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Cannon Design's 88,000 s/f Univ. of Maine project earns LEED Silver Certification

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Cannon Design's 88,000 s/f Student Recreation and Fitness Center at the University of Maine project has earned the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification. The Center is the largest building project ever undertaken at the University of Maine. The facility features a three-court gymnasium, fitness center, natatorium (with swimming pool and sauna), walking/jogging track, Multiple Activity Court (MAC) court, racquetball (convertible to squash) courts, and support spaces. The contemporary building fits seamlessly into its heavily wooded site and incorporates sustainable building materials and systems, including heat-recovery systems and recycled materials.

"The beautiful new Student Recreation Center has transformed our community, and news of the LEED Silver Certification is yet another mark of distinction." said University of Maine president, Robert Kennedy. "It is an honor to be recognized for the innovative design, quality construction, and the ultimate benefit that the facility has had upon campus life."

Extensive use of glass on the south façade presents views of the activities within and provides users with views out to the scenic campus. The building's exterior material palette of recycled copper metal clad panels, field stone, glass walls, and architectural precast concrete panels harmonizes with the natural setting. Inside, exposed wood structure, wood paneling, and light filled spaces further reinforce and connect with the natural setting.

Since its opening, the Center has become a hub of healthy, productive campus activity for students, faculty and staff members, and community members.

"The Recreation and Fitness Center has had a wonderful inaugural year, registering more than 320,000 visits by early June," said Jeff Hunt, director of campus recreation at the University of Maine. "It is a focal point of our campus and the LEED Silver Certification shows that we chose the right approach in building the center with sustainability and the environment in mind."

"It is a privilege to have been part of designing and engineering a building that impacts the campus," said Peter Hourihan, principal at Cannon Design. "The Center has become an central part of campus life for students, faculty and staff at the University, and, by highlighting the Center's efficient, sustainable and inventive design, its LEED Silver certification further deepens the Center's significance on campus and its role in enhancing student life."

Comments from the judges the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) which reviewed the Center after its construction said, "This is by far one of the best facilities... The use of natural lighting is phenomenal throughout the facility, as well as the use and color of the wood...An exceptional job in site location, interior finishes and optimizing visual accessibility...This approach expands the definition of campus recreation on campus-promoting a sense of place as well as activity....The pursuit of LEED certification is commendable."

LEED Certification is a recognition validated by the U.S. Green Building Council for building projects that are environmentally responsible, healthy places to live and work. The Certification is awarded through a third-party review program and is internationally recognized as a standard to measure the design, construction, and operation of "green" buildings.

Cannon Design is ranked among the leading international firms in planning and design for healthcare, science & technology, education, sports & recreation and government clients. The firm employs a staff of 800 in 17 offices.

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