ECSU’s fine arts facility honored

School’s FAIC opened in 2016

WILLIMANTIC — The Fine Arts Instructional Center (FAIC) at Eastern Connecticut State University, home to the visual and performing arts programs, has received an honor award by the Society for College and University Planning.

The award was for Excellence in Architecture for a New Building.

The 119,000-square-foot facility, completed in April 2016, was designed by William Rawn Associates Architects Inc. of Boston, along with The S/L/A/M Collaborative (SLAM) as Architect of Record.

The awards, in partnership with the American Institute of Architects Committee on Architecture for Education, is a juried competition.

The award promotes comprehensive campus design that incorporates strategic and integrated planning resulting in exemplary buildings, campus grounds, institutional success and careers that inspire.

The $62 million FAIC capitalizes on the high-performance building design to create a welcoming venue, bringing fine arts to the university’s everyday life and the city of Willimantic, according to an ECSU release on the award.

The facility combines teaching, performance and exhibit space for the performing arts, art and art history departments.

The center also features several general-purpose classrooms and three performance venues:

- A 400-seat concert hall/auditorium, tailored to music performances, also serving as a major gathering place for the campus community, including convocations and lectures.
- A 250-seat proscenium theater that provides a venue for theater performances on campus, allowing for proscenium theater training for students in the major.
- A flexible 75-seat studio/black box theater located off the main lobby.

The center also has an art gallery that provides a signature space for rotating exhibits from Eastern’s permanent art collection, outside artists, student and faculty work.

With its mix of performance venues, art gallery and instructional spaces, and its modern aesthetic, the FAIC gives Eastern an opportunity to present itself to the broader community through the enhanced presence of the fine arts on campus, according to an ECSU release issued last week.