

Ernie Davis Hall to celebrate LEED Gold certification Oct. 10

Syracuse University's newest and first "green" residence hall has been awarded LEED® Gold certification, established by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and verified by the Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI). Ernie Davis Hall will celebrate this achievement with a plaque presentation ceremony and brief reception on Monday, Oct. 10, at 2:30 p.m. in the residence hall's private dining room.

Ernie Davis Hall LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is the nation's preeminent program for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED certification may be earned at the levels of certified, silver, gold and platinum.

Ernie Davis Hall, SU's first LEED-certified building, achieved certification for its whole-building approach to sustainable design and construction aimed at advancing human and environmental health. SU had originally targeted the building to receive LEED Silver. However, some enhancements during the green building process by the Office of Campus Planning, Design, and Construction allowed the building to achieve LEED Gold, the second-highest level attainable.

"Achieving LEED Gold status for Ernie Davis Hall is a major milestone for SU," says SU Chancellor and President Nancy Cantor. "Not only is it a signature achievement in the greening of our campus, but it is a signature educational opportunity for our students living and learning in this building to see and experience excellence in sustainability. It's also a fitting tribute to Ernie Davis, a quintessential precedent setter, himself, whose example continues to inspire the SU community."

Named after the late 1962 SU alumnus—a two-time All-America selection and the first African American to win the coveted Heisman Trophy—Ernie Davis Hall is the University's first entirely new residential building in more than 40 years. Designed by Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects of Atlanta, Ga., the building features 60 split-double units and 120 single units for a total of 250 beds, as well as complementary dining, fitness and academic space. Construction by J.D. Taylor Construction Corporation of Syracuse on the 140,000 square-foot, nine-story structure took 18 months and was completed in 2009.

"Although it's primarily a residence hall, Ernie Davis is truly a mixed-use building that offers much more than just a place for students to sleep," says Eric Beattie, director of SU's Office of Campus Planning, Design, and Construction. "There's 2,000 square feet of academic space, which includes a laboratory, a 500-seat dining facility and lifestyle amenities such as a campus fitness center and convenience store."

The eco-friendly features of Ernie Davis Hall are numerous. Low-flow toilets, faucets and shower heads reduce water use by 30 percent over standard plumbing fixtures. Irrigation for the grounds is not necessary because of an innovative storm water retention system and enhanced site permeability and landscape design that incorporates native plants. The building's white roof

is designed to help minimize the “heat island” effect on sunny days. Some of the many energy-saving features include high-performance insulated glass windows, use of day lighting and lighting fixture controls, and variable-speed kitchen and laundry dryer exhaust fans to save electricity.

“Many unique and innovative features to enhance occupant comfort went into the building’s automated systems,” says Doug Tankersley, senior project manager with Campus Planning, Design, and Construction. “Student rooms are continuously ventilated 24/7 solely with outside air that is filtered at the source. Sensors automatically control passive heating and cooling units to maintain temperatures throughout the residential spaces.”

Among the other sustainable operations features of Ernie Davis Hall are:

- **Energy-efficient heating and ventilation systems.** Warm air exiting the building travels through the ventilation shaft, over a coil that captures the heat and transfers it back into new air coming into the building, eliminating the need to heat with additional fuel.
- **Innovative storm water management.** A system of pipes on top of the building collects rainwater and brings it to an underground tank. This potentially large amount of water collects in the tank and is discharged slowly back into the sewer system to reduce runoff from each rain event that would otherwise immediately enter and overtax the combined storm/sewer system.
- **Dining center efficiencies.** An energy-efficient dishwashing system employs an innovative heat recovery system to reduce energy costs, and re-circulates the water used to rinse plates—prior to them being sanitized—to reduce water consumption. At the heights of the dining center are circular air diffusers that provide fresh air ventilation to the dining room and work with the building’s highly efficient heating, cooling and ventilation systems.
- **Second floor light well.** The light well on the second floor was constructed to get natural light deep into the building to reduce need for electricity during the day.
- **Concrete structure.** The concrete structure serves as a high-mass thermal sink to hold and retain stable temperatures to maintain comfort.
- **Operable windows in bedrooms.** This feature provides occupant control of the personal indoor environment.

“Before building construction even began in February 2008, the site was prepared to minimize environmental impacts,” says Beattie. “This included preventing erosion from water runoff and installing a permanent storm water detention system to minimize discharges to the City of Syracuse’s combined storm/sewer system.”

The construction process proceeded to take a highly sustainable approach. Over 78 percent of the project’s 894 tons of waste was recycled rather than disposed of via landfill or incinerator.

Building materials with recycled content and locally sourced materials from within 500 miles were used whenever possible and practical. Strict indoor air quality procedures were followed to greatly minimize dust and other construction debris from entering the heating, cooling and ventilation systems. And low volatile organic compound (VOC) products such as adhesives, sealants, paints and finishes were used throughout the building's interior.

“With each new LEED-certified building, we get one step closer to USGBC’s vision of a sustainable built environment within a generation,” says Rick Fedrizzi, president, CEO & founding chair of USGBC. “As one of the newest members of the LEED family of green buildings, SU’s Ernie Davis Hall is an important addition to the growing strength of the green building movement.”

SU’s focus on green building and campus sustainability stems, in part, from its signing the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment. The Syracuse Center of Excellence (SyracuseCoE) recently earned LEED Platinum certification and will hold its plaque ceremony on Oct. 10 at 4 p.m.

The University also has several other recently completed new construction and building renovation projects that are slated to achieve varying levels of LEED certification. These include the Carmelo K. Anthony Basketball Center, Green Data Center, Bowne Hall and Lawrinson Hall.