

Client: Wellesley College

Science Center

Temporary Lab and Classrooms



Triumph Modular partnered with Wellesley College to deliver a high-performance temporary science center that kept teaching and research on track during a three-year, \$250 million renovation of the college's main science facility. After evaluating options, including sending students off campus, Wellesley chose a dedicated modular solution to maintain the quality of its science program and overall student experience.

Starting in December 2017, Triumph designed and installed a forty-one-unit modular complex in just six months, with the building ready for occupancy by June 2018, well ahead of the Fall semester. The interconnected facility provided laboratories, classrooms, collaboration areas, and faculty spaces so the campus could proceed with the renovation without disrupting instruction or limiting access to essential lab environments.

The project was shaped by four key goals: offering high-quality temporary facilities to attract and support top students, fostering an environment suitable for serious scientific research, meeting stringent lab and safety standards, and creating a productive workspace for faculty. Triumph's team integrated standard and ADA-compliant fume hoods, custom ductwork, dedicated chemical piping, and high-hazard chemical storage areas with enhanced fire ratings and secure cages, all aligned with environmental health and safety requirements to match the expectations of a modern science center.

Project Details

Location
Wellesley, MA

Square Feet
32,000

Modular Units
41



To meet the building's technical needs, Triumph Modular installed HVAC makeup air units to support mechanical ventilation, and a backup generator for uninterrupted operation. Three units were specifically designed as vivarium spaces for lab animals, featuring redundant HVAC systems and 24-hour environmental monitoring; these were later removed and replaced for classroom use when animal research concluded. The site itself presented challenges, with half of the area being a parking lot and the other half grassy terrain, featuring significant elevation changes. Triumph Modular utilized a helical foundation system—over 400 in total—to avoid major excavation and accommodate existing utility lines running beneath the site. The modular units were arranged in pods, connected by fully conditioned, site-built hallways.

Additional considerations included renovating the Clapp Library for geology department archive storage, ensuring the foundation could support heavy loads. Throughout the project, Triumph Modular demonstrated meticulous attention to code compliance, fire protection, egress, and ADA accessibility, conducting full code reviews with design professionals. The modular buildings provided flexible swing space, allowing Wellesley to adapt to evolving campus needs and maintain agility for future planning. The project's scope included a mix of labs, classrooms, departmental offices, and even a small café, with units sourced and remanufactured from Triumph Modular's own fleet to meet current code standards.

Notably, the modular units have extended their stay well beyond the original three-year plan, demonstrating the inherent flexibility and value of this approach. The use of modular has enabled Wellesley College to remain agile, keeping the campus fully operational by utilizing these swing spaces as other departments have undergone renovations. This strategy has allowed the college to continue its academic mission uninterrupted, supporting both ongoing operations and long-term campus development.