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SDSC's East Building Receives LEED Gold Certification

Award is UC San Diego's First 'Gold' for Existing Construction

The San Diego Supercomputer Center (SDSC) at the University of California, San Diego, has been awarded a LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) Gold certification for its SDSC East building expansion.

The LEED Gold certification was granted in the 'Existing Buildings Operations & Maintenance' category by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), a non-profit organization promoting efficient and energy-saving 'green' buildings.

San Diego Supercomputer Center East Building, UC San [...]
Photo: Alan Decker

The SDSC East Building is the first structure on the UC San Diego campus to achieve a Gold certification in the existing building category. To date, six other structures have been awarded LEED Gold certification in the 'New Construction' and 'Commercial Interiors' categories, including the recent Gold award for the Village@Torrey Pines East, North Campus Housing, Phase 2 project. In total, SDSC is the ninth building on campus to receive a LEED rating.

With five levels and two wings creating a V-shaped floorplan, the new structure doubled the size of the existing supercomputer center and Organized Research Unit to 160,000 square-feet. 'Green' features of the SDSC East building include its increased use of natural day lighting, a comprehensive recycling program, efficient water fixture installations, and environmentally responsible cleaning and landscape maintenance programs.

SDSC's staff has been working on a steady basis to improve its sustainable operations of the SDSC East building, which also contains a 4,500 square-foot data center housing numerous racks of high-performance computers as part of the university's Co-Location program. That program encourages researchers from across campus to centrally locate their computer hardware at SDSC, thereby leveraging UC investments and economies-of-scale, while providing services at significantly lower rates and benefiting from energy-efficient practices.

"We are particularly proud to achieve LEED Gold certification, especially for a building that houses a sizeable data center that has very unique power requirements," said SDSC Director Michael Norman.

"One of the most rewarding aspects of this project was its strong student involvement," said Michelle Perez, UC San Diego's Sustainability Analyst and head of UC San Diego's LEED Team that includes Building Commissioning & Sustainability staff, interns, USGBC Student Organization members, and campus volunteers. "Moreover, this achievement would not have been possible without the help of Facilities Management, San Diego Supercomputer Center employees, and the Facilities, Design and Construction staff."

Seventeen other buildings on the UC San Diego campus are currently registered with the Green Building Certification Institute and undergoing the LEED certification process.

About SDSC

As an Organized Research Unit of UC San Diego, SDSC is considered a leader in data-intensive computing and cyberinfrastructure, providing resources, services, and expertise to the national research community, including industry and academia. Cyberinfrastructure refers to an accessible, integrated network of computer-based resources and expertise, focused on accelerating scientific inquiry and discovery. SDSC supports hundreds of multidisciplinary programs spanning a wide variety of domains, from earth sciences and biology to astrophysics, bioinformatics, and health IT.

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