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Green building takes gold: Learning and Innovation Centre Wins Victoria Real Estate Board Excellence Award

Victoria – Royal Roads University's newly opened Learning and Innovation Centre (LIC) took home the top honours in the institutional category at the 20th Annual Victoria Real Estate Board's Building Awards, edging out several significant contenders.

"We are very proud of our state-of-the-art facility and this award," said Dan Tulip, vice-president and chief financial officer who accepted the award on behalf of the university. "The LIC complements the character and form of the historic buildings and heritage attributes of Hatley Park in a contemporary manner. Careful thought and planning went into its sustainable construction, from its low-impact site placement, to its technology features, to high indoor environmental air quality, low water usage and energy efficiency."

A panel of judges selected from Victoria's business community gave the award to the LIC based on criteria that included environmental sensitivity, how well the building fits with its surrounding property, aesthetics, choice of construction materials, and overall exterior design.

"Royal Roads University has led the way with our unique blended learning model of short intense residencies and online collaborative approach, and the LIC allows us to take this approach to the next level," said Allan Cahoon, president and vice-chancellor, Royal Roads University. "The award recognizes the LIC is a facility for the 21st century. Not only do we now have more learning space, by embracing the latest in technology our students and faculty can reach beyond the classroom, to connect and collaborate globally on real world issues and solutions.

The LIC offers 33 breakout rooms, seven classrooms, five computer labs and social spaces spanning 5,781 square metres. The fourth floor Centre for Dialogue incorporates high-end technology such as a 30-foot screen for multimedia presentations.

"I, like many students, understand that it's more than just a beautiful and shiny new building. The LIC fosters growth and creativity," said Chelsey Smith, Royal Roads University Student Association president. "The open concept layout, large classrooms and natural light creates an easy learning environment that is generous and comfortable."

The Learning and Innovation Centre was funded by $15 million in provincial funding and $5.1 million from the federal Knowledge Infrastructure Program funding. The building costs were almost $4 million under budget and due to economy of design, favourable economic conditions, and the efforts of a strong project and technical team.

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Royal Roads University was established by the Province of British Columbia in 1995 specifically to deliver quality applied and professional programs to advance professionals in the workplace. The university blends online and on-campus learning with current, real-world relevance for doctorate, graduate and undergraduate degrees, certificates, diplomas, executive and custom education.

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Learning & Innovation Centre - Green Standards Fact Sheet:

- The building and site development have evolved through the application of sustainability principles and is designed to LEED Gold standards.
- Sustainability of site ensured through erosion control measures implemented during construction – building built on site of previous parking lot therefore not destroying natural forest areas.
- Area equal to building footprint set aside for non-development on campus.
- Storm water managed on site with no additional run-off than pre-developed site.
- 95 per cent of construction waste was diverted from the landfill.
- Water use efficiency achieved through use of non-potable water for low-flush toilets, and use of non-potable site water for irrigation of native and drought tolerant plants.
- Energy use reduced through natural ventilation – opening windows and 'chimney effect' of atrium to draw fresh air through building.
- Solar panels provide hot water for washrooms and showers.
- Highly reflective roof reduces need for mechanical cooling in summer.
- Efficient natural gas heating system which can be converted to district heating system in future.
- Heat recovery in mechanical ventilation systems.
- Provisions for bike racks and shower facilities promote cycling to work/study.
- State-of-the-art recycling program is in place, including composting.
- Components used in building are durable; brick, stone, concrete, aluminium, glass and utilize a high recycled content.
- Regionally available materials are used such as B.C. wood throughout the interior spaces.
- Indoor Environmental Quality is maintained through use of low emitting materials and control of air and chemical pollutants particularly with green cleaning measures in place.
- Occupant well-being is assisted by extensive daylight throughout and views from all parts of the building.