



How to Ensure Successful Occupied Campus Construction Projects

Construction on your campus should not be delayed just because it is occupied. With the right contractor and clear expectations from the beginning, your much-needed construction project can proceed with minimal disruptions.

Below are 5 key points to ensure your active campus construction projects are successful.

1. Safety

Every detail pertaining to the well-being of your faculty, students, and construction crews should be addressed during the earliest stages of planning. Be sure your contractor understands the nuances of your particular situation and safety concerns. As planning progresses, ensure that the contractor has a written solution that addresses every one of your safety concerns and a written procedure for enforcement. Background checks of subcontractors, workers, and all team members is suggested. High visibility clothing and badging enables quick identification of those involved with the project so if a construction worker is in a prohibited area you will know immediately. Isolating the work areas mitigates intermingling of students and workers and discourages trespassing. Fences and/or visual barriers should be sturdy and high enough to make scaling difficult. You might consider decorating solid barriers to make them more appealing, and a few peepholes enable safe viewing to help create excitement about the project. Plan foot and vehicular traffic routes to keep your staff and visitors within safety zones and use signage that is easy to see. To communicate the safety plan and to obtain safety buy-in, insist on pre-work safety meetings that actively involve major trade contractors. Plan weekly follow-up job site meetings to review safety protocols and observations to reinforce commitment to safety.

2. Early Decision Making

The earliest decisions typically have the greatest impact on cost, quality, and schedule. Take the time to obtain all the necessary information so these can be informed decisions. As the construction timeline progresses, the cost of changes increases



because of their effect on design documents, work-in-place and on the critical path schedule. Communicate to your contractor your expectations for tracking and reporting the budget vs actual costs. This tool will empower you to make early decisions so you end up with the best product at the best value within your desired timeframe.

3. Phasing/Scheduling

Phasing of work should be discussed as early as design development with discussions continued into preconstruction services. Your contractor can enhance the good advice already received from your designers. Key milestones and dates should be developed early and should be based on consideration of planned campus activities (daily routines, planned events, testing days, known busy periods, known slack periods, etc.). Plan more invasive construction activities and material deliveries to occur during periods when your campus is less active. Inform the contractor if your campus activities sometimes include unplanned events and ask for preliminary contingency ideas. Be sure the contractor has a method for tracking the critical path schedule that works for you and clearly communicate your expectations for ensuring the project remains on track.

4. Site Constraints

It is important to take into consideration what is underground as well as above ground. There may be electrical lines, fiber optic lines, water mains, or any number of other unforeseens in the soils where you wish to build. Learning this in advance of construction start will minimize disruptions, cost, and negative impact to the schedule. Work with your contractor to develop a plan for the site office, storage of materials, parking for workers, and how large equipment can access the construction area. The contractor should visit the campus to inspect existing conditions and should work closely with the facilities staff during development of the project management plan. Advance planning supports your schedule and can overcome even the most difficult site constraint.

5. Partnership

Financial strength, experience, cost, and transparency are all components to look for when choosing your contractor. You want to work with a company whose personnel have the expertise to plan safety and quality into every aspect of the job. An equally



important attribute is the willingness to collaborate with both the client and the designers to develop and execute a well thought out plan that minimizes the disruption of your campus activities. Your contractor should be a partner fully committed to your success.

The day-to-day functionality of your organization should not have to cease because of construction improvements. Stellar's team of experts will work closely with you to balance form and function with priorities and objectives. They have already earned the trust of many clients just like you.

For more information on this topic or assistance of any kind, please contact Kirk Wendland at kwendland@stellar.net or (904) 899-9267.