

Creating Places to Belong[®]

Appalachian State University
Culture Story

 Kimball International

APPSTATE



Nestled in North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains, Appalachian State University is one of the largest of 17 campuses in the University of North Carolina System. With a vibrant student body exceeding 20,000 individuals, the Fall of 2023 marked a historic milestone for the institution as it experienced unprecedented enrollment figures fueled by the inauguration of its new campus in Hickory.

Having enrolled the largest, most diverse first-year and online student population in its 124-year history, this significant milestone exemplifies the university's mission to expand higher education access further into the western North Carolina region.

App State has had an educational presence in Hickory for many years, offering several courses at local community colleges. The decision to establish a permanent facility in Hickory, formerly the largest metropolitan area in the state without a public university campus, underscored the university's commitment to fostering academic excellence and inclusivity for all. In late 2021, Appalachian State University acquired a six-story building located within a few miles from Hickory's downtown area to serve as its new campus. With renovation activities funded in 2022, the university swiftly initiated design efforts to ensure a seamless student move-in date by the 2023 Fall semester.

PRODUCTS SHOWN

Grin® Seating / Dock® Tables / Fringe® Lounge / Whimsy® Ottomans / EverySpace® Benching / Melora® Seating



With specific goals for fostering collaboration, flexibility, and community engagement, the ethos of the Hickory campus space closely aligned with the Collective culture, one of Kimball International's five identified culture types.



By prioritizing occupant satisfaction and embracing dynamic styles of working and studying, the university aimed to cultivate a sense of belonging among its students and staff. The design process, undertaken with their longstanding partner and local dealer, WJ Office, focused on space types and sensory design elements that would enhance interaction, creativity, and well-being.

To meet the university's aggressive move-in deadline, Kimball International's family of brands was selected due to quick lead times, the durability of its products, and the trustworthy relationship it shared with the University in previous projects. From Fringe, Jovalie, Kolo Pods, Om Pods, and Lochlyn by National to EverySpace, Tyba, and Whittaker from the Kimball brand, each piece of furniture was strategically selected to cater to the diverse needs of students and staff.

The opening of Hickory's campus coincided with a period of significant transition for App State, following a thorough reevaluation of university culture and future direction. Expansion into Hickory presented an opportunity to explore new strategies and a design not previously implemented at the main campus in Boone, North Carolina. The goal for the Hickory project was to create an educational setting that complemented and connected with App State's main campus yet also distinguished itself by offering a unique feel that catered to the preferences of local residents. Additionally, the new campus required flexibility, ensuring space types could evolve alongside the school's growth. This ability to evolve and adapt would ensure that the university could continue to foster a sense of community, drive enthusiasm among students, and ultimately increase enrollment well into the future.

PRODUCTS SHOWN

By Design Dock Table / EverySpace® Benching / Melora™ Seating / Jewel™ Seating / Nate & Natty™ Seating



Collective Culture Design Considerations



Areas that include flexible furniture for easy transition.



Settings that offer variety to support meetings, social interactions, and eating.



Spaces with ergonomic furniture that promote employee well-being.

Dedicated to providing spaces that support various workstyles and activities, the Hickory campus seamlessly integrated a range of Kimball International space types. The Meet-Up spaces, represented by open meeting areas and smaller meeting pods, facilitate dynamic collaboration and problem-solving sessions, essential for student engagement. Work Your Way areas, comprised of touchdown settings and lounge areas, offer individuals the flexibility to work autonomously or engage in focused tasks within a supportive environment. Through the use of privacy pods, Well + Good spaces provide students and staff opportunities to focus or recharge amidst their academic pursuits. In addition, multiple Hub spaces were created in common areas featuring comfortable soft seating. Designed to promote socialization and connectivity, these multifunctional spaces encourage organic interactions, spark conversations, and foster a shared sense of purpose among members of the university community.




The Meet-Up




Well + Good




The Hub




Work Your Way

PRODUCTS SHOWN
 Fringe® Lounge / Dock® Tables / Kolo Pod / Pairings® Perch Lounge / Theo™ Tables / Whimsy® Ottomans / Nate & Natty™ Lounge / Strassa® Table / Jewel™ Seating

To enhance the overall sensory experience, stimulate creativity, and promote well-being, the university incorporated bold textiles in bright colors that coordinate with App State colors. They also added elements of biophilia throughout the common spaces, creating a welcoming ambiance that steers clear of a traditional institutional feel.

With Hickory's campus doors opening for the first time on August 21, 2023, the excitement that enveloped students, staff, and the surrounding community far exceeded all expectations. The thoughtfully designed spaces immediately resonated with individuals, inspiring a newfound sense of belonging and camaraderie. Immediately, students and staff gravitated to the common areas, intuitively making the spaces their own by lounging in cozy seating or leveraging the pods for studying or attending virtual classes. Notably, the ADA-compliant Kolo Pod was utilized by a student in a wheelchair on the very first day, highlighting the inclusivity of the design. The evident appreciation for thoughtful, student-centered design grounded in cultivating a sense of belonging has motivated App State to further explore design enhancements throughout the university.



PRODUCTS SHOWN

Whittaker™ Lounge / Idara® Lounge / Lochlyn® Storage / Tyba® Lounge

Collective Culture Sensory Considerations



Texture, Hues,
and Shapes



Layout



Biophilic
Elements



“We are more than pleased with our solutions from Kimball International. It was a bold move introducing new furniture concepts, such as pods, to our new campus, but it’s paying off! Hickory’s success is already opening design potential across the University. My goal is that this project reinforces the importance of thoughtful, intentional, and impactful design to the greater university community.”

- Jacki McGuire, University Interior Designer, ASU



CULTURE TYPE

Collective

SPACE TYPES

The Meet-Up

Well + Good

The Hub

Work Your Way

SERIES

Nate & Natty™, Dock®, EverySpace®, Joelle®, Melora™, Pairings®, Theo™, Tyba®, Whittaker™, Footings®, Fringe®, Grin®, Hobsen®, Idara®, Jovalie®, Jewel™, Kolo Pod, Lochlyn®, Om Pod, Mariben®, Strassa®, Universal Tables, Whimsy®, Irma, Lehr

APPLICATIONS

Community, Focus Spaces, Social & Collaboration, Student Center, Training & Learning, Welcome Spaces

INDUSTRY

Education

PRODUCTS SHOWN

Jovalie® Lounge / Dock® Tables / EverySpace® Power Beam / Kolo ADA Pod / Irma Stools / Om Stand Pods

Kimball®

Product Summary

Dock®
EverySpace®
Joelle®
Melora™
Nate & Natty™
Pairings®
Theo™
Tyba®
Whittaker™
By Design Dock Table

NATIONAL®

Product Summary

Footings®
Fringe®
Grin®
Hobsen®
Idara®
Jovalie®
Jewel™
Kolo Pod
Lochlyn®
Om Pod
Mariben®
Strassa®
Swift™
Whimsy®

Etc.

Product Summary

Irma