The design locates the Multicultural Center on top of the existing bookstore and encloses a formerly wind-swept courtyard to create a new entry to the Viking Union.
The textured metal façade alludes to the weaving traditions of the local Salish Tribes and “cultural fabric” of the ethnically and culturally diverse student groups.
The Multicultural Center program creates a new home for the Ethnic Student Center and four centers under the AS Student Advocacy and Identity Resource Centers (the Blue Resource Center; Disability Outreach Center; Queer Resource Center and Womxn’s Identity Resource Center). The expansion combines the Multicultural Center, Viking Union, Bookstore, Multipurpose Room and KUGS within one building that honors and supports the University's growing diverse population and engages the campus to better understand multiple cultures.
The new entry lobby connects the union horizontally and vertically with stairs to previously hidden spaces while providing a new entry to the completely renovated bookstore and large 800-person event space.
Together with an interpretive planner, we led an in-depth, multi-year conversation with students to generate a unique graphic message for the Center. The resulting images, words and materiality reflect the unique spirit of the campus.
Program areas provide a welcoming location for study, social and meeting areas; a multi-purpose dance studio hosts student group cultural activities.
A resource library provides a space to share cultural history and resources and provides a welcoming location for study.
A common kitchen and dining area are available to host gatherings or share meals. The building orientation provides stunning views of Bellingham Bay.
Weaving traditions of the local Salish Tribes are celebrated in the expression of the metal sunscreen system and wood ceiling.
All spaces, including the bookstore, were designed with flexibility in mind to easily adapt to changing needs throughout the academic year and to address programmatic needs as campus expectations evolve.