light.

“We used a lot of texture and color,” says deFreitas, whose youthful design features hip study rooms, bamboo-like metal sculptures and a haiku poem on the stair risers that lines up if you stand just so. “After the soft opening, a couple of kids on skateboards stopped

to peek in. They said, ‘Dude, this is so cool, we got here three years too late!’ That was a good compliment.”

UCSD’s organic expansion shows no signs of slowing. Several noteworthy projects are currently in the works, including the \$420 million Jacobs Medical Center, a state-of-the-art design that’s heavy on soothing outdoor spaces.

For Hellmann and the countless architecture aficionados that flock to tour the campus, every new structure adds to the unique story that began 50 years ago. UCSD will never be known for its cohesive, era-defined style—unlike the East Coast Ivies, for example, or UC Berkeley—and that’s a huge part of its appeal.

“I like the excitement in the different kinds of architecture,” says Hellmann. “While it’s disparate, I see the buildings as inhabitants of the landscape, and that landscape is the contextual fabric that holds it all together.”

**HONOR SYSTEM** From left: Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Physics (IGPP) at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, by Lloyd Ruocco (1963); Geisel Library by William Pereira & Associates (1970).

