LaRose Student Commons

LaRose Student Commons is a two-story, 10,000 square-foot facility that provides gathering and study space for students in the Historic Neighborhood. The building includes a 1,200 square-foot activity room, study nooks, a 3,000 square-foot event space, a kitchen and office space for the Historic Neighborhood.

Per the University's Green Building Policy, the building was designed and constructed using the principles of the LEED program and earned LEED Silver certification. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design and is the preeminent green building rating system internationally.

Sustainable Sites

The building is located within walking distance of many commonly used buildings on campus, as well as downtown Elon. Bike racks are provided on the site and no new parking was added to the site. In fact, parking was removed to allow for the building's construction. The site includes ample open space for outdoor seating and enjoyment.

Water Efficiency

The restroom plumbing fixtures in the building are low-flow. The lavatory faucets use less than 1 gallon of water per minute, toilets have dual-flush handles and the urinals use only 1 pint of water per flush. These fixtures are expected to reduce the building's potable water usage by about 34%. The landscaping around the building is designed to minimize the need for irrigation.

Energy Efficiency

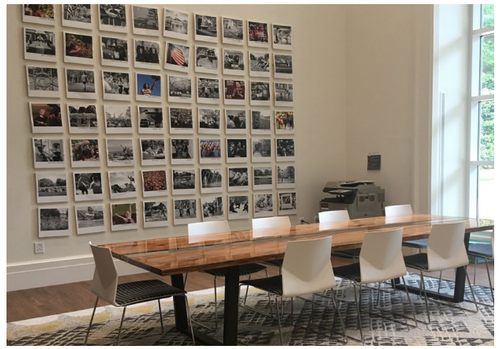
Energy efficient systems were integral in the design and construction of the LaRose Student Commons. The energy cost savings of the building is about 35% compared to a building that meets the standard building energy code. Among the energy efficiency strategies there are variable speed drives on pumps and fans, energy recovery wheels, variable air volume air handling units and high efficiency condensing type boilers. The central chilled water system employs a variable capacity and high efficiency air cooled chiller. Building lighting is controlled through a combination of switching and occupancy sensors. All lighting is LED, including specialty lighting, which does not contain mercury. There is metering for water, natural gas and electricity, including submeters for HVAC, lighting and plug loads, which allows for improved monitoring and tracking of consumption.

Materials and Resources

During construction, about 80% of the waste was recycled or reused, which kept it out of the landfill. In addition, building materials with recycled content (pre and post-consumer) were used, about 14% based on cost. Using recycled content reduces the need for virgin materials. Specific examples include the structural steel and other metal materials.

To support the regional economy and reduce the impact of transportation, regional materials were used as much as possible. In the LEED system, regional materials are those that are extracted, harvested, recovered and manufactured within 500 miles of the project site. Based on cost, about 23% of the building materials are regional. Specific examples include the concrete and structural steel.

In addition, many of the furniture pieces contain recycled content. Two of the community tables in the building incorporate wood from trees removed on campus.



As in all buildings at Elon, recycling containers are located throughout the building for single stream recycling, and cardboard recycling is also available. In addition, the building has collection bins for textiles and thin plastics, as well as compost bins.

Indoor Environmental Quality

Providing excellent indoor environmental quality was another essential component in the design and construction of the LaRose Student Commons as it contributes to the health and productivity of building occupants. Great care was taken during construction to ensure the building and systems were kept clean and free of contaminants benefiting the construction workers and the eventual building occupants and users. For example, duct work was kept covered to prevent debris from accumulating and a special sweeping compound or wetting agent was used to minimize dust.

The adhesives, sealants, paints and flooring systems used in the building contain low or no amounts of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Low VOC products allow for better air quality during and after construction. The composite wood products used in the building contain no added urea-formaldehyde. Many of the furniture pieces also incorporate low-emitting materials, and some have earned a third-party designation that verifies low chemical emissions.

The entry way systems also help provide good indoor air quality be preventing dust and other contaminants on shoes from entering the building. The building also receives natural light from windows located throughout the building. Studies have shown that natural light improves occupant well-being and productivity.

A green cleaning program is also used in the building, which benefits occupants and maintenance personnel. Green cleaning improves air quality, occupant health and well-being and is better for the environment.

Innovation in Design

This category within LEED recognizes exceptional performance and innovative strategies not covered in standard credits. The LaRose Student Commons project earned Innovation in Design credits for the use of LED lighting that does not contain mercury and enhanced water metering. An educational program to educate building occupants, visitors and the greater community on the sustainable building features and their benefits also received credit. If you would like a tour focusing on the sustainable features of this building, please contact us.

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