Philadelphia University’s Center for Sustainability, Energy Efficiency and Design receives LEED gold rating

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 9, 2012—Philadelphia University’s Center for Sustainability, Energy Efficiency and Design (SEED), which features more than 14,000 square feet of gray-to-green renovated space, has received the gold certification from Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) and the U.S. Green Building Council.

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.

While the SEED Center was designed to achieve LEED® certification, PhilaU originally anticipated achieving silver status. In addition, work is currently underway on what is expected to be the campus’s second LEED® building—the DEC Center for the Kanbar College of Design, Engineering and Commerce is being constructed to meet sustainability standards.

The University received funding from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Redevelopment Capital Assistance Program, Connelly Foundation and Scholler Foundation to support the renovation of the SEED Center, and construction began in early 2010 on what was formerly Hughes Gym. The renovation was a fast-track, design-build project by Nason Construction Inc. and Spiezle Architecture Group Inc. The renovation was completed just in time for the beginning of the fall 2010 semester.

“A lot of effort and creativity went into the project, from design through execution, and all parties played a vital role in making the project the success that it is,” said John F. Wright ’98, AIA, a PhilaU alumnus who was Spiezle’s lead project architect on the team.

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Sustainability features in the renovated facility include reuse of building materials; daylight lighting and sunshade maximization; automatic lighting controls with daylight harvesting; energy-efficient mechanical systems; and low-VOC (volatile organic compound) finishes. In addition, the roof system was structured to support a future photovoltaic array for on-site energy generation.

“We took a 40-plus year-old building, reused the footprint, did a total gutting of the interior and for around $200 per square foot of construction cost turned the facility into a model for sustainability,” said Thomas Becker, PE, EFP, PhilaU’s associate vice president for physical plant operations. “It was by no means an easy project from any perspective—budget, timing, mid-project re-bid and weather—but through it all the team pressed forward and exceeded all expectations.”

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](http://www.PhilaU.edu).