



**UW Health Clinical  
Simulation Program**

# Simulation Center

insights

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*George Keeler, Administrative Director, UW Health Clinical Simulation Program*

**Flad Architects**

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**UW Simulation Program**

University of Wisconsin doctors, nurses, and other health professionals can now practice their skills and test their knowledge in real-world settings with no risk of harm to patients or practitioners thanks to the UW Health Clinical Simulation Program housed at UW Hospital.

Simulation is the leading edge of medical instruction according to the American Association of Medical Colleges. It offers endless opportunity for everyone from medical students and residents to nurses and paramedics to learn and hone skills, which ultimately translates into better patient outcomes. Medical practice, education, and even some certifications are growing

increasingly reliant on simulation, which requires unique space and technology.

As a joint project of the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics, the University of Wisconsin Medical Foundation, and the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, the UW Simulation Program is unusual in that it bridges institutions, departments, and disciplines

to offer a centralized space for collaborative training, education, and exercises.

“One of our primary objectives was to create a ‘front door’ for the UW Simulation Program as a whole,” says Flad architect Laura Serebin. “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.”



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.



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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



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