Summary: UCLA needed to upgrade their graduate housing and their design standard. Working with the architects and Rick Pulley design, we tailored an elegant solution that blends durability, sustainability, modern design, and a sense of space.

Case Study: UCLA

**Project Name:** Weyburn Terrace Paseo & Commons Apartments

**Project Location:** Westwood, Los Angeles

**Project Size:** 500 fully furnished studio apartments

**Building Type:** Graduate Student Housing

**Project Team:** UCLA, Studios Architects, Rick Pulley

**Product List:** Bed with Underbed Storage, Desk with floating pedestal, Chair, Nesting Tables, SideTable/bookshelf.

**Dates:** 2012-2013
UCLA Background

UCLA was founded in 1919 as the southern and second campus in the University of California system. Occupying a 419-acre urban campus with 163 buildings, UCLA receives more applications per year than any other school registering 119,000 in 2017.

UCLA is a top-ranked public research university with an endowment of $2.06b and an annual budget of $6.7b which funds six undergraduate colleges, seven professional schools, and four professional health science schools and a thriving profile of NCAA division one athletic teams.

With 31,000 undergrads and 13,000 postgrads, the school offers 337 degree programs. It was ranked by US News & World Report as the #1 public university in the United States in 2017-2018. It was also ranked 15th in the world for academics by the The Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

In terms of distinctions among faculty, students, and alumni, they are legion and include 24 Nobel laureates, 3 Fields Medalists, and 5 Turing Award winners to list a few. The accounting of distinguished graduates and their accomplishments, contributions, and awards is simply too great to list.

Equal to UCLA’s academic prowess is its storied athletic program. According to Wikipedia:

*The Bruins have won 126 national championships, including 114 NCAA team championships, more than any other university except Stanford. UCLA student-athletes, coaches and staff won 251 Olympic medals: 126 gold, 65 silver and 60 bronze. UCLA student-athletes competed in every Olympics since 1920 with one exception (1924), and won a gold medal in every Olympics that the United States participated in since 1932.*

Finally, UCLA cultivates a robust commitment to sustainability. Each year, the school’s student-led Sustainability Action Research—part of their Institute of the Environment & Sustainability (IoES)—pairs students with a campus stakeholder to “research, rethink, investigate, and tackle UCLA’s greatest sustainability issues.”
And the school maintains and measures progress against a comprehensive sustainable policy with respect to all green practices.

*The Sustainable Practices Policy establishes goals in nine areas of sustainable practices: green building, clean energy, transportation, climate protection, sustainable operations, waste reduction and recycling, environmentally preferable purchasing, sustainable food service, sustainable water systems.*

**Process and Approach**

In 2012, DCI was awarded a contract to furnish UCLA’s Weyburn Terrace Paseo & Commons Apartments. By direct mandate from the University Chancellor, the school wanted to upgrade and elevate the design standard for graduate student housing in Weyburn Terrace.

The goal was for these fully furnished residences to feel like adult apartments rather than college dormitories.

To this end, the school hired Studios Architecture firm to help redesign the interior space and furniture.

*These wonderful facilities were specifically designed to meet the numerous demands and rigors of graduate school. Consisting of 500 fully furnished studio apartments, Paseo and Commons residents need not worry about providing furnishings, a common concern among students moving to Los Angeles.*

The Studios firm hired furniture designer Rick Pulley to create concepts for the furniture and then DCI translated his visions into final products.

**Design**

We engaged in a deeply collaborative process with the UCLA team and the result was a unique and distinctive furniture line with solid white oak tops. It’s called the *Paseo Collection*.

The solid oak tops accentuated the apartment’s modern design and the solid hardwood desks featured a floating
pedestal to capture and accentuate the modern motifs.

To save space, we built drawers into the underbed. We also created an overhanging bed deck above the drawers to create the illusion of more space in the room and to make it feel less closed in.

To create strong visual contrast, the bed featured black drawer fronts set against the beautiful oak finish.

**Balancing Space & Durability**

This project featured another interesting hurdle. When you design furniture, how do you create something that has a light footprint which is, at the same time, durable? That was one of the challenges of this project.

The UCLA team wanted the space in the apartment to feel more open. But at the same time they wanted super durable furniture. It’s hard to design a piece of furniture that effectively balances space and durability.

To create space, your furniture usually needs to be lightweight and transparent. In contrast, durability tends to feature heavier materials in both look and substance.

We solved this problem by designing the oversized tops. In this way, the furniture that helped to convey the look they wanted while maintaining a high degree of durability.

The solid hardwood oak tops also added a strong sustainability dimension to the project. Why? Because all our hardwood furniture is FSC certified. This was also an important consideration for UCLA, who placed a premium on sustainable design for [Weyburn Terrace](https://weyburnterrace.ucsf.edu/).

> “Sustainability was an inherent part of the design. Abundant daylight minimizes the use of task lighting, and although cooling is provided, interiors spaces are primarily naturally ventilated due to the benign climate. As with most residential complexes, all units are naturally lit. The site development includes bioswales and a drought-resistant landscape. The team made a strategic decision not to provide additional parking. WRT Solomon ETC was the Associate Architect on the project.”
The Paseo Collection