

A Signature Solution

for a new Chicago landmark.

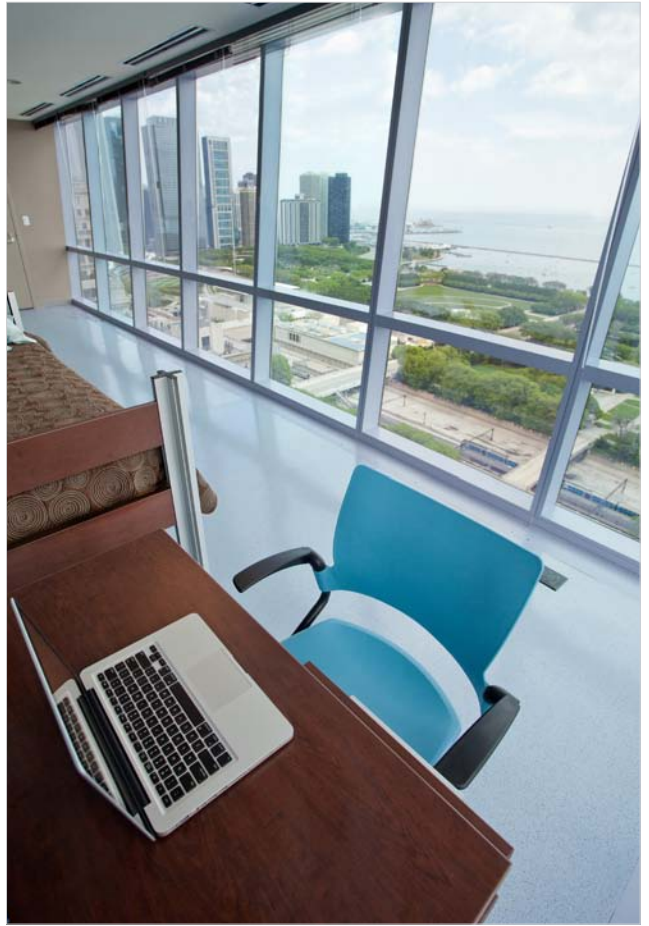


Case Study



Roosevelt University's Wabash Building is a design innovation — a unique vertical campus that called for **a new perspective in furniture.**

Roosevelt University set out to bring something entirely new to its students and the downtown Chicago skyline. **The result:** the Wabash Building, a 32-story vertical campus that connects university living and learning by stacking everything from lecture halls to student rooms within a single structure.





We have the building architecture,
the interior architecture, the furniture.
Everything works together.

Patricia Rotondo, Lead Designer & Associate Principal VOA

Designed by VOA Architects, the Wabash Building is the second tallest collegiate building in the country and the sixth tallest in the world. The lower 15 floors are a mix of classrooms, labs, offices, and student services and activities. Above are 17 floors designed to house more than 600 students in apartments with spectacular views of the city and Lake Michigan.

For the student apartments, the furniture had to meet the overall design criteria of quality and aesthetics, and stay true to Roosevelt's goal of sustainability, which meant furniture that was not only crafted of sustainable materials but also manufactured within 500 miles of the University.

"We wanted the furniture to blend in with our unique building and not stand out or look too trendy," says Patricia Rotondo of VOA Architects, who served as lead designer on the project. "Because we were dealing with a lot of different entities, we had to go through a very careful selection process to be able to decide what furniture to go with."

Roosevelt and VOA Architects built out spaces that mimicked each area of the building and invited more than 15 manufacturers to show mockups. Al Keener, the RT London Sales Representative for the project, chose Essix for the RT London mockup for two reasons: **its exceptional durability and aesthetic.**

Sleek and structural, Essix combines wood and exposed metal, a signature look that echoes the building's unique design and the university's forward-thinking culture.

After a blind review process that included many different people within Roosevelt, all the way from student affairs to the University president, Essix was selected as the solution for the student apartments.



Steve Eldersveld of RT London and Patricia Rotondo of VOA Architects

"The building has a specific aesthetic that fits in the city of Chicago," says Rotondo. "We used a lot of glass and metal combinations, so for the furniture to also have that metal component was important, besides the fact that it is built in a sustainable manner."

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Like all RT London products, Essix incorporates recycled and renewable materials and Sustainable Forestry Initiative-Certified wood products, along with processes and finishes that reduce and eliminate harmful emissions. These practices help Roosevelt earn LEED points, and achieve its goal of being the first U.S. academic building that is LEED-certified, an internationally recognized green building certification system.

Just as importantly, Essix is highly functional, engineered to handle years of everyday use and to easily adapt to individual needs. The Essix desk, for example, can switch from left- to right-handed applications. The bed is height-adjustable and can be bunked or lofted without tools.



In the process of finalizing design details, RT London was asked to propose a wardrobe solution that could replace built-in closets. Working closely with the design team, RT London designers and engineers modified existing components to create a custom wardrobe that met the budget and, over the long term, would provide more flexibility than built-ins.

While the furniture was originally slated for installation in late summer 2011, delays and strikes in Chicago pushed the date out several months. But because RT London design, engineering, and manufacturing is done entirely within the U.S., schedules could be adjusted and changes accommodated.



When the building was completed in the spring of 2012, RT London delivered the 634-bed project to downtown Chicago in 19 trailers in 8 days.

"I can't say enough good things about my experience with RT London, It has been a great representation of your firm and your furniture," Rotondo says. "I'm glad Al Keener took the phone call that day and was willing to drive a truck into the city of Chicago loaded with furniture and a mattress."

“Overall it's very gratifying to see a process that started three or four years ago and see where we are today. And see everybody very happy with the end result.”



Roosevelt University

Chicago, Illinois

A coeducational, private university with campuses in Chicago, Illinois and Schaumburg, Illinois founded in 1945. The university is named in honor of both former President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. The university's curriculum is based on principles of social justice and currently the university enrolls around 7,000 students between its undergraduate and graduate programs.

<http://www.roosevelt.edu/>

Patricia Rotondo, VOA Architects

Lead Designer & Associate Principal

With more than seventeen years experience as a designer, Patricia is the Senior Director of our Hospitality interiors projects for VOA Associates. She is responsible for developing design concepts and space analyses for significant projects and clients throughout the world in multiple markets including Education, Entertainment + Cultural and Hospitality. Patricia's work has won multiple awards and is often featured in leading hospitality publications such as Hotel Design, Hospitality Design and Boutique Design.

<http://www.voa.com/>

Steve Eldersveld, RT London

Vice President of Sales

Steve has 15 years of professional experience with Steelcase in Research and Development, Advanced Concepts, Advanced Marketing, Product Marketing, and Product Development. The experience was outstanding, with exposure to a wide range of corporate clients and product development opportunities. In 2000, Steve came to RT London, focusing on Sales, Marketing, and Product Development.

B. Alan Keener, RT London

Sales Representative

Al has worked in the college and university housing market for RT London since 1995. Al seeks to serve his clients with enthusiasm and integrity. "My goal is to find the best solution for the client, to see them succeed on their terms, and to help meet the various requirements of the college housing environment." Prior to entering sales Al served as a teacher and pastor for almost 15 years. Residing in Grand Rapids, MI, Al is married and has four daughters.



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