

## Student Center Honored with Prestigious Architecture Award for Counter Culture Design

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The second phase of the UC San Diego Student Center expansion was among the year's most impressive local architectural projects, according to the San Diego chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). The Student Center was honored with a Citation Award by AIA for its warmth and authentic setting.

The jury voted a Citation Award to "Public," a local architecture and planning firm, for maintaining the existing character and feel of the new structures in the 1970's center. The jury was particularly impressed with the newly built Treehouse Computer Lounge, which was conceptualized as a tree canopy - jurist Rod Kruse called it an "absolute delight."

The architects at "Public" and the university's facilities staff worked closely together and with the many student organizations to ensure that the character of the existing center would be enhanced by the new work, according to principal architect James Brown.

The Student Center was the original social hub of the campus until the newer, larger Price Center was built in the 1980's. The modern new Price Center contains the main food court and the fraternity, sorority, student leadership and administrative offices, attracting the majority of students.

However, several organizations still remain in the original Student Center, including the student newspaper, radio and TV stations, food co-op, bookstore and general store. "The Student Center has a very eclectic and active student population," Brown said. "The people make the place, and this is very true here."

The philosophy behind the expansion was to retain the informal feeling of the Student Center while bridging it with the Price Center, Brown said. "The Price Center is more official in a way and the architecture expresses a higher degree of formality and scale," he said. "The Student Center design has counter culture aspirations. It wants to be un-slick."

"Public" also won an AIA Merit Award in 2006 for the first phase of the project. The initial phase, which began in 2004, involved the addition of 13,593-square-feet of space to the existing center and second phase added another 4000-square-feet. The expansion included additional space for student organizations, Groundwork Books, the General Store, the Bike Shop and the Food Co-op. In addition, the Grove Café expanded to offer inside seating.

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