

**CASE STUDY: UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC CENTER AT LAKE NONA  
LOCATION: ORLANDO, FL**



**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The new University of Florida Research and Academic Center at Lake Nona captures paramount opportunity for the university but is also the ultimate testimony to the versatility of metal mesh. Design by HOK, the \$44 million, 100,000-square-foot facility will enable the university to have direct collaboration opportunities with the Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute at Lake Nona's top scientists.

While the facility itself is sure to make great strides in the research field, its façade has already accomplished great feats as the result of HOK's unique design concept realized through GKD-USA's technical expertise. One of the most significant exterior elements is an immense sunshade made of GKD Escal 7 x 1 weave. To produce the 8,250-square-foot sunshading panels, the architect had a very specific set of objectives that GKD had to meet: 10 trapezoidal panels were required to also curve from top to bottom, effectively wrapping the exterior and hugging intermediate supports. Additionally, a center area cuts away to reveal a glass curtainwall behind.

The new facility gains numerous benefits from the sunshade, outside of striking appearance. Sunscreens mitigate heat gain through direct sunlight, a must in hot and sunny Florida. This form of solar management reduces the use of mechanical cooling, making a more energy efficient building. But by covering the large glass curtainwall with a transparent material such as metal mesh, building occupants will still have natural lighting and unobstructed views to the outside. All of these factors will contribute to the building's LEED Gold (ver. NC 2.2) level certification.

The facility will house the following:

- A clinical research unit from UF's Institute on Aging
- Expansion of the College of Pharmacy's Ph.D. program in the emerging field of pharmacometrics, an area of research which seeks to quantify how drugs and diseases interact to aid in efficient and effective drug development and regulatory decisions



- The Orlando campus of the College of Pharmacy's entry-level professional degree program, which will house 200 students seeking the doctor of pharmacy degree

The center will extend UF's research enterprise to the Orlando area and promote collaboration among researchers at UF and Sanford-Burnham. Their goal is to make fundamental medical research in cancer, diabetes and other diseases available to patients in clinical settings. The center also will give the university a strong presence in the growing medical complex at Lake Nona, which includes the UCF College of Medicine and Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences, the Nemours Children's Hospital, the Orlando Veterans Affairs Medical Center and the M.D. Anderson Center Research Institute.