PLATINUM

VISUAL SYSTEMS

Earlham College, Richmond, IN

# The Perfect Solution

## From Concept To Completion

'FCS' Floor-to-Ceiling Markerbords

Earlham College is a private, liberal arts college in Richmond, Indiana. Established in 1847, Earlham's 800-acre campus includes Earlham College and the Earlham School of Religion. The school serves approximately 1,200 undergraduate students.

*Panels join together using a concealed stabilizing spline.*

## Computer Science Department Needs an Upgrade

Before fall of 2015, the Earlham Computer Department was in the basement of a building on campus. The space was cramped and not functional for the collaborative and cross-departmental approach. At Earlham there are very few barriers between disciplines. The school envisioned multi-use spaces designed for teamwork where students from a variety of disciplines could converge. To retrofit their basement labs, the students and faculty stacked as many whiteboards as they could in different directions along the walls to provide writing space. The makeshift writable walls were a poor solution for a true collaboration space.

## Finding the Right Equation

For over 10 years the school's design and planning committee assembled a list of requirements and resources. However, they struggled to find an architecture firm that understood how they worked and what kind of space they needed. Instead of the traditional classrooms with a single purpose, Earlham wanted a cross-functional space that could be a classroom by day and a busy study space in the evening. Spaces that allowed students and faculty to work together on single problems were vitally important. Eventually, Bora Architects was chosen to design the new Center for Science and Technology. They understood the non-traditional space Earlham needed and created classrooms with practical functionality and inviting aesthetics.

## The "Make Everything Writable" Approach

When designing spaces to be used for lecturing and cross-departmental collaboration, Bora envisioned large walls that not only looked great, but were writable and could be used by faculty and students alike for team communication and problem-solving. Bora contacted Platinum Visual Systems for a floor-to-ceiling product that could be installed across large walls, provide a superior writing surface, and endure heavy use over time. The computer science department's lean-to whiteboards were about to be a thing of the past.


*Removable magnetic trays optional*

## Platinum Has It Covered

Platinum's Floor-to-Ceiling Markerboards and Chalkboards were just the thing the new Science and Technology Center needed. The boards create a perfect visual communication system without limits. The oversized panels join together using a concealed stabilizing spline, creating a smooth transition from panel to panel. Sizes range from 6' high by 8' wide, up to a massive 12' high by 24' wide wall system. Additionally,t custom sized panels were created to fit areas where something special was needed.

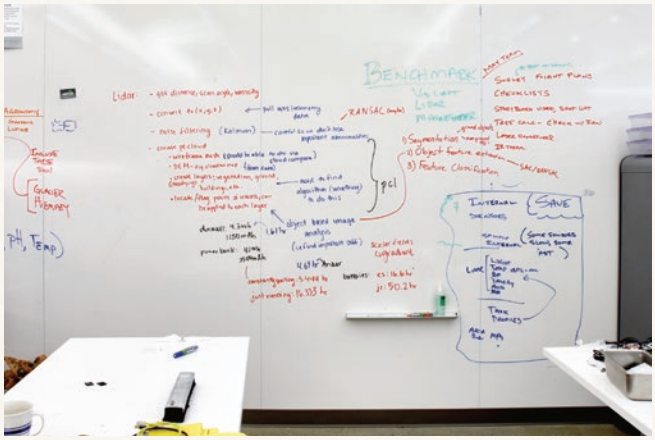
The Porcelain-on-steel Markerboard writing surface creates a durable, nonporous surface with a high resistance to impacts, abrasions, scratching, and fading. Additionally,t the boards are engineered for outstanding color contrast so writing is easily visible across the room and the markerboards wipe clean easily with a cloth or standard eraser.

Some rooms and hallways in the Technology Center utilized Platinum's floor-to-ceiling Chalkboards. The chalkboards controlled matte finish never gives up — and never allows glare or ghosting. Just clean, precise writing every time. Few chalkboard products on the market today stand up to repeated use as well as Platinum's Writanium® Chalkboards with their non-porous, scratch-resistant surface that withstands extensive use and harsh cleaning.

## *An Eloquent Solution*

The 42,000-square-foot Center for Science and Technology is now home to the math, physics and computer science departments and the Science and Technology Learning Commons, a shared space for all the sciences. Students and Faculty alike utilize the space and writing surfaces on a daily basis for lectures and intense collaborations.

Both markerboard and chalkboard walls are magnetic and are used to display maps, photos, and posters, as well as attach functional trays to hold writing utensils and erasers.



The "Make Everything Writable" approach was a big hit with faculty and students alike. Martha Byrne, visiting assistant professor of mathematics, said,t "Our studio is a place where students can come and work and play with mathematics. ...We have floor-to-ceiling chalk- and white-boards, and the tables in the studio have dry-erase surfaces, so no one will ever lack for writing surfaces."

Earlham studentt Neil Nicholson praised the boards for their usefulness in the classrooms, "I'm a visual learner, so when the Teaching Assistants can write something out on the wall it's easier for me to understand."

Charlie Peck, professor of computer science, was a member of the building's design and planning committee. His old teaching space was in the basement filled with lean-to whiteboards. Peck was excited to have a facility with built-in writing spaces, and his reaction to the new collaborative spaces - "The reality is better than we thought. We can sit 12 people down in front of a board and design collectively."

> "THE REALITY IS Better Than We Thought It WOULD BE"

**PROJECTS:**
Center for Science and Technology
Richmond, IN

**OWNER:**
Earlham College, Richmond, IN

**ARCHITECTURE FIRM:**
Bora Architect, Portland, OR

**LEAD ARCHITECT:**
Mark Schopmeyer

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR:**
Empire Building Company, LLC
Cincinnati, OH

**CSI INFORMATION:**
10 11 00 Visual Display Boards