



Sustainability in higher education reaches milestone in Colorado

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Auraria Higher Education Center Science Building Addition is 1,000th LEED certified campus project in the US.

Higher education reached a milestone earlier this year as the number of LEED™-certified campus projects reached 1,000 when the Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC) Science Building Addition in Denver, Colo., achieved LEED NC 2.2 Gold certification.

The new Auraria Science Building addition, a four-story, 197,000 sq. ft. facility includes research and teaching labs, classrooms, offices, a student lounge and coffee bar, and accommodates the Auraria Campus' growing student body as well as the Community College of Denver, Metropolitan State College of Denver and University of Colorado Denver. Through its unique and thoughtful design, the new facility space has been recognized as a symbolic bridge connecting not only with the existing campus buildings, but also with the larger Denver community.

"A LEED certified building serves as a visual statement of an institution's commitment and leadership to improving the built environment," said Jaime Van Mourik, director of Higher Education at the Center for Green Schools at USGBC. "The prominent placement of the AHEC Science Building in downtown Denver provides a space for collaboration between higher education and the local community which is the type of activity that will drive a sustainable future. It is a wonderful example of how higher education can act as a catalyst for building a healthy community."

The most notable design element is the building's floor- to- ceiling windows, which invite extensive natural light into the space and allow passersby to see in. The views look outward to the surrounding greenery and campus buildings.

"The building is outwardly focused by providing an edge along Speer with the windows set in essentially a picture frame. Embracing sustainability has allowed for a building that is welcoming both inside and out," said Jill Jennings Golich, campus planner for the Auraria Higher Education Center.

Sustainability elements integrated in the project design include automatic shades that respond to daylight, occupancy sensors that turn on and off lights, and the use of locally manufactured materials. The new building consists of a high-performance curtain wall and thermal barrier framing system, and incorporates a modern design accentuated by bare concrete slab and exposed pipes and ducts. Construction activities also incorporated sustainability practices such as diverting or recycling over 75 percent percent of waste, using low VOC products on-site, and following best practices during construction to ensure high indoor air quality.

In 2010, the project was given a Downtown Denver Award by the Downtown Denver Partnership in recognition of its inviting design and catalytic qualities.

"We honored this project because we believed the science center would help bridge the physical and perceptual gap created by Speer Boulevard, ultimately transforming the relationship between the schools and Downtown," said Tami Door, President & CEO of the Downtown Denver Partnership.

The project is also home to Colorado's Art in Public Places with a sculpture called Psyche by Donald Lipski.

For more information on the Auraria Science Building, [visit: www.ahec.edu/sciencebuilding.htm](http://www.ahec.edu/sciencebuilding.htm)

For more information regarding USGBC Colorado's Higher Education Subcommittee, please contact Jessica Scott at 303-292-6182.

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