DLRGROUP

EVOLUTION OF CAMPUS[SM] 4.0
RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Student Engagement and Wellbeing on Campus



Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 4

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & WELLBEING 6

WHAT IS WELLBEING? 8

PHYSICAL WELLBEING 10

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING 14

SPIRITUAL WELLBEING 18

INTELLECTUAL WELLBEING 22

VOCATIONAL WELLBEING 26

FINANCIAL WELLBEING 30

SOCIAL WELLBEING 34

ENVIRONMENTAL WELLBEING 38

NEXT STEPS: PATHWAYS TO WELLBEING ON YOUR CAMPUS 42

ABOUT DLR GROUP 46

Introduction

Evolution
of Campus

This is a significant time in the history of higher education. In the current climate, it is imperative to communicate and cultivate innovative ideas that chart a new course for the future.

What began as a listening exercise to understand our clients' points of view during the COVID-19 pandemic has blossomed into an in-depth annual research study. Evolution of Campus™ (EOC) represents over 6.5 million students across 240 institutions, including four-year public and private institutions, community colleges, and academic medical centers. From direct interviews with college and university leaders we gain a holistic understanding of what institutions are facing and how to effectively plan for the future.

PHASE 01
Pandemic Impact
(Completed Spring 2020)

Research completed during the early months of the pandemic shone a spotlight on vulnerabilities putting institutions in a position to embrace systemic change.

PHASE 02
Looking into the Future
(Completed Fall 2020)

Research on best practices for reopening campuses as institutions nationwide gradually resume in-person activities and implement systematic online learning.

PHASE 03
Diving into the Details
(Completed Summer 2022)

Research on supporting science, technology and research on campus, the future of sustainability and resiliency planning, and evolving space types and utilization.

PHASE 04
Student Wellbeing and Engagement
(Completed Fall 2023)

Research on how campuses are utilizing the built environment to respond to a holistic, multi-dimensional approach to campus wellbeing. Findings reveal how campus is changing to meet the needs of today's students.

PHASE 05
AI Impacts
(Estimated Completion 2024)

Research focused on how campuses are leveraging artificial intelligence.



400+
One-on-one Interviews

240
Institutions

6.5m
Students Represented

Student Engagement & Wellbeing

Evolution of Campus℠ 4.0
Research Study

DLR Group is passionate about how space can cultivate resilient students, create verdant campuses and enable vibrant communities.

According to the American Council on Education, 70% of university presidents say their most pressing issue is student wellness, and according to NASPA, 72% of student affairs professionals said the mental health of students and employees worsened during the past year.

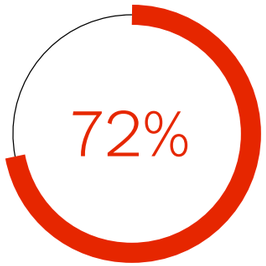
To address this growing concern, DLR Group conducted focused research on student engagement and wellbeing to help institutions reexamine and reimagine the link between planning and design with the campus' culture of wellbeing.

We were curious to explore how the higher education model might be changing in response to these challenges, especially in regards to capital and operational finances. We wanted to explore new strategies and programs that intend to engage students across all aspects of wellbeing, and as planners and designers, influence how we plan, program, and design spaces in the future.

The research reveals strategies that can be implemented to improve wellbeing, without boundaries and across all scales. DLR Group's findings includes design strategies that targets all eight dimensions of the **Wellness Wheel**: emotional, social, financial, vocational, spiritual, intellectual, physical, and environmental health. Together, these dimensions intersect to achieve holistic wellbeing.

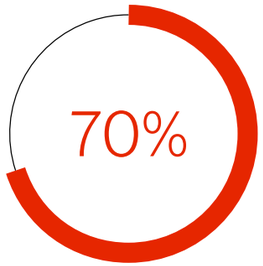
> "What we've uncovered through the research in Evolution of Campus 4.0 is that many, if not most, higher education institutions are struggling in some way to address at least one dimension of student wellbeing. Despite this, many institutions are taking action to combat what's missing and provide students with the care they deserve."

- Stu Rothenberger, AIA, LEED AP
Senior Principal, Higher Education Global Sector Leader



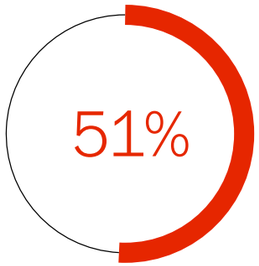
of student affairs professionals said the mental health of students and employees worsened during the past year.

Source: NASPA, 2022



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Source: American Council on Education, 2023

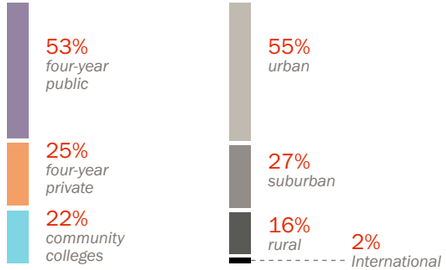


of students identify as "lonely" on campus.

Source: National College Health Assessment, 2023

In 2023, our research study focused on gathering higher education perspectives on student engagement and wellbeing. The EOC 4.0 dashboard summarizes key information and findings.

Interviews were conducted with 51 leaders from facilities, student affairs, and related areas at 40 institutions across the United States.



Click Here to Request Access to the Evolution of Campus Dashboard

What is Wellbeing?

Understanding the Wellness Wheel

At DLR Group, we utilize the Wellness Wheel as a research-backed framework to define and measure a holistic approach to wellbeing. Because wellbeing is more than just mental or physical health, a holistic approach is needed. Wellbeing is the intersection of interrelated areas of human experience and development. The Wellness Wheel also embraces the larger challenges of equity, sustainability, and belonging and how these challenges impact a student's engagement and holistic success on campus. No element of wellbeing stands alone; wellbeing is achieved when all components receive attention, integration, and are supported by the conscious design of the campus experience to encourage wellbeing.

Physical: proper nutrition, personal responsibility, and medical access contribute to physical well-being, while also fostering psychological benefits. Schools promote physical activity, healthy eating, and good sleep habits.

Emotional: involves positivity, self-management, realistic self-assessment, autonomy, and stress management. Students freely express and manage feelings to make personal choices.

Spiritual: acknowledges students' connection to meaning, purpose, and life's depth. It's achieved when actions align with personal beliefs, fostering a worldview. Students reflect on life's meaning and respect others' beliefs.

Intellectual: engaging in creative mental activities, both in and out of the classroom, to discover and share one's potential. It involves nurturing personal interests and curiosity to challenge the mind.

Vocational: acknowledges personal fulfillment and enrichment in students' lives through their contributions. Academic engagement thrives when students can develop their unique gifts toward meaningful goals.

Financial: involves meeting basic needs, managing short- and long-term finances, including budgeting, loan repayment, debt management, and building credit. It's about prioritizing financial health without equating it solely with self-worth.

Environmental: involves engaging with safe, accessible, and sustainable spaces, feeling comfortable and at ease within them, while also respecting and enjoying natural settings without polluting them.

Social: encourages contributing to one's environment and community. Students feel important and they have an impact on society, and take an active part in improving the world. Social wellness includes the feeling empowered to enhance personal relationships and friendships.



Source: "Wellness Wheel." University of Nevada, Las Vegas. https://www.unlv.edu/studentwellness/about. Feb 2023

Physical Wellbeing

Encouraging and Supporting Physical Health



Swarthmore College
Dining and Community Commons

Higher Education has traditionally thought about the physical needs of students beyond the classroom. Today this includes spaces that encourage healthy behaviors such as recreation centers, campus design that encourages recreation, easy access to nutritious food choices, and student healthcare centers across campus. Just as important to active health spaces, the development of access to restful spaces cultivate healthy relaxation and sleep habits, safe sexual practices, and alcohol/drug awareness have emerged in the research. We also heard an increased focus on access to resources to will develop a lifelong understanding of what their individual body needs for health, healing, and energy.

Key Topics

Food
Fitness
Health

Ideas to Explore

- Food pantries for access to healthy food, regardless of income level.
- Social spaces, including game equipment for spontaneous physical activity.
- Walkability to desirable amenities, offering an incentive for movement.
- Nutritional dining, such as juice bars, health snack hubs, and fresh food markets that also offer culturally diverse options.
- Fresh perishable and non-perishable options in a drive-thru style on campus.
- Spaces for respite, such as rooftop gardens, fireplace and lounge, or yoga and meditation rooms.
- Adequate bedroom and living spaces that allow for downtime and rest.
- Access across campus to nurses, preventative care, and sexual health resources.
- Removing mirrors and scales from selected recreation areas to prevent negative student body image and/or disordered eating.

University Towers

Austin, TX

Recognizing the need for physical activity, healthy eating, and adequate rest, DLR Group partnered with Cardinal Group to re-design University Towers, a housing community shared by University of Texas at Austin and Austin Community College students. The renovation features a welcoming lobby with pool and ping pong tables, a cyber cafe and lounge, expanded fitness center with natural daylight, restful living spaces, and a roof deck with a view, cabanas, and a fireplace.





Emotional Wellbeing

Helping Students Manage
Life on Campus



Catawba College
Center for the Environment Building

Support for emotional wellbeing includes programs and spaces that help students to manage life on campus. Today, there is a need to increase mental health resources for students. These resources help students manage stress, develop strategies for relaxation, and develop a positive self-image. Just as important, campuses are seeking design solutions to reduce the stigma around seeking mental health and emotional guidance, and locating these services to balance privacy, while also encouraging access and transparency. Students with access to resources to maintain their emotional wellbeing are more likely to form healthy relationships and develop appropriate coping strategies.

Key Topics

Mental Health
Stigma

Ideas to Explore

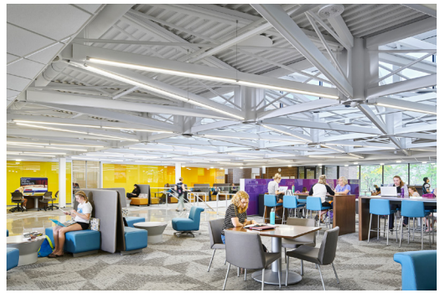
- Access to mental health resources, both in-person and virtual.
- Discrete spaces to access virtual mental health services.
- Design that celebrates mental health care and dismantles the lingering stigma around seeking support.
- Delivering a free, highly interactive program for students that provides educational tools for emotional resilience and increases awareness of wellbeing options across campus.
- Student care reporting programs that track student progress and intervene before small problems become major challenges.
- Access to daylight, views of nature, running water, and non-traditional spaces that promote relaxation.
- Residential care specialists who serve as the first point of contact for struggling students, providing immediate intervention by meeting with students where they live.

University of Iowa Schinder Education Center

Cedar Falls, IA

DLR Group's design of the University of Iowa Schindler Education Center establishes several breakout areas with readily configurable furniture that enables students to quickly congregate and collaborate. Informal learning spaces are 'carved out' of corridors and main thoroughfares to create nodes where students cross paths in a natural way that creates a welcoming community feel.





Spiritual Wellbeing

Enriching Spiritual Life



University of Nevada - Reno
University Arts Building

Regardless of an individual's belief system, spirituality is an inherent quality of an enriched life full of purpose and meaning. The campus focus on spiritual wellbeing is often related to a school's affiliations and priorities, but universally, students who experience spaces and gain access to resources to maintain spiritual wellbeing develop an understanding of their purpose and a passion for their values. This can be achieved through various formal and informal spiritual practices, including chapels, prayer rooms, and spaces for quiet reflection.

Key Topics

Practice
Meaning

Ideas to Explore

- Spaces for prayer, meditation, and relaxation – both private and community spaces.
- Uniquely sourced design elements that reflect the tradition of the campus.
- Mental health counselors who work alongside religious staff to provide students with a comprehensive approach to seeking help.
- Individual student services staff who encourage students in their spiritual journeys.
- Support views and access to nature.

Diné College Library

Shiprock, NM

At Diné College, a Navajo Nation based campus, DLR Group reflected the vital connection between the Diné and the natural world in their new library design. The building centers around a space that echoes a sacred hogan — traditionally used for ritualized smoking and prayers. This room encourages students, staff, and faculty to gather, experience, and honor the spiritual relationships between humans, earth, and sky within Navajo beliefs.



Click Here to Explore More of the Project

Intellectual Wellbeing

Fostering Opportunities for Experiential Learning



University of Nevada - Reno
University Arts Building

Intellectual wellbeing includes programs and spaces that emphasize the opportunity for experiential learning. This includes places where students have the freedom to create, discover, and grow through stimulating activities, self-guided inquiry, critical thinking, and curiosity. Students who receive resources to support their intellectual wellbeing develop time management skills, a better understanding of their learning styles and academic needs and find personally effective methods for goal setting and academic motivation.

Key Topics

Academic Preparedness

Ideas to Explore

- Innovative ways to create spaces and programs outside the classroom that help students excel in the classroom.
- Spaces that mimic traditional workplace settings and spaces where students can interact with employers on campus.
- Transparency that showcases discovery and fosters collaboration.
- Spaces that foster a comfortable crossroads across departments.
- Mixed-use public spaces, such as galleries or banquet rooms for community use.
- Hybrid learning spaces and supportive technology for hybrid learners between classes.
- Maker spaces for students to create and practice skills, such as robotics or embroidery, that help stimulate the brain and amplify critical thinking skills.
- “Non-programmed” spaces where students engage with each other and the campus community both physically and creatively.

Arapahoe Community College Sturm Collaboration Campus

Castle Rock, CO

DLR Group's design of the Arapahoe Community College Sturm Collaboration Campus focuses on hands-on learning, real-life scenarios and internship/apprenticeship collaboration spaces. This new Campus brings together educational, business and community elements to enable innovative delivery of higher education, career/technical training and workforce training. The design embodies and facilitates collaboration between all users while providing a highly engaging and progressive learning environment for students.



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Vocational Wellbeing

Preparing Students for Professional Careers



Ohio State University
Jameson Crane Surgical Skills Lab

Vocational wellbeing includes programs, support, and the creation of opportunities for students to prepare for the next steps in their career path. This includes practical skills — training, certification, and networking — as well as aptitudes for interpersonal communication, time management, and office etiquette. Students who receive resources for vocational wellbeing connect with peers and potential employers that align with their career aspirations or get support for balancing academics and work while enrolled.

Participants described approaching vocational wellbeing in two ways. First, campus leaders are aware that many students are now employed in addition to their academic courseload and extracurricular activities. Second, institutions are exploring how they can provide curriculum, programming, and facilities that connect academics more directly to students' career options.

Ideas to Explore

- Dedicated career simulation spaces such as nursing labs with responsive mannequins and spaces designed and equipped for automotive mechanic training.
- Professional clothing closet to provide students with free clothing that helps further students' career endeavors and increases financial access to business attire.
- Collaboration, and potentially co-location, with employers to increase access to internships and promote awareness of job requirements/ compensation.

Key Topics

Balance
Purchase

Daytona State College Nursing Simulation Building

Daytona, FL

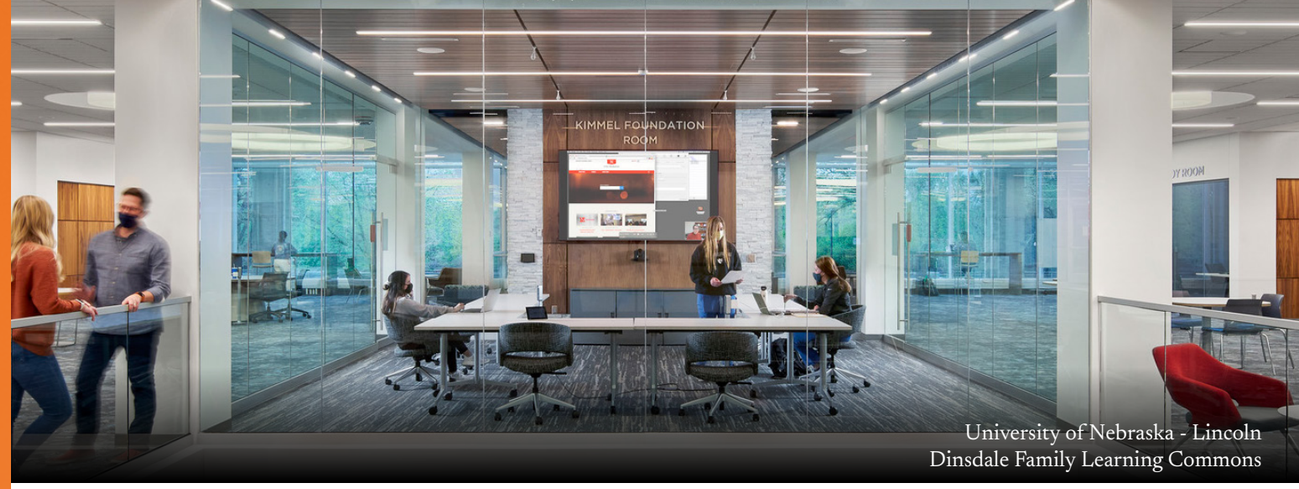
DLR Group's design transforms the building into a state-of-the-art nursing simulation facility for aspiring LPNs seeking RN status. The transformed facility includes the authentic learning environments that are critical in developing the skills necessary for students to confidently step into their careers.





Financial Wellbeing

Prioritizing Financial Secruity for Students



University of Nebraska - Lincoln
Dinsdale Family Learning Commons

Significantly, institutions are thinking critically about providing financial security to their students through access to food, housing, transportation, and — in some cases — childcare.

Financial wellbeing resources help students learn about and plan for financial success, including meeting basic needs and managing money. As the idea of the "typical" student changes, financial skills and insecurity are some of the major drivers of stress. Students who receive resources for financial wellbeing can afford their basic needs while enrolled to be able to focus on their studies, while developing financial literacy and management skills for life beyond school.

Key Topics

Security
Aid

Ideas to Explore

- Continue to ask, "What are all of the needs students have outside the classroom that, if unmet, hinder their performance in class and overall retention?"
- Financial literacy programs to teach students about finances, budgeting, student loans, and financial decisions.
- Lifestyle spending accounts to grant students funds to put toward wellness activities and increase their utilization of campus wellness resources.
- Student employment scholarship fund that pays students for their summer employment off campus to help subsidize their tuition.

Evergreen Valley College Student Services Complex Building

San Jose, CA

Evergreen Valley College's new Student Services Complex Building consists of two connected structures via a bridge. Program elements include: a queue-less service model, expanded health services, expanded financial services, expanded counseling, expanded veterans services, informal student engagement zones, multi-purpose/flexible classrooms, and an event space with rooftop patio.



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Social Wellbeing

Fostering a Sense of Belonging on Campus



University of Southern California - Los Angeles
Memorial Coliseum Renovation

Social wellbeing emerged as a major focus of most participating institutions. Campus leaders are exploring ways to create a sense of belonging, healthy relationships, and engagement for a diverse and evolving student body through facilities and programming. Institutions are asking, “In what ways can we provide spaces and activities for students to feel welcomed as human beings and have spaces for relaxation outside of their studies?” Students with access to resources for social wellbeing feel comfortable, safe, and welcomed in campus spaces. These include experiences anchored in commonalities and identities, but also experiences that introduce students to new interests and perspectives — a key component of the ways higher education is intended to expand worldview.

Key Topics

Restoration
Belonging

Ideas to Explore

- Student cohorts to connect with one another and cultivate meaningful friendships.
- E-Sports program for students with a niche interest to foster a sense of belonging and community for those who do not feel represented elsewhere.
- Separate recreational and fitness spaces for students who are not athletes, designed for socializing and meeting new friends.
- Pathways and furnishings organized for social interaction.
- Places for informal engagement between students from different cultural backgrounds, where they can experience each other’s practices, food, and values.
- Spaces that reflect and promote the stories of diverse cultures, values, and ideologies.
- Transparent visioning and programming that builds consensus and shared history.
- Diverse project teams and student advisory committees on projects.

University of Florida Institute of Black Culture and Institute of Hispanic-Latino Cultures

Gainesville, FL

The University of Florida entrusted DLR Group to design their new Institute of Black Culture (IBC) and the Institute of Hispanic-Latino Cultures (IHLC, "La Casita"). DLR Group's design (both the exterior and interior) reflect the unique cultures housed within each building. While La Casita stakeholders wanted a space that represents the rich colors and textures typical of Hispanic-Latino cultures, IBC stakeholders wanted "a symbol of social justice that looks towards the future."



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Environmental Wellbeing

Designing for Environmental Sustainability and Safety



Cal Poly
Vista Grande Dining Facility

Environmental wellbeing surfaced as an integral focus of institutions throughout our EOC study. Campus leadership continues to investigate how the design of physical space contributes to personal safety and environmental sustainability. They also grapple with how overt these features and messages should be on campus, describing the need to balance informing students without increasing stress, triggering trauma, or amplifying the atmosphere of potential danger on campus. Environmental wellbeing also includes spaces that are designed for indoor air quality, redlist free materials, access to natural light, and access to outdoor areas and views of natural or garden spaces.

Key Topics

Access
Safety

Ideas to Explore

- Spaces informed by potential risk factors for self-harm, including safety netting, lockable windows, constrained height of buildings, and limited roof access.
- Services located near student residence or dining halls to increase accessibility and safety.
- Upgraded mechanical systems to improve indoor air quality.
- Renovation of outdated spaces to increase natural light and include redlist-free materials.
- QR codes posted around campus to give students access to a virtual map of wellbeing resources.

Swarthmore College Dining and Community Commons

Swarthmore, PA

The new Swarthmore College Dining and Community Commons serves as a central hub of activity and a cornerstone for social gatherings on campus. To fulfill the College's goal of a net-zero building, DLR Group implemented various sustainable design solutions, including energy reduction and production, zero waste options, biophilic design, and locally sourced food.



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Next Steps: Pathways to Wellbeing on Your Campus

Our Four-Step Process

Each campus has unique challenges and opportunities to meet the wellbeing needs of current and future students. DLR Group has uncovered a four-step process which defines the specific interventions that are best suited for your campus.

1

Analyze Today

Identify the current resources on campus.

- Understand existing measures and surveys of student wellbeing.
- Determine which existing programs serve each dimension of student wellbeing, regardless of what department they are in.
- Catalog spaces on campus that are used (formally or informally) to support wellbeing.
- Identify academic resources (faculty expertise, research initiatives) at your institution are relevant to wellbeing.

2

Ideate with Students

Ask students what resources they want to see on campus.

- Review pre-existing student input data (from surveys and other sources) relevant to wellbeing.
- Convene a focus group of diverse students to better understand their challenges and needs.
- Conduct a survey with open-ended questions about potential resources on campus.

3

Prioritize the Future

Translate needs and gaps into specific goals.

- Identify which institutional strategic priorities support student wellbeing.
- Prepare a list of specific goals related to each dimension of wellbeing.
- Establish metrics to evaluate success over time.

4

Plan for How to Meet Needs

Prepare an implementation strategic with specific campus improvements.

- Generate a list of physical improvements to support wellbeing across a variety of space types.
- Quantify the impact of capital improvements on wellbeing based on a list of criteria.
- Prioritize projects to understand which have the most potential.
- Start with a smaller pilot project to make an immediate impact.

Georgia Tech Student Engagement and Wellbeing Facilities Planning

Atlanta, GA

To enhance student wellbeing, the Georgia Institute of Technology, commonly referred to as Georgia Tech, consolidated all departments that promote wellbeing under the Division of Student Engagement and Wellbeing (SEWB). Together, DLR Group and Georgia Tech hosted a series of workshops to determine how physical space could be reconfigured and improved to better serve the needs of students from various backgrounds and needs.

The goal of this work was to position wellness services and spaces to become an integrated part of the campus experience. The resulting program encourages a holistic approach to serving students through several departments including counseling, student organizations, diversity, ethics, student health, and the arts. To help visualize and distinguish program areas, the design team established five distinct program types. The proposed building program allocations include:

- Belonging, Community, and Intercultural Spaces
- Student Wellness Spaces
- Shared Meeting Spaces
- Collaborative and Social / Study Spaces
- Office Spaces

Click Here to Explore More of the Project







About DLR Group

Firm Overview

DLR Group is an integrated design firm. Our promise is to elevate the human experience through design. This inspires a culture of design and fuels the work we do around the world. We are 100 percent employee-owned: every employee is literally invested in our clients' success. At the core of our firm are interdisciplinary employee-owner teams, engaged with all project life-cycle stakeholders. These teams champion true collaboration, open information sharing, shared risk and reward, value-based decision making, and proficient use of technology to elevate design.

Locations

Austin
Charlotte
Chicago
Cleveland
Colorado Springs
Columbus
Dallas
Denver
Des Moines
Durham
Honolulu
Houston
Kansas City
Las Vegas
Lincoln
Los Angeles
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San Diego
San Francisco
Seattle
Sonoma
Tucson
Washington, D.C.

Dubai
Shanghai

1500+
Employee-Owners

57+
Years of Experience

#2
Education Design Firm

#1
Green Design Firm

400+
Colleges and Universities



DLRGROUP

Contact DLR Group to learn more about our learnings and approach to wellbeing on campus.

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