

THE FUTURE OF LEARNING

Centennial College Opens LEED Gold Library and Academic Facility

TORONTO – A new gateway building for the flagship campus of Centennial College opened today to meet the needs of an expanding student population in the digital age. The state-of-the-art Library and Academic Facility designed by Diamond and Schmitt Architects combines a wide range of learning and study spaces and is targeting LEED Gold designation for energy efficiency.

The 103,500-square-foot facility contains 22 classrooms, a 200-seat auditorium, double-height library, learning labs, academic offices and a light-filled atrium that serves as a central meeting point on campus. A four-storey biofilter living wall is the centerpiece of the atrium and acts as a natural air purifier for the building. Diamond and Schmitt Architects pioneered the commercial application of this technology developed by Nedlaw Living Walls as part of its ongoing commitment to sustainable design solutions.

“The design of this building is welcoming, inspirational and suffused with natural light”, said Donald Schmitt, Principal with Diamond and Schmitt Architects. A striking combination of brick, copper and composite wood is featured on the exterior cladding. A sequence of glazed vertical bays on the north façade extends across the roofline to harvest daylight that reaches deep into the core to expose 75 percent of the floor plate to natural light.

Responsive to new and adaptive ways of learning, the building provides over 250 study, research and collaborative work spaces for students with an array of technologies available, including workstations, media viewing carrels for small groups, technology studios that match the presentation capabilities of classrooms, video conferencing and wireless network access throughout.

“Just as building technology and materials have changed, so too have our expectations of a college library”, says Ann Buller, President, Centennial College. “Students today are much more apt to study in groups; they access resource materials with wireless devices; and expect to gather rare archival information within seconds, not working days. For all these reasons, Centennial’s new library plays a pivotal role in providing a supportive learning environment”.

Classrooms on the first and second floors accommodate 1,900 students in traditional and theatre-style room configurations. The auditorium, atrium, a café and gallery are also located on the ground floor. The third floor houses the library, special collections, archives, library offices and a variety of study spaces, including labs for individual and group study. Additional meeting rooms, silent study areas and offices for Centennial’s senior administrators comprise the top floor. All spaces in the building overlook the four-storey atrium in the centre of the building accessed by circular corridors.

Along with the biowall, other sustainable features include a rainwater-collection system for reuse in washrooms and a green roof on the auditorium; these serve to lower the environmental impact and greatly reduce operating costs for the college. “The Library and Academic Facility frames a new alumni courtyard and improves access to existing buildings on campus”, Schmitt said. “It embodies the excitement and energy of Centennial’s diverse student body”.

Diamond and Schmitt Architects (www.dsai.ca) is a leading Canadian full-service architectural practice. The firm is recognized for excellence in the design of award-winning academic and research buildings, commercial, residential and health care institutions and performing arts centres. Current projects include the Schulich School of Engineering, University of Calgary, the St. Catharines Centre for the Performing Arts and Bridgepoint Hospital in Toronto.

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