

NORTH AMERICA'S 'GREENEST' CAMPUS PURSUES ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

Energy Systems and Nuclear Science Research Centre Opens

TORONTO – The University of Ontario Institute of Technology today celebrated the opening of the newest addition to its growing campus in Oshawa, Ontario. The Energy Systems and Nuclear Science Research Centre completes the original Master Plan of eight buildings, six of which are arranged around a campus quad, and all designed by Diamond Schmitt Architects.

The ERC will focus on research and teaching clean and green energies and technologies. The four-storey, 9,290-square-metre (100,000-square-foot) facility houses 16 laboratories for the study and advancement of geothermal, hydraulic, hydrogen, natural gas, nuclear, solar and wind energy technologies. The building also houses six multi-media classrooms, 70 offices, plus lounges and study areas configured around a central skylit atrium, which provides a point of orientation, gathering and connection for students and faculty.

This building shares a similar scale and compositional form to the other modular buildings on the quad: a regularized bay system composed of warm red brick, copper cladding, cedar detailing and large windows to ensure natural light and views. The ERC is distinguished on the façade opposite the quad by an all-copper treatment that speaks to the program within: the conductivity of copper being a visual metaphor for research into different forms of energy.

All of UOIT's buildings are designed to be highly flexible and adaptable to future program needs and teaching configurations. "Faculty offices, lounges, study areas, and even lecture halls and labs can be swapped without major structural or mechanical revisions to the base buildings," said Donald Schmitt, Principal with Diamond Schmitt Architects. Added project architect Michael Szabo: "The UOIT design concept is an academic village forming a landscaped quadrangle that overlooks the Oshawa Creek Ravine."

For UOIT, the new facility means enabling research that is vital for Canada's sustainable economic growth. "ERC's cutting-edge facilities will allow UOIT's highly regarded professors to advance innovative research of the highest quality in clean and green energy technologies," said Dr. Tim McTiernan, UOIT president and vice-chancellor. "ERC will attract new researchers and new students to UOIT, lead to the creation of new knowledge and new intellectual property, and also promote Canada's entrepreneurial advantage through public-private research and commercialization partnerships."

The planning, design and engineering of the entire campus exhibits a profound commitment to sustainability, which garnered recognition as the "greenest" campus in North America from the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP), when UOIT opened in 2003. Polansky Commons, the grass-covered quadrangle, sits atop what was then North America's largest geothermal heating and cooling system. The 42-acre campus has a comprehensive, sustainable landscape strategy culminating in a protected wetland and an adjacent ravine. Each of the buildings in the 900,000-square-foot of built space is designed to LEED Gold specifications.

Diamond Schmitt Architects (www.dsai.ca) is a leading Canadian full-service architectural practice dedicated to sustainable design solutions. The firm is recognized for excellence in the design of award-winning academic research buildings, commercial, residential and health care institutions and performing arts centres. Current projects include the Global Innovation Exchange Building at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, Bridgepoint Hospital and the Sick Children's Hospital Research Tower in Toronto.

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