THE PROBLEM

This class was a five week course during the second session of summer 2014, it started June 30th and lasted until August 1st. During this time we had to learn about the LEED documentation process along with the information about the Northwest Arkansas Free Health Center, so that we could do all the documentation and get it certified. Since the building had just recently been gutted and redesigned, so all that we were in charge of was getting all the information together and organized for the LEED documentation. Most people didn’t think that we would be able to get everything done in time.

THE PROJECT

On the first day of class we were divided into six groups, and each group was assigned one of the core concepts. Once we had been assigned our core concepts we had to do research and figure out what credits we could go after and which ones we couldn’t. We then had to present the information that we had learn to the rest of the class the next day. Plus we went to the building as a class one day to actually see the space.

We would meet everyday for 4 hours to work on research and looking through all the files and paperwork sent over from the architect firm. Plus we would have guest speakers that would come every Monday, Wednesday and Friday that would tell us a little more about the project and answer any of our questions. If one group got done with the section that they were working on then they could go help another section.

I was in the energy and atmosphere group and we divided it up amongst us. I mainly worked on the lighting aspect which was part of prerequisite 2 and credit 1.1, but I also did prerequisite 3.

I helped out the rest of my team and the other groups when I could.

In the end we got everything done in time and submitted. It took a little while to hear back from them and the first submission they had some questions about certain things. So we fixed the areas that they had questions about and submitted it again. After the second submission we were reward the silver certificate with a total of 51 of 110 points. The people that we were doing all the documentation for were really just hoping to get certified but we were able to get the silver.

SUSTAINABILITY

This project contributes to sustainability in the social, built and natural systems.

This project primarily addresses the social systems of sustainability by having us work together as a team and working with those who do work with making buildings LEED certified. Plus for one of the credits a person created and educational pamphlet that could be displayed and that people could read and see exactly how the building was LEED certified.

The built system is addressed in that the building’s interior was gutted and redesigned to be more energy efficient.

The natural system is addressed since some of us learned if the plants that were planted were native to the region.

OVERVIEW

Completing this project has solidified my interest in pursuing a career in sustainability by possibly getting a Masters degree dealing with the built system and maybe become a LEED Accredited Professional. It is obvious to me that if we want to have a more sustainable society, education and outreach is critical to motivating individuals to become environmental stewards. I was even curious to learn if there were more programs out there that were like LEED, which I found the Sustainable SITES Initiative and the Living Building Challenge. I found one building that tried to get the highest rating for all three of the programs I mentioned above.

PHOTOS

Top left is the Scorecard from LEED
Top right is a picture of the entrance to the building
Bottom right is a picture of one of the waiting rooms inside.