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

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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.

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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.

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.

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?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.?

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

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.

?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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