The Spirit Bridge is the keystone to the University's “Eco-Park,” also designed by the landscape architect. It provides the critical link to a new wellness trail that can be accessed by both town and gown.
The Landscape Architect led a multidisciplinary team of designers and engineers to create the softly winding footbridge which replaces a failing concrete and chain link pathway. In form and function, the bridge reflects FDU's commitment to Hackensack River stewardship.
The University wanted this critical infrastructure to be beautiful, and to define and differentiate the campus, shifting the culture of the historically commuter school. The design solution, featuring covered seating, public spaces, and native plantings, strengthened the University’s sense of place.
Because the new bridge is built on an existing pier structure, the design had to accommodate specific weight and width restrictions. To maximize plantable areas, the Landscape Architect used a specially designed lightweight soil matrix and drainage system.
Before: The existing 1960’s bridge was a failing concrete and chainlink structure that merely provided a way from point A to point B on the campus.
After: From the guard rails and planters to the generous canvas-covered seating, the team carefully designed each element to showcase sustainable methods and native plants of the riverine ecosystem.
The tiered landscaping feels like an extension of the adjacent riverbanks, with Creek Sedge and other ground covers, colorful shrubs like Bush Honeysuckle, and small trees such as the Tiger Eye Sumac, whose sculptural branches complement the bridge's form.
As a central piece of the Landscape Architect's larger “Eco-Park” master plan, the Spirit Bridge is restoring the historic river landscape, changing the perception of the campus, and helping to make the school more competitive by improving application and retention rates.
The Landscape Architect selected the plants for their year-round visual interest, their suitability to the shallow soils, full sun, and windy conditions of the bridge microclimate, and their ability to restore the riverine ecosystem by attracting native birds, insects, and turtles.
As a central resource for the campus community and area residents, the bridge is changing how people view the University and the river. It has increased pedestrian activity and other healthy behaviors.
The team chose materials for their lightness, durability, and sustainability, including recycled teak sourced from a program that protects elephants in the Republic of Myanmar.
Color-changeable LED fixtures are programmed for everything from daily dawn and dusk light shows, to FDU spirit week colors, to rainbow displays. To assist with maintenance, electrical and irrigation system access is conveniently and discreetly embedded into the furnishings.
Lighting makes the bridge a destination at night contributing to public safety though the activation of place. Morning and evening light shows reward people, whether passing over or lingering on the bridge, with thirty-minute celebrations of sunrise and sunset.
Designed to meet the needs of today and tomorrow, the bridge will become increasingly vital – and visible – as FDU grows, with a prominent new hotel and student center planned for nearby sites in Hackensack.
The Spirit Bridge doesn't just connect the campus; it connects FDU's past, present, and future.
## PLANT SCHEDULE FDU SPIRIT BRIDGE

### BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME

#### TREES
- Platanus occidentalis	Sycamore

#### SHRUBS
- Cornus sericea 'Cardinal'	Red-Osier Dogwood
- Cornus sericea 'Flaveramia'	Golden Twig Dogwood
- Diervilia Ionica 'Copper'	Bush-honeysuckle
- Juniperus horizontalis	Creeping Juniper
- Rhus glabra	Smooth Sumac
- Rhus typhina 'Tiger Eye'	Cutleaf Sumac

#### HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS
- Achillea millefolium 'Saucy Seduction' TM PP20782	Pink Yarrow
- Achillea x 'Moonshine'	Yellow Yarrow
- Aster ericoides 'Snow Flurry'	White Heath Aster
- Aster oblongifolius 'October skies'	Aromatic Aster
- Bigelowia nuttallii	Nutall's Rayless Goldenrod
- Bouteloua gracilis 'Blonde Ambition'	Blue Grama
- Carex amphibola	Creek Sedge
- Deschampsia cespitosa 'Goldtau'	Tufted Hair Grass
- Echinacea pallida	Pale Purple Cone Flower
- x Heucherella 'Copper Cascade' PPAF	Heucherella 'Copper Cascade'
- Heuchera 'Crimson Cascade'	Alum root 'Crimson Cascade'
- Heuchera 'Sunrise Falls'	Heucherella 'Sunrise Falls'
- Liatris aspera	Rough Blazingstar
- Liatris microcephala	Dwarf Blazingstar
- Muhlenbergia capillaris	Pink Muhly Grass
- Panicum virgatum 'Shenandoah'	Switchgrass
- Phlox subulata	Moss phlox
- Ratibida pinnata	Prairie coneflower
- Verbena stricta	Hoary vervain

#### BULBS
- Allium sphaerocephalon	Drumstick Allium
- Crocus chrysanthus 'Vernal Jewels'	Snow Crocus
- Muscari armeniacum	Grape Hyacinth
- Narcissus 'February Gold'	February Gold Daffodil
- Narcissus 'Poeticus Recurvus'	Pheasant's Eye Daffodil
- Tulipa blend	Red Cubed Tulip
- woodland Blend	5 Early Blooming Bulb Blend

#### TRAILING PLANTS TO BE PLANTED ANNUALLY
- Ipomoea batatas 'Desana Bronze'	Sweet Potato Vine Purple
- Ipomoea batatas 'Desana Lime'	Sweet Potato Vine Green

#### PREGROWN SEDUM MATS
- Phedimus (aka Sedum) spurium 'Fuldaglut'
- Phedimus (aka Sedum) spurium 'John Creech'
- Phedimus (aka Sedum) spurium 'Red Carpet'
- Phedimus (aka Sedum) spurium 'Tricolor'
- Phedimus (aka Sedum) spurium kamtschaticum
- Phedimus (aka Sedum) spurium takesimensis 'Golden Carpet'
- Sedum acre 'Gold Moss'
- Sedum album 'Coral Carpet'
- Sedum album 'Mural'
- Sedum floriferum 'Weihenstephaner Gold'
- Sedum reflexum 'Blue Spruce'
- Sedum rupestre 'Angelina'
- Sedum sexangulare
- Sedum x Immergrunchen