In the age of rapidly developing technology nearly all academic spaces should be designed with intentionality, simplicity, durability, flexibility and visibility in mind and as the primary design drivers and objectives. By focusing on these design criteria, spaces are able to not only encourage constant use/activation by putting “learning on display”, they are also able to then work as a ‘Swiss Army Knife’ of sorts and become easily adaptable over time to changing equipment and pedagogical needs as they arise.

By embracing hyper-flexibility in academic buildings, institutions are oftentimes able to reduce “actual programmatic square footage” while focusing on higher quality spaces and greatly increasing the actual use of such spaces as many of these can be used to satisfy multiple programmatic needs. When utilizing these strategies properly, a single academic building can serve a multitude of functions and programs such as classrooms and labs 8 hrs/day, coworking and group study space 8 hrs/day, performance space and making 8 hrs/day, etc. therefore maximizing space utilization and become a true 24-hour building.

Through this “Swiss Army Knife” approach, any such building will have significantly more usefulness to a much broader university population in addition to cutting down on site, landscape and sustainability implications while also allowing for unique opportunities for serendipitous collaborations to occur between people from dissimilar backgrounds and academic programs, therefore strengthening an institution’s overall propensity for innovation and academic advancement.