

Education in the Ecotone

Integrating educational disciplines is usually approached programmatically first, and physically second. The result is synthetic, for as crossovers develop spontaneously, programs do not. Instead of searching within disciplines for connections, institutions should be focusing on the existing spaces between them. Each discipline is its own ecosystem, knowledge from one cannot thrive in the middle of another, but along the borders natural diffusion will occur given the right conditions.

At Bucknell University, the New Academic Quadrangle acts as a physical and metaphorical 'ecotone' between STEM and the humanities. At this intersection of design and educational philosophy, Bucknell has optimized the conditions to facilitate natural integration and academic synergy.

The relationships between interior and exterior public space, classroom and laboratory, were designed for fluid interaction of users. The exterior court and main level functions of each building act as a conduit for multiple streams of interaction. The vision for Bucknell was to create an interdisciplinary, collaborative, biophilic learning environment through the interconnections of educational, research and communal spaces, both inside and out, this goal is achieved.

