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New green building 'LEEDs' the way

By Lindsay Allen '00

CMU's Education Building will help make campus a little more eco-friendly while setting the standard for all of the university's future buildings.

The university's first-ever building designed to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council, the Education Building will have a number of "green" components.

"The building will be more energy efficient with the use of natural light, the use of natural and recycled materials, and an actual green roof of ground-covering vegetation on the child development lab and auditorium, which provides excellent, natural insulation," says College of Education and Human Services Dean Karen Adams.

Groundbreaking for the Education Building, which was designed by SHW Group of Berkley, took place in April 2007, and Walsh Construction of Detroit is building the facility. Classes will begin in the building in fall 2009.

Andrew Hetletvedt, an SHW Group project manager, says his company is committed to creating learning environments that are engaging and instructive.

"We see the building as a teaching aid," he says. "It's more than aesthetics – we have programmatic reasons behind every decision that is made."

Sedum will be planted on more than 50 percent of the roof area. In addition to its aesthetic benefits, the plants will protect the roof membrane, reduce the volume of water runoff, and improve the quality of water runoff.

While it will be easy for people to see the green roof and conclude that the building is environmentally friendly, Hetletvedt said there are many other factors essential to LEED certification that often go unnoticed.

Rapidly renewable resources such as bamboo and regional building materials are used whenever possible. Large windows will maximize the use of natural

light, but also will include shading to block the summer heat, reducing the air-conditioning need. Heating and cooling units will be energy efficient. Environmentally friendly adhesives, sealants, and paints will be used. At least 75 percent of construction waste materials are being recycled. And recycled products – for instance, recycled concrete for roadbeds – are being used when possible.

In the future, all CMU buildings – whether they are new facilities or existing buildings undergoing renovation or expansion – will be designed and constructed per LEED standards.

"CMU first became interested in applying LEED to our buildings because it supports a design that addresses water savings, energy efficiency, and indoor environmental quality," says Linda Slater, CMU's director of plant engineering and planning. "Making smart choices during the design process can positively impact both the quality of the building for the tenants and the long-term cost of operating the building."

Slater says adherence to LEED standards is an important part of CMU's sustainability efforts.

"The commitment to design and construct all future projects to LEED standards strongly supports CMU's commitment to sustainability," she says. "It is one of many steps being taken to support a sustainable campus through the university's design, construction, and operation practices." *

On the Web:
See Education Building construction updates at www.ehs.cmich.edu/newbuilding/newbuilding.asp



Sedum like this will be planted on more than half of CMU's Education Building roof by Xero Flor, the company that installed the green roof on the Ford Dearborn Truck Assembly Plant shown here. Inset: a sketch of the Education Building.

