



Creating a Campus Green Existing Buildings Program

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Bren Hall at the University of California, Santa Barbara has earned double LEED Platinum certification.

Trying to green the operations of all of the various buildings on a college campus can be a bit like trying to get all of your family members to go on a healthy diet and exercise program at the same time. It can be a daunting task. They have a range of ages, sizes, shapes and activities; they consume different things in different quantities and their aspirations vary widely. Some are ready for the quinoa salad and a marathon right now, while others are passionate about their red meat and haven't jumped on a bike in years. Where do you even start?

Little Suzie is that four year old student center who is very cooperative and has been eating healthy her whole life. She'll be easy to get on board with the new program. Crazy Uncle Ned is that 60 year old physics building who keeps to himself, and no one is quite sure what goes on in there. Ned might take a bit more work to get up to speed.


Successful implementation of your family diet program, much like the successful implementation of your campus green existing building program, will require careful coordination with the right people at the right time. With that in mind, we recently released a new workbook called "[Establishing a Culture of Performance on Your Campus](#)", which utilizes the [LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance](#) (LEED EB:O&M) as a tool for the comprehensive establishment of green practices and evaluation of performance both across a university campus and within individual buildings. This workbook provides a framework—a recommended sequence of activities—to make the process more straightforward and meaningful.

1. The first stage is "campus assessment," in which the institution should define the opportunity and overall aspirations and priorities, assign responsibility and secure resources. This is when you should start looking at some of those major LEED fundamentals, like installing energy meters at each building.
2. In stage two, "campus implementation," the team can begin to align green policies and practices across the campus and establish consistent methodologies for performance tracking. At this point we would encourage institutions to [register the campus in LEED online](#) and submit a master site for review, to have those policies, plans and other site-wide credits approved for streamlined use within individual building certification projects.
3. Stage three, "building feasibility study," is where you begin to determine which buildings are the best candidates for LEED EB:O&M certification and which will require upgrades and retrofits to become eligible. Completing a feasibility study is one of the first steps any potential LEED EB:O&M project should complete, but it can be especially useful for universities as a tool for prioritizing the allocation of time and resources.
4. Finally, in stage four, "run pilot", it's time to measure performance over time and submit for certification. Once the first building has achieved certification—pause to celebrate your


success—then reflect on the experience, refine your processes and move on to tackle the next candidate for certification.

Now, we know that every institution is different, and we realize that greening operations usually won't, and sometimes shouldn't, follow this idealized linear path. Many universities have already implemented exceptional green practices before developing comprehensive policies, and some teams will find it useful to certify a pilot building before developing a master site. That's perfectly fine. We hope that this new workbook will help make some of the steps more clear, and help more institutions find success with LEED.

If you have questions about any of the content of the workbook or how LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance can work for you, send us an [email](#). And make sure to let us know how Uncle Ned is doing training for his triathlon- we hear it's a particularly scenic one this year.



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USGBC staff

2 comments

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Robin Blakeman

1 week 3 days ago

Good stuff. I'll be sure to share at the usgbc SF PB governing / planning meeting



Robert OBrien

1 week 5 days ago

Looks promising- any chance a similar handbook for collections-based museums might be forthcoming? I work at Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History and any resources to help guide the process would be appreciated.

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