

# AEROSPACE ENGINEERING AND MECHANICS

## BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE AKERMAN HALL HANGAR RENOVATION

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### Project Overview

A \$2.5 M renovation of the Akerman Hall Hangar, now the Gary J. Balas Atrium, was conducted as part of a \$5.3 M project to upgrade the fire/life/safety systems in Akerman Hall and the old Mechanical Engineering buildings. The project began in the Spring of 2010 and was completed in September 2010. A tall, dramatic entry vestibule and new pedestrian plaza create a grand east entrance to Akerman Hall off of Scholars Walk. The original 16-foot steel hangar doors have been replaced with a striking, glazed curtain wall entry.

Renovation of the hangar area was a top departmental priority for many years. The renovation returned the hangar to its original layout by removing the temporary laboratories, added in 1985, and hallway from the driveway to Akerman Hall. The first and mezzanine (second) floors for the hangar were completely replanned and repurposed to provide flexible, light, industrial research labs, offices, and collaborative spaces for undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral students.



Open House Reception



AEM Alumni Career Panel



DeLeo Dedication Event

### Links for More Information

- [Project Timeline](#)
- [Artistic Renderings of Renovated Hangar](#)
- [Floor Plans](#)
- [Interior Design Specifications](#)
- [Full length article in AEM Update](#)

### Special thanks to Alumni & Friends

The department would like to extend their sincerest gratitude to all alumni and friends who made the renovation of the hangar possible. This transformative project has benefited our talented students and faculty with improved space and a learning environment that reflects the excellence of the AEM program.

The general study spaces are often fully occupied. The student conference room is used heavily by the senior design class as well as other student groups. Additionally, the space has frequently been used by the department as well as other CSE academic departments for events previously held offsite.

Although construction is completed, the fundraising for the project continues. For information on how to give to the project, visit our [giving page](#).

### Akerman Hall Hangar Name Change

On April 24, 2015, the Department of Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics held a dedication ceremony for the Akerman Hangar, renaming it the Gary J. Balas Atrium. Professor Balas passed away in November, 2014, and as a tribute, the Akerman Hangar was dedicated in his honor. Professor Balas' leadership of the department was instrumental in bringing talented people to Minnesota and renovating the department's home in Akerman Hall. Read more [here](#).

### Hangar featured in Architecture Minnesota

Architecture Minnesota featured the historic renovation of the Akerman Hangar as their July/August 2012 issue cover story. The story focused on the hangar's transformation into a modern workspace while retaining its historic character. See more about the story [here](#).

### Finished Hangar Photos

See our beautiful photos of the completed hangar, provided courtesy of BWBR Architects. Click [here](#).

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