


# SUNDAY ARTS

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Long live the grid: Architect Charles Gwathmey's new Student Center at Cleveland State University celebrates primal geometric shapes.

2 new buildings  
on Euclid Avenue  
show how campus  
look is improving



STEVEN  
LITT

If there were a prize in Northeast Ohio for the most-improved college or university campus, Cleveland State University would win it hands down.

The city's big urban university has steered firmly away

from defensive-looking architecture that once made the 70-acre campus, founded in 1964, look like a cross between a prison and a factory.

In recent years, CSU has embraced the notion that it should open itself up to the surrounding city with buildings that aim for a welcoming sense of transparency and even (gasp!) beauty.

The most dramatic evidence of this turnaround comes in the form of two sizable new buildings on Euclid Avenue, the city's historic main street.

One is the \$44 million Student Center, designed by the venerable New York architecture firm of Gwathmey Siegel & Associates, and the other is the \$36 million Julka Hall, which houses the College of Education and Human Services and the School of Nursing.

Both are well-designed; both make strong connections between their interiors and the surrounding city; both are flooded with daylight; and both do a lot to improve the appearance of Euclid Avenue.

They're also an outcome of a new master plan devised under former CSU President Michael Schwartz, who led the university from 2000 to 2009.

That vision, devised by Kent State University's Urban Design Collaborative in Cleveland, showed how CSU, traditionally a commuter school, could develop into more of a residential campus. It also showed how CSU could ameliorate the harsh, Brutalist-style architecture of its earlier buildings with renovations and a fresh approach to new buildings.

The Student Center and Julka Hall follow a string of other projects that grew out of the plan. These include a \$29.5 million Recreation Center, finished in 2006 along Chester Avenue at East 24th Street, and a more recent group of administrative offices along Euclid Avenue at East 24th Street.

The Student Center, which occupies a strategic location at East 21st Street and Euclid Avenue, is the capstone to the Schwartz era, even though it was completed under his successor, Ronald Berkman.

# CSU's dramatic face-lift



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Julka Hall at CSU follows the new campus emphasis on transparency and lots of daylight.