

CONTEXT

FALL 2021

WOMEN AND DESIGN

Women Who Lead

The 'Other'
Philadelphia School

Designing Motherhood Experts:
Redesign the System!

Transforming Architecture

DESIGN PROFILE



FDU SPIRIT BRIDGE

Viridian Landscape Studio

The new Spirit Footbridge strengthens FDU's identity, unites its campus, and showcases its commitment to sustainability.

Spanning 200 feet across the Hackensack River, the densely planted garden path replaces a crumbling concrete-and-chain link walkway connecting FDU's split campuses. It affirms the University's commitment to river stewardship and embodies the ongoing transformation of their campus into a sustainable eco-park. With generous shaded seating areas, outlooks for birdwatching or enjoying river views, and lush native plantings, the new bridge is more than a passage; it's a destination.

Viridian led a multi-disciplinary team to create the new footbridge, which reuses existing piers to save on cost and resources. To maximize plantable area within challenging height and width limitations, Viridian designed a lightweight soil matrix and used hanging planters for added vegetation outside the railing. Materials were selected for their resilience, durability, and sustainability, including recycled teak sourced from an

elephant conservation program in Myanmar. Plants were selected for year-round visual appeal, suitability to the bridge microclimate, and their ability to attract native birds, insects, and turtles.

The tiered landscape feels like an extension of the riverbanks. By showcasing beautiful native plants, the footbridge is changing perception on campus of what a "sustainable landscape" can be. It's also changing campus culture. Historically, FDU has been a car-centric commuter school with few distinguishing architectural characteristics. The popular bridge quickly became a signature feature of the campus increasing pedestrian activity and giving the school a bold new space that enriches the student experience. It's inspiring of new sense of place and a new sense of pride.

As a central piece of Viridian's larger FDU landscape master plan, the bridge helps restore the historic river landscape, raise application and retention rates. The Spirit Bridge doesn't just connect the campus; it connects FDU's past, present, and future. ■

PROJECT: FDU Spirit Bridge
LOCATION: Teaneck/Hackensack NJ
CLIENT: Fairleigh Dickinson University
PROJECT SIZE: 200 foot long pedestrian bridge

PROJECT TEAM:
Viridian Landscape Studio (Landscape Architect)
Maser Consulting (Structural/Civil Engineer)
BigR Bridge (Bridge Engineer/Fabricator)
BEAM (Lighting Design)
Brose E. Brooks & Associates
(Mechanical/Electrical Engineer)
ROOFMEADOW (Green Roof Consultant)

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