

Hearst Building receives 'green' certification

Ranking given to facility for gains in sustainability after yearlong renovation

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RTF junior Angela Torres sits in front of the William Randolph Hearst Building on Thursday afternoon. The building received a gold certification award from the U.S. Green Building Council.

The William Randolph Hearst Building received a gold certification Thursday for green efforts made in its renovation.

The U.S. Green Building Council awarded it the highest level of certification after the yearlong \$2.35 million project.

"I'm thrilled. It's a very big deal," said architect Bethany Trombley, senior project manager for the Classrooms, Offices and Auxiliary team at UT's Project Management and Construction Services department.

Energy savings, water efficiency, reduction of carbon dioxide emissions, improved indoor environmental quality and resource allotment are the principal green strategies developed by the U.S. Green Building Council. Utilities costs will be cut by up to 50 percent, Trombley said.

"We've been on the right track. We're tightening up requirements a bit," she said. "The main thing is that a third party verified that we're doing this right. It's an indicator that UT was already on the cutting edge."

Under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), buildings accumulate points for sustainability. Trombley is an accredited LEED professional with expertise in commercial interiors.

"Sustainability is about three things: our environment, energy and human needs — the triple bottom line," she said. "That's important for productivity."

The renovations include a new air conditioning system, duct work, lighting replacement and renovations of restrooms to meet Texas Accessibility Standards.

"So much stuff you can't see. You go around, the building looks the same," Trombley said. "But we definitely met the needs."