

# Sustainability a Priority at North Park University Johnson Center for Science and Community Life

CHICAGO, IL (September 9, 2014) – When the new [Nancy and G. Timothy Johnson Center for Science and Community Life](#) was being conceived as an integral part of North Park University's campus, sustainability was a critically important component to the overall design and use of the building. North Park worked closely with longtime architectural partner, VOA Associates Inc., to conceive what has been designed to achieve [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design \(LEED\)](#) Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council, which establishes criteria for the construction of sustainable buildings.

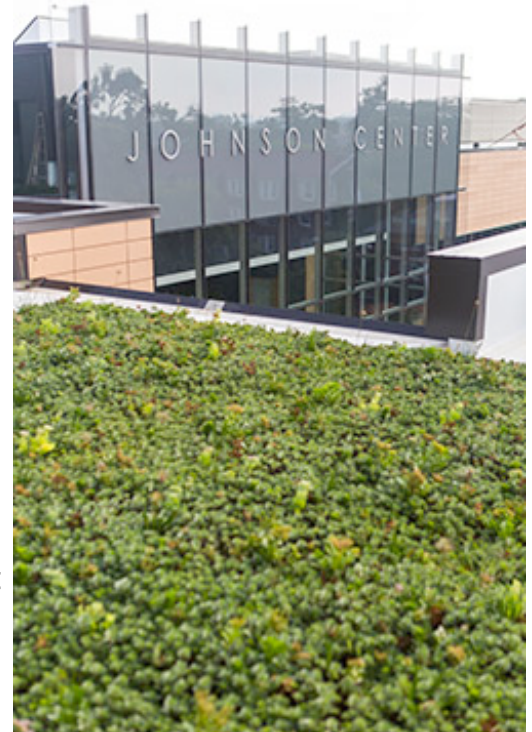
"Environmental stewardship and sustainability within our urban campus setting was one of our main objectives," said Carl Balsam, executive vice president and chief financial officer of North Park University.

LEED-certified buildings are designed to lower

operating costs, reduce waste sent to landfills during construction and operation, conserve energy and water, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and increase asset value. Utilizing a LEED checklist of targeted sustainable solutions, North Park University was able to provide the best environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors, while also minimizing waste, reducing toxins, lowering potential energy bills and operating costs, and achieving healthier indoor air quality.

Throughout the design process, participants in design charrettes—which included scientists, faculty, staff and administrators, and students—gave input to the architectural team for the design of a building that would create a space for all students, optimize outdoor space and daylight, as well as meet sustainability goals. That design is evident in the two-story atrium, and lobby, which encourages gathering and social interaction.

-MORE-



*Sustainability features include a "green roof" on the Johnson Center for Science and Community Life, which not only promotes stewardship but provides a real-life laboratory for environmental science students at North Park University.*

A number of sustainable solutions were implemented throughout design and construction phases. The Johnson Center is on track to achieve LEED Gold status. The sustainable points achieved as regulated by LEED include Sustainable Site; Water Efficiency; Energy and Atmosphere; Materials and Resources; Indoor Environmental Quality and Innovation and Design Process.

Uniquely, many aspects of the Johnson Center LEED certification will be studied and taught as part of the [environmental science major](#) and [chemistry major](#) curriculum at North Park. Specifically, the "Introduction to Environmental Science" class taught by [Dr. Al Bjorkman](#) and the "Environmental Chemistry" taught by [Dr. Jon Rienstra-Kiracofe](#) will study the various components that comprise the Johnson Center's LEED Gold status, such as the green roof and energy efficiency and sustainable technologies.

Storm water runoff was abated utilizing a green roof, storm water collection, retention and re-use, and vegetated detention areas. Native and adaptive landscaping will help reduce irrigation needs. In addition to the green roof, high albedo, white thermoplastic roof membrane was used to reduce heat absorption and minimize the urban heat island effect.

Because North Park University's urban location provides easy access to multiple public transportation options, exemplary transit related LEED credits were obtained.

[Learn more](#) about the Johnson Center building, including [photos of the process from start to finish](#). For more information about North Park University's Nancy and G. Timothy Johnson Center for Science and Community Life dedication celebration September 12 and 13, visit [www.northpark.edu/News/Nancy-and-G-Timothy-Johnson-Center/Dedication](http://www.northpark.edu/News/Nancy-and-G-Timothy-Johnson-Center/Dedication).

###

**CONTACT:**

Lori Keenan  
Smarthinking PR for North Park University  
[Lori@SmarthinkingPR.com](mailto:Lori@SmarthinkingPR.com)  
(847) 902-2905

Marcia Mawe  
Director of Marketing  
North Park University  
[mmawe@northpark.edu](mailto:mmawe@northpark.edu)  
(773) 244-5750

North Park University  
3225 W Foster Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60625  
[www.northpark.edu](http://www.northpark.edu)

