

UCSD Price Center Design Earns Prestigious National Architecture Award

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For the second time in as many months, the University of California, San Diego project to expand its Price Center for students has garnered a prestigious award. The Price Center design won a 2005 American Architecture Award from the Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture and Design, whose judges noted its "design excellence."

UCSD's Price Center also received an Honor Award from the San Diego Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in May.

According to the museum's team of international judges, the winning projects in 2005 "represent the best new contemporary architecture being built from coast to coast, including projects designed by American architects in Great Britain, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Denmark, China and Spain."

Both awards recognize the work of architect Mehrdad Yazdani of Cannon Design, who worked closely with students, faculty and staff on the university's building advisory committee for the Price Center expansion.

"This award, like the previous one, confirms that the university is developing a dynamic and vibrant expansion of the Price Center," said Gary Ratcliff, director of University Centers at UCSD. "By their nature, student-center facilities are lively, interesting places, and this has given Mehrdad the opportunity to fully exercise his creative abilities."

The impetus for expansion of the Price Center came from the Associated Students at UCSD, who established a taskforce, conducted a survey, and got students to approve a \$39 quarterly fee to help fund the expansion, said Ratcliff. "Students have played a lead role in developing the design, and most of those on the building advisory committee are students."

The expansion will add more restaurants and retail services - including a bank, hair stylists and a larger Post Office - as well as a 5,000-square-foot grocery store. Also planned is more space for student organizations, more meeting rooms, more lounge, study and computing space, and a 24-hour space that will include late-night dining.

The Price Center will nearly double in size, said Ratcliff, and the designers focused on lots of windows, lot of ways to get in and out, and a mix of active "see-and-be-seen" spaces and more contemplative spaces - and the building will be "green," more energy efficient.

Groundbreaking for the Price Center expansion is scheduled for January, and construction should be completed by December 2007.

The Chicago Athenaeum has recognized new and outstanding American architecture with its American Architecture Awards since 1987. This year, a jury of Norwegian architects selected 33 designs for the award, including corporate headquarters, institutions, skyscrapers, urban-planning projects and residences.

Yazdani, the project architect for the UCSD design, has been listed as one of Los Angeles' 25 most highly regarded designers by the *Los Angeles Business Journal*. His work has been featured in international publications including *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Progressive Architecture*, *l'ARCA*, *Architecture*, *Architectural Design*, *Casabella*, *The Architectural Review*, *GA Houses*, and *Kenchiku Bunka*.

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