

DSU Becomes 1st State Entity in Obama's Better Building Challenge

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DSU President Harry L. Williams said the University has a role in modeling best practices in Delaware. He said DSU is doing just that through its building energy upgrades project.

Delaware State University's commitment to be an institutional leader in environmental stewardship has moved to a new level as it has become the first state entity in President Barack Obama's Better Building Challenge announced today.

The Challenge is part of the Obama Administration's Better Buildings Initiative launched earlier this year spearheaded by former President Bill Clinton and the President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness.

The Better Buildings Initiative supports job creation by catalyzing private sector investment in commercial and industrial building energy upgrades to make America's buildings 20% more efficient over the next decade, reducing energy costs across the country by nearly \$40 billion.

The University was invited to be a part of the initiative as the result of its honor in receiving the 2011 Climate Leadership Award from the American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC). The award recognized DSU for the work it has done as a member institution of the ACUPCC through its Go Green initiative on campus since 2009.

DSU is one of 60 university, corporate, community and industrial partners in the Better Buildings Initiative. Of the 10 universities, DSU is the only HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) selected.

"Higher education should play a meaningful role in modeling best practices for their states. Delaware State University is honored to join President Obama in the Challenge and also to contribute to Delaware's becoming an environmental leader in reducing its carbon footprint," said DSU President Harry L. Williams, in attendance at today's announcement and gathering of participants in

Washington, D.C.

Among DSU's initiatives enabling it to be part of the President Obama's Challenge is a Guaranteed Energy Savings Agreement in coordination with the Delaware Sustained Utility (SEU). The University entered into the agreement, allowing it to invest in energy conservation and facility improvements, after completing an exhaustive investment grade energy audit.

"We were looking for ways to address some needed facility improvements in a way that would save on energy costs and allow us to spend dollars on other needs to serve our students," Dr. Williams said.

The endeavor will help the University realize more than \$5 million in savings over 20 years. The SEU has issued Energy Efficiency Revenue Bonds to finance upgrades and help DSU achieve a goal of 25% in greenhouse gas reductions by 2015.



DSU is the first Delaware entity to commit its participation in President Barack Obama's Better Buildings Challenge.

State Sen. Harris B. McDowell III, D-Wilmington North, who sponsored the legislation setting up the state's Sustainable Energy Utility and serves as its co-chair, congratulated the University on becoming part of an important national program.

"A hallmark of any great leader is his or her ability to both seize and take full advantage of the opportunities before them," McDowell said. "President Harry Williams and DSU Executive Vice President for Finance and University Treasurer Amir Mohammadi have demonstrated vision and leadership by joining the SEU Bond Program and saving the University millions of dollars in energy costs."

McDowell, long recognized as a leader in energy policy, said the program is important because it helps institutions take advantage of the "non-use of energy" which he observed is the nation's cleanest and greatest new energy resource. "President Williams has helped to cement DSU's position as one of our country's most forward-thinking schools."

Dr. John Byrne, co-chair of the SEU and the architect of the bond structure, praised DSU for embracing the distinctive role of higher education. "DSU has turned its campus into a living laboratory for how to build a sustainable future – it shines as a model of advanced thinking for the country," he said.

The SEU's 2011 Energy Efficiency Bond is the first in the country to finance clean energy investments from the money savings created. The SEU has put Delaware in the forefront of clean energy efforts nationally, with several cities, counties and states duplicating the model, according to Dr. Byrne.

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“Being asked to be a member of the President’s Better Building Challenge validates that DSU is focused on what matters to our state and our nation,” said Dr. Williams.

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