

# Diamond and Schmitt Architects

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### DREXEL UNIVERSITY CELEBRATES NEW SCIENCE BUILDING

Diamond and Schmitt Architects' design includes first living wall on a U.S. campus

TORONTO – Drexel University in Philadelphia today opened the Constantine N. Papadakis Integrated Sciences Building designed by Diamond and Schmitt Architects. The five-storey building serves as a campus gateway and sets a new benchmark for sustainable design at U. S. universities.

The limestone-clad facility houses 44 research and teaching laboratories for biology, organic chemistry and biomedical engineering. A ground floor 250-seat auditorium and café are adjacent to a large atrium with a dramatic coiled staircase and a 75-foot tall biofilter living wall – the largest installation of its kind to date in North America.

“This building creates a living room, a gathering space for the Drexel community which didn’t exist before”, said Donald Schmitt, Principal with Diamond and Schmitt Architects. “The design intent is to allow students and faculty to come together to work and socialize in the atrium, in labs filled with natural light, and in lounges or ‘collaboratories’ located in a three-storey transparent tower.”

The 150,000 square-foot building on a triangular site anchors a main intersection on campus and is expected to become Drexel’s first building to achieve LEED certification by the U.S. Green Building Council.

“The form and function of the Papadakis Integrated Sciences Building have grown out of Drexel’s commitment to environmental sustainability and biological science,” said Drexel President John A. Fry. “This unique facility serves as a hub for some of Drexel’s most important research and innovation, while responding to the demands of good campus stewardship.”

Sustainable features include alternate transportation, rainwater management and heat island mitigation. The five-storey-high biowall was designed and installed by NEDLAW Living Walls in collaboration with Diamond and Schmitt Architects. The two firms pioneered the installation of these plant-based air purifiers. Airborne pollutants are drawn over the plants’ root zones where microbes help to remove particulates and volatile compounds to produce an exemplary standard of indoor air quality. By connecting the biowall to the HVAC system, the recycled and cleansed air significantly reduces demands on heating and cooling outside air and lowers energy consumption.

Diamond and Schmitt Architects ([www.dsai.ca](http://www.dsai.ca)) has extensive experience designing academic and laboratory facilities. Mr. Schmitt was Principal-in-Charge of the campus master plan and academic buildings at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, the Bahen Centre at the University of Toronto and the Computer Science and Engineering Building and the South Thayer Academic Building, both at the University of Michigan. The firm is also active in performing arts spaces, residential and commercial projects around the world.

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