



NOT JUST 'ANOTHER STACK' OF

SIPS

INSULSPAN® STRUCTURAL INSULATING PANELS CREATE FURNITURE AT UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN.

Furniture is not typically the first type of project that comes to mind when you think of structural insulated panels (SIPs). However, for their large-scale furniture project, Ashley Bigham and Erik Herrmann thought of SIPs first.

Both architectural designers and lecturers at the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan, they were tasked with creating furniture for the common space of the building's new wing. The two-story common area is a central hub of activity for the school and hosts lectures, workshops, and discussions, so the furniture needed to be large and dynamic.

The concept they created, named "Another Stack," is composed of horizontal pieces that are piled on each other to form seating, a platform, tables, and whatever else is needed in the space. However, the key to making their design function was to find a material that was easy to move around, strong, and could be produced on their short 6-week time line.

Ashley and Erik were familiar with SIPs and had specified them before. "SIPs are equally strong as they are light. Their structural capacity to overall weight ratio made it perfect for a structure that would receive a lot of traffic, but could easily be transformed into something else by just a couple of people," said Erik.



The Insulspan® Structural Insulating Panel (SIP) System was used to create the furniture. Two different thicknesses

of SIP panels, 6½" and 8¼", were used allowing the SIPs to be stacked into different combinations to achieve certain ergonomic heights. To eliminate assembly and seams, each piece was designed and cut from Insulspan's largest master panel, 8'x24'.

"We were only limited to the shape and size of our pieces by what we could fit through the doors," said Ashley. "The space turned out great. It is fun to look down and see professors holding meetings, or students selling donuts from the middle of a circle."

"It is also interesting to see how people react to the stacks," added Erik. "They are not small enough to be thought of as furniture, but not large enough to feel like a permanent structure. Since the largest piece only weighs approximately 120 pounds, it lets people move the pieces and decide how to stack the SIPs without being confined to the normal uses of furniture."