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News

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Philadelphia University's Innovative DEC Center Earns LEED Gold Sustainability Certification

PHILADELPHIA, June 20, 2014—The DEC Center at Philadelphia University has become the second campus building in two years to earn LEED gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council, joining the Center for Sustainability, Energy Efficiency and Design in reaching this prestigious sustainability standard.

“Philadelphia University is a leader in both sustainability education and practices on our campus,” said Philadelphia University President Stephen Spinelli Jr. “These are critically important issues in the 21st century that our graduates are addressing as leaders in their fields and that the University is addressing in our campus operations. In just two years, our two newest buildings have both been certified LEED gold, which is a wonderful validation of our efforts.”

Some of the features that earned the DEC Center its LEED gold rating include its stormwater management system, heat-reducing green roof, water-efficient faucets and toilets, solar pre-heat of hot water, energy-efficient lighting, partial geothermal power from the University's first geothermal well, and the solar veil to control heat. In addition, the University has committed to using 100 percent green power in this building, and throughout the entire campus, starting July 1.

The University's two LEED gold buildings “provide a great variety of practical, sustainable features that both help the environment and reduce our costs of operating the buildings,” said Tom Becker PE, assistant vice president for operations. “These features also provide teaching tools that can be demonstrated in the classroom while also showcasing the University's commitment to sustainability in operations.”

The DEC Center, which opened in January 2013, is a 40,000 square-foot dynamic space that houses the Kanbar College of Design, Engineering and Commerce, which features an award-winning curriculum that forges collaborations between designers, engineers and entrepreneurs.

The building, by architectural firm Shepley Bulfinch, was designed to support and enhance the innovative DEC curriculum.

The DEC Center features a two-story central forum with state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment; digital media center; seminar rooms with high definition projection; and fully equipped industrial work spaces.

The DEC Center's unique design has recently garnered attention from architecture and environmental publications. The distinctive aluminum veil surrounding the DEC Center was recently recognized as a top sustainability practice in the 2014 Insider Knowledge report published by *Environmental Leader* and *Energy Manager Today*. The DEC Center's innovative and distinctive design also was featured in a June 2 story in *Metal Architecture* magazine. In 2013, the DEC Center received a merit award from *Engineering News Record* for an educational/research project.

In 2012, the SEED Center became the first University building to reach LEED gold certification. Featuring more than 14,000 square feet of gray-to-green renovated space, the SEED Center is home to PhilaU's graduate programs in sustainable design, construction management, interior architecture and real estate development, and also serves as a regional resource for architects, engineers, builders and developers by offering training in sustainable building design strategies and green product and material integration.

Sustainability has been a longstanding value at PhilaU. The University's comprehensive Climate Action Plan, submitted to the American College and University President's Climate Commitment earlier this year, formalizes its plan to reach climate neutrality by 2035 by curtailing carbon and greenhouse gas emissions.

Philadelphia University, founded in 1884, is a private university with 3,600 students enrolled in more than 60 undergraduate and graduate programs. As the model for professional university education, the University prepares students to be leaders in their professions in an active, collaborative and real-world learning environment infused with the liberal arts. Philadelphia University includes the innovative Kanbar College of Design, Engineering and Commerce; the College of Architecture and the Built Environment; and the College of Science, Health and the Liberal Arts. For more information, go to www.PhilaU.edu.