

PALM BEACH STATE COLLEGE DENNIS P. GALLON CAMPUS

TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES, FLORIDA

Palm Beach State College, a public state college and member institution of the Florida College System, desired to add a fifth campus within Palm Beach County to serve its central-western region. This area was specifically targeted geographically as it is the fastest growing area of the County but unserved by institutions of higher education. Following an extensive search for buildable property of suitable size for a campus and with access on a primary roadway, Palm Beach State College contracted for a 75-acre parcel along Southern Boulevard, one of the State's intrastate highways connecting the coast to the Glades. The Dennis P. Gallon Campus, named for the school's retired fourth



president who was instrumental in bringing this campus to fruition, is within the boundaries of the Town of Loxahatchee Groves, and in very close proximity to the Villages of Wellington and Royal Palm Beach and the Glades Agricultural Area. There are existing businesses in the area that are expanding and goals to attract new businesses that would benefit from the pool of students at the new campus.

Urban Design Studio (UDS) worked closely with administrators at Palm Beach State College, their District Board of Trustees and design team to obtain entitlement approvals from the Town of Loxahatchee Groves. The Town is one of Palm Beach County's youngest municipalities and had not yet encountered a project of this magnitude. And unlike most development projects, colleges are ultimately governed by the State of Florida Department of Education and are subject to published "State Requirements for Educational Facilities" (SREF) that circumvent many of the local land development codes. UDS partnered with Town Staff and prepared language for the Town's Comprehensive Plan to facilitate permitting the campus within its boundaries compliant with the SREF and still furthering the Town's rural design guidelines. As part of the future land use amendment and master plan approval processes, UDS participated in many community outreach meetings and public hearings and worked with the design team to mitigate concerns through the establishment of site-specific design guidelines addressing elements such as setbacks and buffering.

Achieving the entitlement approvals was a large step toward construction; however, additional funding was also needed. UDS assisted Palm Beach State College with the presentation of the proposed Master Plan for Phase 1 of the campus and prepared supporting documents for submission to the State Legislature and the Governor's Office for funding consideration. The first building at the Dennis P. Gallon Campus was completed in early 2017. Fronting Southern Boulevard, it is a three-story, 50,000-square-foot multipurpose facility with classrooms, computer labs and a 250-seat lecture hall. In keeping with the College's commitment to sustainable construction, the campus adheres to the International Green Construction Code, developed to make buildings more efficient, reduce waste, and have a positive impact on health, safety and community welfare.