LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is an internationally-recognized green building certification system. Developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) in March 2000, LEED provides building owners and operators with a framework for identifying and implementing practical and measurable green building design, construction, operations and maintenance solutions.
Project Summary
After 56 years on Tulane’s historic uptown campus, the Tulane School of Social Work moved into the newly renovated third and fourth floors of 127 Elk Place. Originally built in 1917 as the Elk’s Lodge headquarters, the historic building is located just off Canal Street next to the Joy Theater. The building is now part of Tulane’s Downtown Campus and provides a perfect home for the School of Social Work. The renovation provides 20,000 square feet of offices, smart classrooms, and support spaces for the school, which previously occupied a 7,000 square foot building on the uptown campus. The new space includes a faculty and staff lounge and kitchen, a student kitchen, two student lounges, a 100-person lecture hall, and a two-story sun room with a hanging garden. The downtown location provides easier access to community partners and perfect environment for students to learn about the field of social work. The project was awarded LEED Gold.

Transportation
The Tulane School of Social Work, located just outside of downtown New Orleans, is now closer and more accessible to its community partners than it was on the uptown campus. At the downtown location public transportation is available to nearly all parts of the city. There are four RTA bus stops within 100 yards, two of the Tulane shuttle lines stop at the building, and the Canal streetcar line runs along Canal Street, less than a block away. Nearby “bus hubs” connect commuters to several different bus lines and the streetcar provides easy access to many others. The area is also part of a growing network of bike lanes on major roads throughout the city. Showers are also provided for those who may bike to work. Within walking distance of 127 Elk one can find restaurants, shops, daycare, medical care, and a host of other services.

Efficient Water Use
Water use is managed with in the building, most notably with low-flow plumbing fixtures. Low-flow urinals use .25 gallons per flush and each water closet uses only 1.28 gallons per flush. Low-flow showers and faucets are also included in the water management system. All together the installation of these fixtures is expected to reduce the school’s water use by 20%.

Energy Efficiency
Determined to be in good condition, the existing central HVAC unit was kept and recalibrated for greater energy efficiency. New energy efficient distribution equipment was installed throughout the project while temperature controls installed in most rooms allow users to control their environment within a fixed range. To help support more efficient mechanical systems, all of the exterior walls were insulated, providing R-13 insulation levels and sealing air leaks in the historic facade. To further reduce cooling loads, as well as the heat island effect, highly reflective materials were installed on more than 75% of the existing roof. Rooms have motion and light sensors to turn lights off when spaces are unoccupied or dim lights when there is ample daylight. The energy efficient lighting systems will allow for over 25% reduction in lighting power usage. Finally, all of the appliances purchased for the project are ENERGYSTAR rated, as per university-wide standards.
Recycling & Sustainable Materials
Approximately 62% of all demolition and construction waste for the project was diverted from landfills including concrete, metal, drywall, carpet and ceiling tiles. Over 85% of the wood used in the project, including the custom suspended wooden ceilings and wooden doors, is certified as sustainably grown and harvested by the Forest Stewardship Council. Approximately 11% of the building materials were sourced from within a 500 mile radius to help decrease transportation related pollution and offset the project’s carbon footprint.

Measured by cost, over 11% of the materials purchased for the renovation were made of recycled content. These materials include metal, ceiling tiles, insulation and wood. One third of all of the furniture (in cost) in the building was moved from the previous location, reducing the need for raw materials to make new furniture. Recycling rooms are included on both floors so that the sustainable trend can continue from construction to occupancy.

Indoor Environmental Quality
During construction, the contractors and work crews took extra precautions to ensure the future indoor air quality inside the building. These measures included protecting the HVAC system from dirt and dust and protecting materials from moisture before, during, and after installation. All adhesives and sealants were screened to ensure that they meet low-VOC standards. To help maintain a connection to the outdoors, the highly compartmentalized interior was opened up, affording most of the rooms direct or indirect access to sunlight through windows, skylights and glass sidelights. Building performance will be continually monitored using occupant surveys and electronic monitoring devices in identified areas. Finally, in an effort to continually promote healthy working habits, an ergonomics policy was developed for the full-time occupants which provides advice and support in setting up an ergonomic workstation.
Prerequisites

C  R  SSp1  Construction Activity Pollution Prevention
D  R  WEp1  Water Use Reduction, 20% Reduction
C  R  EAp1  Fundamental Commissioning of the Building Energy Systems
D  R  EAp2  Minimum Energy Performance
C  R  EAp3  Fundamental Refrigerant Management
D  R  MRp1  Storage and Collection of Recyclables
D  R  IEQp1  Minimum Indoor Air Quality Performance
D  R  IEQp2  Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) Control

Earned Points - 68

D  2  SSc1  Site Selection
D  6  SSc2  Development Density & Community Connectivity
D  6  SSc3.1  Alternative Transportation - Public Transportation Access
D  6  SSc3.2  Alternative Transportation - Bicycle Storage and Changing Rooms
D  6  SSc3.3  Alternative Transportation - Parking Availability
D  6  WEc1  Water Use Reduction (32% reduction)
D  5  EAc1.1  Optimize Energy Performance - Lighting Power (25% reduction)
D  1  EAc1.2  Optimize Energy Performance - Lighting Controls
D  5  EAc1.3  Optimize Energy Performance - HVAC
D  4  EAc1.4  Optimize Energy Performance - Equipment and Appliances (100% Energy Star)
C  5  EAc2  Enhanced Commissioning
D  2  EAc3  Measurement and Verification
D  1  MRc1.1  Tenant Space - Long-Term Commitment
C  1  MRc2  Construction Waste Management (86% waste diverted)
C  1  MRc3.2  Materials Reuse - Furniture and Furnishings (46% by cost)
C  1  MRc7  Certified Wood
D  1  IEQc1  Outdoor Air Delivery Monitoring
D  1  IEQc2  Increased Ventilation
C  1  IEQc3.1  Construction IAQ Management Plan - During Construction
C  1  IEQc3.2  Construction IAQ Management Plan - Before Occupancy
C  1  IEQc4.1  Low-Emitting Materials - Adhesives and Sealants
C  1  IEQc4.3  Low-Emitting Materials - Flooring Systems
C  1  IEQc4.5  Low-Emitting Materials - Systems Furniture and Seating
D  1  IEQc5  Indoor Chemical and Pollutant Source Control
D  1  IEQc6.1  Controllability of Systems - Lighting
D  1  IEQc6.2  Controllability of Systems - Thermal Comfort
D  1  IEQc7.1  Thermal Comfort - Design
D  1  IEQc7.2  Thermal Comfort - Verification
C  1  lEc1.1  Exemplary Performance: SSc3.1
C  1  lEc1.2  Innovation in Design - Education/Lab Orientation
C  1  lEc1.5  EQpc44 Ergonomics Strategy
C  1  lEc2  LEED® Accredited Professional

LEED Certification Thresholds
CERTIFIED - 40+ pts.  SILVER - 50+ pts.  GOLD - 60+ pts.  PLATINUM - 80+ pts.