



C A S E S T U D Y

An Intimate Feeling Includes the Ceiling

Project: Mount Holyoke College Student Dining Commons
Location: Graton, California
Architect: Bergmeyer, Boston
Client: Mount Holyoke College

A student cafeteria doesn't have to feel like a student cafeteria. The new Student Dining Commons at Mount Holyoke College is intended to offer an inviting, personal experience that evokes some of the school's long tradition of intimate dining rooms.

An important element of that effect is an unusual ceiling. It features thermoformed ceiling panels from Ceilume combined with conventional flat mineral fiber panels that are used over seating areas around the periphery. The transition between these two types of ceilings is an intermingled effect that helps lead diners from the food service to seating, while also helping to break the large volume of the space into more intimate areas.

"We wanted it to be a place where students felt comfortable," recalls Krista Easterly, Interior Designer at Bergmeyer. The Mount Holyoke College Dining Commons received an award for Outstanding Design from American School & University magazine and has apparently achieved its goal of creating an inviting place for students. "It's been wildly successful," Easterly relates. "They're selling more meals than they ever imagined. Everybody likes what we created there, so I think it was a success."

