

## **NYSERDA grant will help AU close in on solar energy goal**

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Thanks to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), Alfred University (AU) is closer to meeting its goal of generating 100 kilowatts of solar power on campus within five years, said Michael Neiderbach, executive director of capital projects for the University. NYSERDA has announced the awarding of a \$268,840 grant for the installation of a large solar panel array, capable of generating 48.88 kW, on the roof of the Science Center. Because of its size, the Science Center is a logical site for installation of the solar panels. The number of panels that will need to be installed to have 48.88 kW capacity will take up much of the rooftop of the 75,000-square-foot building. The new panels are expected to meet an average of 8 percent of the annual electrical energy needs of the facility, said Neiderbach. The University will partner with Solar Liberty of Buffalo, NY, on the project. "Solar energy systems at schools and universities are an especially effective way to demonstrate to students, faculty, and the community that solar power is a practical alternative to buying electricity from the utility companies," explained Adam Rizzo, president of Solar Liberty. "The cost of solar equipment has gone down, and the public has begun to recognize that having solar panels on your roof can be a mainstream way of reducing energy costs and reducing your environmental impact." The NYSERDA grant covers 90 percent of the project cost, Neiderbach said. Alfred University will be responsible for all internal wiring associated with the project as well. Work is scheduled to begin this fall. "We appreciate NYSERDA's willingness to work with us to advance our goal of achieving 100 kW of solar-generated power within five years," said Neiderbach. The University had earlier received a NYSERDA grant to install solar panels to generate 17.01 kW on the roof of Ann's House, a new 48-bed residence hall that opened a year ago. Ann's House is registered with United States Green Building Council, and is awaiting LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification, making it the first LEED-certified building on campus. In addition to the solar panels (also installed by Solar Liberty), which provide at least 8 percent of the building's needs, Ann's House has a high-efficiency heating system; low VOC (volatile organic compound) flooring, caulking and paint; low-e, thermopane windows; LED (light-emitting diodes) lighting and televisions; a heat-recovery exhaust system; regionally grown building materials and a natural stone and cement composite siding. "Between the two projects, we will be generating just under 66 kW of solar energy on campus," said Neiderbach. "That puts us nearly two-thirds of the way toward our goal." To achieve the goal of 100 kW of solar power, Neiderbach said he will continue to seek funding to offset the costs. "With NYSERDA's support, solar energy becomes an affordable alternative for our campus," Neiderbach said, noting President Charles M. Edmondson has signed the President's Climate Commitment. (<http://www.presidentsclim...>) "Not only does the solar energy we generate reduce our demand for market-rate electrical energy, thereby lowering our power bills, but it also reduces carbon-dioxide emissions that are a by-product of conventional power generation," said Neiderbach. In addition to the \$268,840 for the Science Center project, Alfred University also received a \$6,650 grant from NYSERDA for caulking windows in Myers Hall. The windows were retrofitted several years ago with insulating panels that are effective in stopping heat loss; the caulking will enhance their effectiveness even further.