



**BUSINESS ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS
PRESENTED BY ACTERRA: ACTION FOR A SUSTAINABLE EARTH
2009 APPLICATION**

Ohlone College, Newark Center – Sustainable Built Environment

A. PROGRAM SUMMARY

Ohlone College's Newark Center for Health Sciences and Technology has won the most prestigious certification possible from the US Green Building Council, the LEED Platinum Rating. Awarded at the December 2008 meeting of the council, Ohlone College is the only college in the United States at this time to be certified at the Platinum level. This award resulted from a commitment by the college's president and board of trustees to build the most environmental campus possible. With those criteria in mind, the designers and builders of the campus, along with the college staff, proceeded to address every design issue with that goal. On average 50% of the campus's electricity will be provided by 38,000 square feet of solar panels.

Energy recovery systems, using two enthalpy wheels, maintain comfortable temperatures in the building. Approximately 26 miles of geothermal coils aid in providing cool air in the summer and warm air in the winter. Recycled blue jeans provide insulation material, and the furniture used by staff and students is constructed of recycled materials. The entire 130,000 square foot, two-story building on an 81-acre campus reflects a remarkable commitment to sustainability in the built environment.

B. CRITERIA

1. Leadership

The committed leadership that led to the construction of Ohlone's Newark Center for Health Sciences and Technology campus was demonstrated from the very start of the planning effort. The original site selected was made available through a cooperative effort between the City of Newark and a local landowner at below market cost. However, upon review of the existing environmental conditions of the site, it was determined that the site would not be an appropriate choice for a campus with a goal of being the most environmentally responsible community college possible. So the difficult decision was made to look elsewhere, and that decision led to the current, preferred alternative location.

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Most professionals in construction and architecture will agree that there are few, if any, easily developable building sites left in the Bay Area. The alternative site, located across a major thoroughfare from a high school campus with excellent public transportation access, did require a Brownfield remediation effort.

Again, the Ohlone Board of Trustees demonstrated commitment and leadership by purchasing the site and allocating funds for the clean up of the site, while recognizing the eventual benefits of building at the location. The campus was awarded an “Environmental Hero” award from the EPA for the clean up of the site.

That leadership continued throughout the entire planning, design and construction process. For any public institution of higher learning, capital and construction costs are paramount. However, Ohlone’s staff, working closely with their architects and contractors, recognized the future savings in energy that would be generated by utilizing a wide range of construction materials, building fixtures, landscaping, and lighting. These decisions, made during the design and construction of the campus, were not always easily reached, but the leadership of the college along with a LEED accredited project management team met the challenge.

2. Significant Environmental Benefits

The newly constructed campus is a model of what the Sustainable Built Environment can be with a demonstrated commitment to preserving natural resources. Pleasant aesthetics greet the visitor and the community. Green building design elements are clearly demonstrated from the attractive, thermally efficient windows to the less visible elements incorporated into the design. The entire campus makes a statement to students, faculty and staff and the public that Ohlone’s Newark Center for Health Sciences and Technology is much more than a typical community college. Here are some of the major elements of the built environment of the campus:

- Solar panels that generate on average 50% of the building’s energy needs
- 26-miles of geothermal ground coils also contributed to reduced energy usage
- Two 16-foot diameter enthalpy wheels, fresh-air energy recapture systems that save up to 25% of costs for cooling and heating
- Water efficient, Bay Friendly® landscaping

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- Ground denim insulation, more efficient than traditional fiberglass
- Carpet made from 30% to 38% recycled plastics
- Up to 97% recyclable, ergonomically-designed furniture
- Recycled content terrazzo flooring
- “Macheche” Guatemalan hardwood, responsibly harvested using Forest Stewardship Council guidelines
- Brownfield remediation of herbicide contaminated soil
- Wetland restoration site to become Living Laboratory for campus
- Low VOC emission paint

In addition to the now expected efforts at constructing a sustainable building, such as solar panels and low flush toilets, the Ohlone team ensured that the furnishings installed were comprised of recycled materials and the landscaping was friendly to the sensitive Bay environment adjacent to the campus.

From the first days of construction, construction debris was continuously recycled by the construction manager, Turner Construction. An outstanding 91% of the construction material left over from the project was recycled.

3. Potential Model for Business and Education Community

The Newark Center has already received national recognition from being the first community college campus to receive the prestigious LEED Platinum certification, and has immediately begun to serve as a model for other institutions and businesses. The college staff, design, and construction teams have been and continue to be very generous with their time, sharing ideas, lessons learned, and hosting tours. The design and construction methods used in the development of the Newark Center are readily accessible to other institutions and construction professionals.

This remarkable campus illustrates that with commitment and leadership, the science and art of constructing a functional, attractive element of the built environment can be completed by other businesses and institutions.

The college staff is in the midst of a program that will develop a core group of local environmental educators and community leaders that will be able to use the campus as a model for what can be achieved with leadership and commitment.

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4. Demonstrating Program Commitment

The development of the Newark Center for Health Sciences and Technology was the result of a bond measure passed by the voters in Ohlone College's district. That the Fremont, Newark and a portion of Union City voters supported the passage of the bond measure was due, in large part, to the demonstrated commitment of the college, working in concert with local elected officials. The bond issue had unanimous support of the local education community and community leaders.

Once the bond measure passed, the president of Ohlone College and the board of trustees never wavered in their commitment to bring a state-of-the-art campus to Newark. That commitment was furthered by the selection of the architects, Perkins+Will, and the construction manager, Turner Construction. The selection of those firms was based in large part upon their proven records in sustainable design and construction. In addition, all of the sub-consultants, sub-contractors, and suppliers were selected and supervised to ensure a continuing commitment to building a green campus.

No construction project is exempt from concerns over expenditures, and decisions had to be made every step of the way to contain costs. To protect the goal of a green campus, a separate ongoing program was developed and led by the Ohlone staff to solicit contributions from local industries and the community to complete the furnishing of the campus. The names of contributors represent Fremont's and Newark's community leaders.

"When the college decided we had this opportunity to build a new campus, we wanted to do something that met the needs of students for the 21st century, as well as took care of the environment and what we call the sacred grounds below us," said Leta Stagnaro, associate vice president at Ohlone college. "The Ohlone College is named after the [Ohlone] Indians. In honoring the Indians and their tradition of honoring the ground and resources, we decided we wanted to take part in that philosophy." It's very rewarding for the college, not only for faculty and staff and students, but the entire community, to be able to complete the project the way that we did," said Stagnaro. "It was something we felt was important to do. And when people say they can't build a campus on a (LEED) Platinum level, we can say we did it. So it can be done."

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5. Collaborative Effort

The collaborative effort(s) that led to this remarkable community college campus began during the campaign for the bond ballot measure and continued through design and construction. The staff at Ohlone selected Turner Construction as construction manager for the Newark Center for Health Sciences and Technology project. With over 40 LEED projects completed and an additional 65 projects underway, Turner's extensive experience in building sustainable construction projects, which made them uniquely suited to work with and collaborate with Ohlone on this project. Their experience combined with access to a broad database of Green material suppliers and processes was a key element of the collaborative process.

However, the collaborative process did not end with the opening of the college campus. Ohlone College faculty and staff members have started a sustainability committee to promote sustainable practices on campus and address issues concerning energy and the environment. Committee members will discuss ways that they can promote sustainable practices in the classroom, on campus, at home, and in the community. By taking charge and leading by example, they hope others will begin to practice sustainable lifestyles as well. This will lead to a cost savings for Ohlone and its students, as well as reduce strain on the environment. David Acorn, Ohlone's Student Sustainability Coordinator says, "Ohlone College has one of the most energy efficient buildings in the world. We have the opportunity to teach others how to be sustainable and realize how much potential sustainable practices have. Green technology has the potential to be the most profitable and rewarding industry in the next decade."

