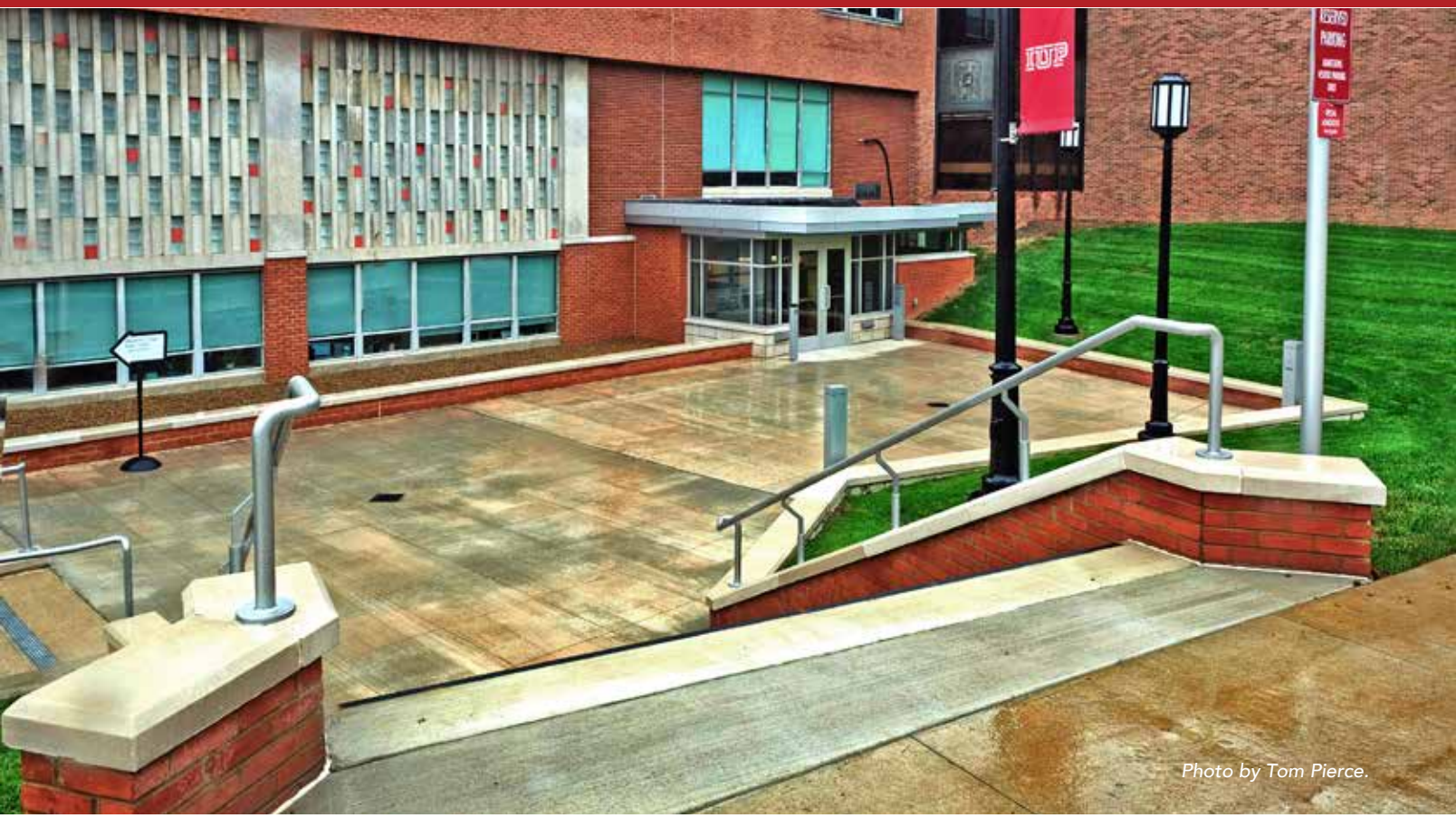


Photo by Tom Pierce.

# PROJECT PROFILE

## UNIVERSITY COLLEGE AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

As more students have gone on to undergraduate studies from high school over the past few decades, there have been more students attending universities who may not have been prepared for the experience. Universities have responded to this need by segments of the student body by developing programs that support the transition from high school to higher education. One of those programs at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) is called the University College.

University College was designed to help students who need support in adjusting to the demands of college courses. University College also supports a bigger slice of the student pie, the student ready for college work but unsure about their major. The latter type of support involves what IUP calls Investigatory Studies, which allows undecided students to take classes towards graduation while evaluating a path to study. Hundreds of students are engaged with University College for two semesters on their way to settling on a major. University College has a staff of four, in addition to the faculty. What University College didn't have was an updated home.

In spring 2018, IUP advertised for bids for renovation of a portion of one of its libraries to become the new location for University College. MacLachlan Cornelius & Filoni Architects (MCF) designed the project, which would be in the basement of Stabley Library. In summer of 2018, IUP awarded separate prime contracts to Darr Construction for HVAC and plumbing, Westmoreland Electric, and to Fred L. Burns Inc. as the general contractor.

The Stabley Library was constructed in the 1950s. An addition, the Stapleton Library, in the late 1980s was roughly double the size of the Stabley Library footprint. As libraries have evolved with the increasing use of digital technology, the physical plant for book collection storage and research, among other uses, has become unnecessary. In the case of the Stabley Library, the university was using the basement of the building for storage of collections that had not been viewed in years. Consolidation of space permitted the basement to be adapted for re-use as the University College.

Tom Pierce, project architect for MCF, explains that the evolution of libraries, because of technology, created an opportunity for the new program.

"This was the creation of a whole new college that was designed to help acclimate students to a college curriculum," Pierce says. "There are huge transitions in libraries today because of electronic data. The University College was part of the

transition of the Stabley Library. The library was built sometime in the 1950s and a large addition was put on in the late 1980s. The basement had been used for storage and there were book collections stored in high density storage units that hadn't been viewed in years."

To create the new space for University College, the basement would be converted to office use. That was the simple part of the scope of work. It was decided that access to the new space would not be through the library. New exterior entrances would be added, which necessitated a significant change to the adjacent exterior area.

"We excavated a new courtyard and put a new entrance façade on the building. It was a challenge to gracefully develop this lower entrance. Ben Wetmore was the project manager for our firm, and he designed a beautiful plaza," Pierce says. "The plaza was a grassy knoll adjacent to the building. About half of the basement area was infilled with about 10 offices, a conference room, and a lobby. The lunch area was updated, and we created two new accessible lavatories."

In September 2018, IUP released the successful bidders on the project to begin construction.

Joe Burns, owner of Fred L. Burns Inc., jokes that he is certain he was awarded the project because of what he overlooked. He says that most of the challenges of the University College related to the fact that there was a full scope of work required in a very small space.

"There was limited space for the excavation and concrete pour. We had to back our way out of the site. The schedule was very tight. It's one of the more difficult jobs we've done," Burns says.

"There was no access to the job site through the library. The only access was through the exterior. We eliminated a row of ribbon windows at each of the two locations where entrances were built and renovated the space behind it into office space. We converted it from library stacks. It was a complete gut and rebuild from ceilings to the floor."

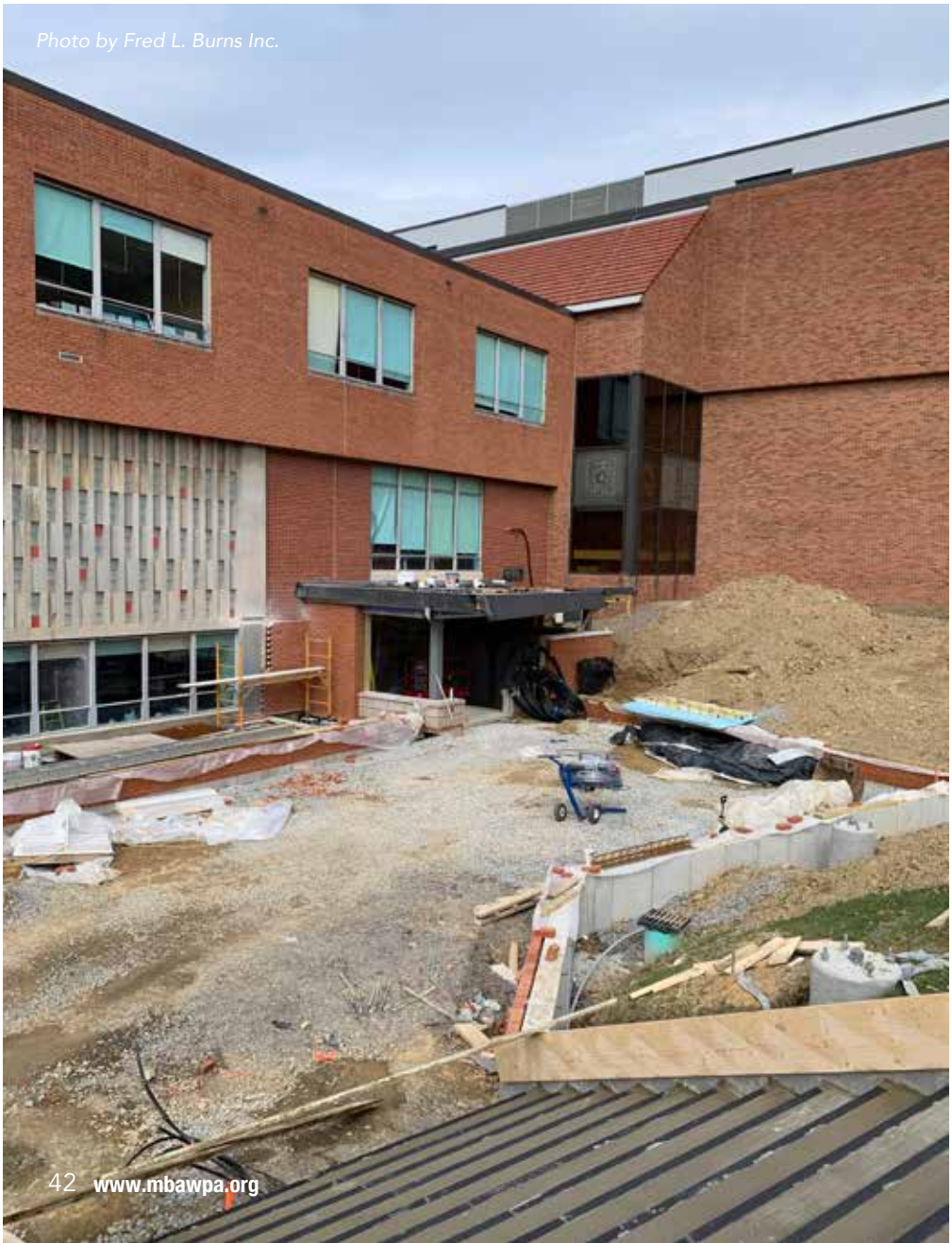

*Photo by Fred L. Burns Inc.*

Burns notes that the construction of the two new entrances were complicated by the fact that each had a small footprint but needed to be fully accessible. Something as mundane as the office ceilings presented an outsized challenge, Pierce recalls, as interpretations of codes dictated that there be fire-rated ceilings where the need hadn't been anticipated.

"The greatest challenge was those exterior vestibules. For a small space, the vestibule was very busy," says Burns. "When I say busy, the vestibules are not big, but they are complicated. We did not have column reference locations to match up to the existing building. The mullions had to align vertically with the exterior wall panels. There are two-tiered soffit panels. There is a vertical panel, a soffit A and soffit B that are wrapped to the vertical planes. It was a pain in the neck."

Within the new entrance vestibules, the confined space available forced the design of the stairways to be more complex than the architect or contractor would have preferred.

"We had radius concrete pours on the steps. The railings were also radiused," Burns says. "The glass is segmented and just to put the wood railing on that short radius rail was difficult. There are


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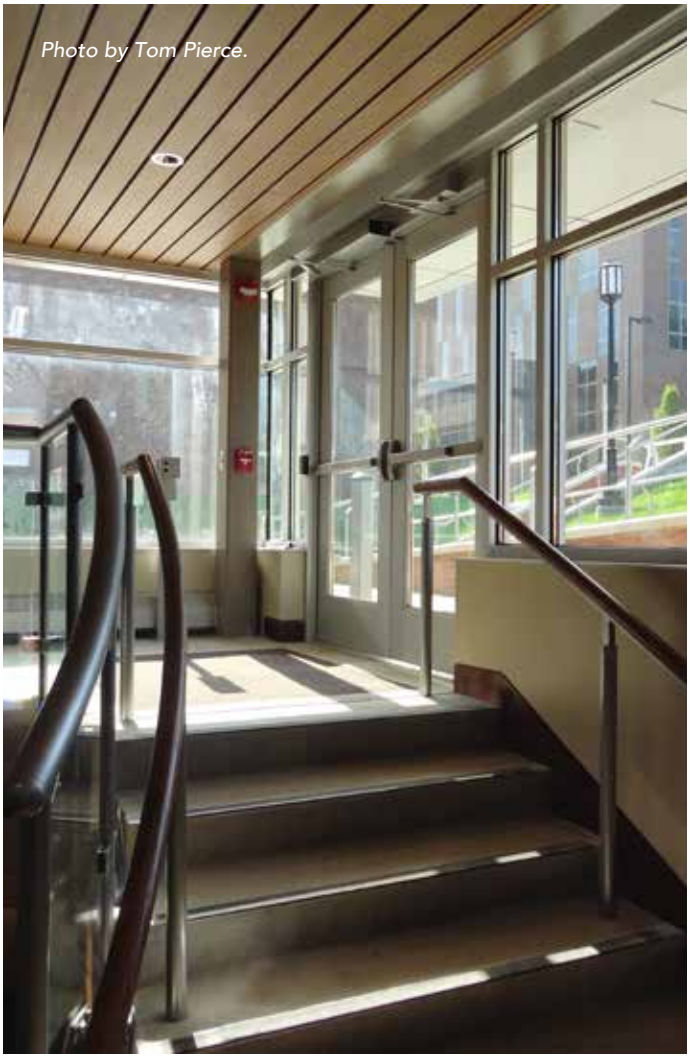
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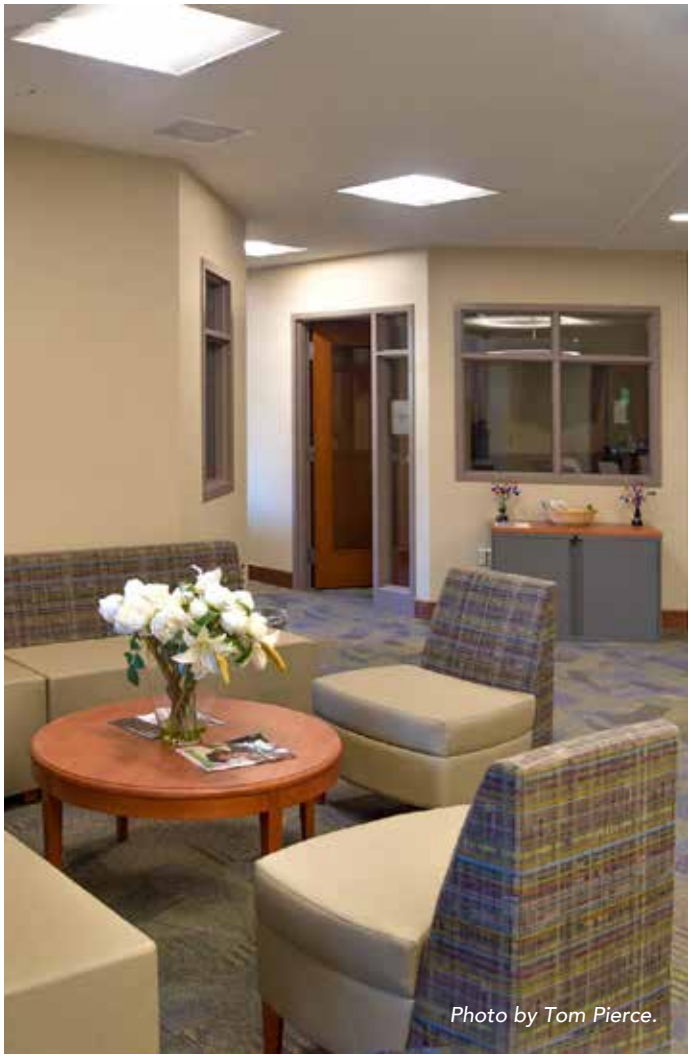
Photo by Tom Pierce.

compression fittings that held the glass in place, and it had to be at a precise angle to work. It looks nice and functions well day-to-day, but it's difficult to put together."

The buildout for the University College was more straightforward once the team was able to move fully to the interior. In addition to the work of the specialty contractors on the interior, some of the finishes were provided by an Indiana University faculty member.

"We were delighted it turned out as well as it did. Joe's workmanship was exceptional. It was just a delight to work with him," says Pierce. "The client was terrific. The university is very enthusiastic about the end product."

Burns says that the University College project was notable for the way it compressed activity and schedule into a tight space. He says that the conditions created more change orders than normal, but that Indiana University got a pretty good bang for its buck on the $2.5 million project.

"I give kudos to Tom Pierce. He really helped us with these little headaches. I think it was a rough project for him with all the changes that popped up. He worked his tail off," Burns recalls. "Jason Mackovyak [former vice president of engineering at IUP who managed the project] was a great project manager for IUP. A difficult job can become easy when you have great team members. The owner, MCF, and our subcontractors made the project work.

"I enjoyed the project. This was one of those jobs that you just can't wait to get away from while you're doing it but, when I reflect back, I savor those projects." BG

## PROJECT TEAM

| | |
|---|---|
| Fred L. Burns, Inc | General Contractor |
| Indiana University of Pennsylvania | Owner |
| MacLachlan Cornelius & Filoni | Architect |
| Division Seven | Exterior Panels |
| A. J. Vater & Sons | Painting |
| Butler Floor & Carpet | Flooring |
| Quattrone Masonry | Masonry |