

# Worcester Polytechnic Institute Unity Hall

Worcester, MA

*The entire campus is ungated and uninterrupted by public roads, adding to its bucolic character. As the campus has expanded, the siting of housing and other ancillary buildings has diluted the strong clarity of its initial planned organization on the hill.*

Worcester Polytechnic Institute is a 95-acre campus perched atop a hill overlooking the city of Worcester. Originally designed by Calvert Vaux, the historic core campus is characterized by a series of ordered quadrangles and pathways, with a traditional New England landscape of evergreens, mature shade trees, rolling groundcover and expanses of green lawn.

This new student activity building is a vital campus aggregator, located adjacent to the campus library. It mediates between the upper academic campus and lower residential precinct, offering opportunities for overlooks and quiet courtyards and gardens as it traverses a 60-foot grade change. The landscape design takes into account stabilization of the steep slopes and stormwater runoff by locating stone walls and planted berms. Wherever possible, stone walls are repurposed.

The building program is stacked with robotics labs on the lower levels, sandwiched by faculty offices on the mid-levels and student activities and meeting spaces on the upper levels. Small-scale walls and paving create a quiet approach to the entrances. At the uppermost level, an open plaza offers sweeping views of the campus, the city of Worcester, and the rolling seven hills which surround it.

**Client**

Gensler

**Size**

3.5 acres

**Team**

Gensler  
Nitsch









