

GREEN SCHOOL, GREEN DORMS

In a way, the State University of New York – College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY-ESF) has always been a green school. For almost 100 years the school has focused exclusively on teaching students about nature. Now that sustainability programs in schools across the nation are in high demand, schools such as ESF are seeing jumps in enrollment. This has led to the need for more on-campus housing.

SUNY-ESF had been looking to neighboring Syracuse University for its student housing in the past, but enrollment increases at that school meant SUNY-ESF would have to provide additional housing for itself. When the time came to do that, there was not even a question of whether SUNY-ESF's new dorm would be sustainably built.

The new residence hall will contain 454 beds in a mixture of suite-style and apartment units. The project is being built to LEED-Silver specifications. Features will include the use of recycled construction materials and the use of a modular construction method, both of which will reduce the amount of landfill waste. Daylight harvesting and natural ventilation will enhance the building's interior environment.

"[Making the project sustainable] is something that's very important to us," says Brenda Greenfield, executive director of the ESF College Foundation, which is overseeing the project. "We think it's a way of practicing what we teach."



A rendering of the new student housing community being developed on the campus of State University of New York - College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, N.Y. WTW Architects is collaborating with HKK Architects on the design of the community.

The new residence hall is also making great strides in stormwater management. Through the use of rain gardens, natural landscaping and water harvesting, the project will divert all rainfall on the property from the city's sewer system. The school is partnering with the City of Syracuse on the stormwater management system design and is also applying for grant funding for it through Onondaga County's Green Improvement Fund.

"The City of Syracuse has shown real leadership in the way stormwater is handled, and I think it's been a collaborative process," Greenfield says.

The school has also been instrumental in the development process. SUNY-ESF faculty have

collaborated with project developer Allen & O'Hara in the design process, and students have used the project as a "living lab" to learn more about sustainable construction.

"We have been meeting for one-and-a-half years in the preconstruction process, and, at every stage and every meeting, we're always talking about issues related to sustainability," says Rhonda Johannesen, vice president of Allen & O'Hara. "We make our design choices based on it, and it's become an integral part of the process. I can say that, as a developer, SUNY-ESF and the ESF College Foundation have been totally committed to doing the very best they can do for their students in a way that lives up to their mission." **SHB**

— Coleman Wood