

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 22, 2011

CONTACTS: Geri Kelley
MSU College of Human Medicine
Office (616) 233-1678 / Cell (616) 350-7976
geri.kelley@hc.msu.edu

Kate Washburn
Wondergem Consulting, Inc.
Office: (616) 235-7467 / Mobile: (616) 308-4047
kate@wondergem.com

MSU Secchia Center medical education building achieves LEED® Gold certification

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – The Secchia Center, headquarters for the Michigan State University College of Human Medicine, has been awarded LEED® Gold certification, one of the highest environmental designations available.

“The award is a real mark of distinction,” said Marsha D. Rappley, MD, the College of Human Medicine’s dean. “It’s a natural outcome of trying to construct the very best building with the resources we had. We’re very excited to have this recognition, and it’s a reflection of all the hard work that went into it.”

Renaë Hesselink, chair of the U.S. Green Building Council West Michigan Chapter, presented a plaque Dean Rappley at a special Earth Day event Friday at the Secchia Center.

The Gold certification, second highest available, is in recognition of the many environmentally friendly features that went into the design and construction of the Secchia Center, which opened last fall in downtown Grand Rapids. The building’s location in an urban setting, its highly efficient lighting, heating and cooling systems, its use of building materials from within 500 miles and other green attributes helped it achieve Gold certification.

While those sustainable features somewhat increased construction cost, the resulting energy savings will offset it in a little more than six years, said Shirine Boulos Anderson, principal with Ellenzweig, Design Architect for the new headquarters. Michigan State University has a long tradition of environmentally friendly programs, she noted, and Grand Rapids often is called one of the greenest cities in the country because of its concentration of LEED certified buildings.

“Grand Rapids is an amazing community where there is high awareness of sustainability,” Anderson said.

Going for the Gold required a great deal of commitment by everyone involved, including MSU, the designers and the builders, said Dan LaMore, senior vice president of the Christman Co, which managed the building’s construction. For example, it’s one thing to plan on recycling most waste materials, he said, but it’s another to make sure it happens.

“It required a very rigid management process,” LaMore said. “It’s a very collaborative effort.”

-more-

Dick Temple, an executive with URS Corp., Architect of Record for the Secchia Center project, noted that all four buildings in the new Michigan Street Development, which includes the Secchia Center, have achieved some level of LEED certification. Two of those buildings – the Secchia Center and Spectrum Health’s Lemmen-Holton Cancer Pavilion – earned Gold certification.

“It’s consistent with the belief system of this community,” Temple said, adding that MSU “comes from a background that values the earth.”

From its birth as a land-grant college, MSU has followed practices minimizing its impact on the earth. It expanded that commitment through its Office of Campus Sustainability and its “Be Spartan Green” campaign.

The Secchia Center is MSU’s second LEED Gold certified building. The other is the MSU Surplus Store and Recycling Center on the East Lansing campus. The university’s Chemistry Building in East Lansing and its Kellogg Biological Station dairy facility in Kalamazoo County were granted LEED Silver.

Environmental stewardship applied at every step of the Secchia Center’s design and construction, said Elizabeth Lawrence, the College of Human Medicine’s assistant dean for capital and strategic planning.

“I think the greatest significance (of the LEED Gold certification) is even the highest standards can be accomplished with extraordinary teamwork,” she said. “Really, it’s a pretty great capstone achievement for an already great facility.”

In September 2010, the College of Human Medicine opened the Secchia Center, completing one of the largest medical school expansions in the country. The Secchia Center is entirely financed without public funding. Sources include \$55 million in committed funding from Spectrum Health, which includes interest and principal payments over 25 years. Private donations cover remaining costs.

Founded in 1964 as one of the nation’s first community-based medical schools, the College of Human Medicine has since graduated more than 3,700 medical doctors. The college’s research profile has grown considerably over the past several years, including the recent addition of a \$6.2 million Morris K. Udall Center of Excellence for Parkinson’s disease research and a \$6.8 million Center for Women’s Health and Reproduction Research. For more information, visit humanmedicine.msu.edu

#