“The Simulation Program will not be successful until we are practicing inter-professional healthcare. We can do that here.”

George Keeler, Administrative Director, UW Health Clinical Simulation Program
“One of our primary objectives was to create a ‘front door’ for the UW Simulation Program as a whole. It was critical to create a facility that welcomed and worked for all disciplines and didn’t feel like it belonged to any one department.”

Laura Serebin, Flad Architects
The ultimate design creates a single home for the simulation training programs that were scattered across different departments and schools. Instead of trauma surgeons or nurse practitioners conducting simulation exercises in isolation, the Simulation Program has doctors, residents, medical students, physician assistants, and other providers working together in training scenarios – just as they would in the emergency room or delivery room. The result, says Administrative Director George Keeler, will be more realistic simulations, enhanced training, better use of resources, and, ultimately, better patient outcomes.

“This Simulation Program will not be successful until we are practicing inter-professional healthcare,” Keeler notes. “We can do that here.”

With only 6,500 square feet and needs for simulation and control rooms, debrief and meeting rooms, offices, and substantial equipment storage, there was a lot to accomplish in a small amount of space. The Simulation Center had to be efficient, flexible, and smart.

To answer the challenge, Flad Architects embraced the versatility of theater staging to create four adaptable simulation rooms, along with a skills lab and multipurpose room, both of which also support simulation exercises. These versatile spaces can be configured into various hospital settings – ICU/PACU bays, operating rooms, patient rooms, and trauma/mass casualty areas – to satisfy the training demands of multiple medical disciplines, nursing, and other health professionals.
"There’s a lot of technology in this small space, but simulation is not all about technology. Simulation is ultimately about environment, and that requires different zones of spaces for practice and for feedback. Flad understood that."

George Keeler, Administrative Director, UW Health Clinical Simulation Program

The equipment is real and functioning, yet the spaces are designed to accommodate virtually unlimited educational scenarios. This design flexibility eliminates redundancy and optimizes space utility and resource allocation, plus it allows for adaptation over time as technology and the UW Simulation Program itself evolve.

“We didn’t want to simply replicate the clinical environment,” Keeler says, “yet we had to capture the right atmosphere for the program to be successful.”

That meant the simulation spaces had to be realistic so that they could elicit authentic responses from the participants. It also required spaces conducive to the second component of simulation training: the after-the-fact opportunity for professors to talk with students about what went wrong, how they reacted, and what they might do differently next time.

Keeler points out that a real-world hospital doesn’t afford the time or space for this kind of candor and communication, but the Simulation Center’s debrief rooms do.

“There’s a lot of technology in this small space, but simulation is not all about technology. Simulation is ultimately about environment, and that requires different zones of spaces for practice and for feedback,” Keeler adds. “Flad understood that.”
Flad Architects

Flad Architects has earned a reputation for outstanding client service, fiscal responsibility, and design excellence over its 85-year history. Specializing in the planning and design of innovative science facilities for academic, healthcare, government, and corporate science and technology clients, Flad is nationally known and honored for its planning and design expertise. In addition to traditional architectural services, Flad provides strategic facility planning and programming, laboratory planning, interior design, landscape architecture, and structural engineering.

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