

## **Introduction:**

Bellingham Technical College has had four recent major projects; Perry Center a hatchery classroom building currently under construction, the 2012 completion of the Campus Center, the Morse Center built in 2007, the Desmond McArdle Center built in 2004, and the Haskell Center for allied health built in 2003.

The following notes are based on a phone conversation with Julie Blazek of HKP Architects on February 26, 2013 and input from college staff on March 7, 2013. HKP worked on these major projects as well as the campus master plan. The purpose of this case study is to capture best practices for designing flexible space.

### ***What design elements have you used to create space that is flexible to the user?***

- Standard size and equipment in lecture and computer classrooms maximize flexibility for instructional scheduling.
- Standard sized offices can accommodate an individual with a small conference table or two workstations. This provides adaptability when staff changes.
- BTC has installed operable acoustical partitions to increase the usability of the space with the ability to easily convert classrooms into larger venues. When thinking about furniture they have tried to find light weight but durable products that can be easily moved but withstand rough use.
- Several of the buildings were designed with large open bay areas that can be used for a variety of instructional projects and reconfigured with movable furniture or equipment as the program requires. HKP has designed a novel utility column that is inexpensive to build and can accommodate a variety of utilities; like data, power, gas, air, water, and sanitary sewer. The college has used these utility columns, as well as overhead and wall mounted cord reels, so these spaces can easily adapt to program changes.

### ***Did you also think about how the design could be remodeled for less cost in the future?***

- Desmond McArdle Center was originally designed with provisions for future expansion which has now been successfully accomplished.
- The Haskell Center has provisions to add onto either end for growth in accordance with BTC's master plan. When completing the landscape portion of the Campus Center, lawn was installed instead of a more expensive surface for the courtyard in anticipation of the Haskell expansion.
- Campus Center's first floor is designed to allow expansion of the large group instruction area in the future without having to rework the egress path. In general the campus looks at the master plan and how to implement infrastructure improvements with each project to maximize those systems.

Some of the keys to BTC's success has been to have the architect involved in the campus master planning and focus on the inevitable development of programs and curriculum instead of just current staff procedures. It took strong leadership at the College to avoid designing specialized spaces that would be expensive to change.

Utility Column used in six different labs at Bellingham Technical College

