



PROJECT PROFILE: University of Chicago Gleacher Center Conveys Ideals and Sustainable Accomplishments with Green Globes® Certification

“Now, our certification matches the universal core values that shape our culture.”

JENNIFER SIRAGUSA
General Manager, CBRE

PROJECT RATING:



Open seven days a week from 6 a.m. until midnight, the University of Chicago’s Gleacher Center is a unique property. Built along the Chicago River in the downtown business district, the eight-story, 215,000-square-foot building was designed to serve as a hub for alumni conferences and meetings.

The center also serves as the North American campus for the Booth School of Business’s part-time MBA programs. Fifteen state-of-the-art classrooms are dedicated to students on weekday evenings and Saturdays. An additional 35 spaces are available for rent day and night, which host internal and external conferences and events.

“The building’s dual nature and extensive operations make it much different than standard buildings, and it didn’t fit into the prescribed categories of some green building rating systems,” explains Colin Greene, Senior Director of the Gleacher Conference Center. “We would get inquiries about our sustainability efforts from a small but vocal student minority, and I wondered how we could obtain certification.”

Over the past few years, Greene and CBRE (Gleacher Center’s property management firm) took an aggressive approach to environmental responsibility. “The initiatives we put into place fell in line with Green Globes’ parameters, and certification became an obtainable goal,” recalls Jennifer Siragusa, General Manager at CBRE. “Now, our certification matches the universal core values that shape our culture.”



Among the initiatives implemented, the team:

- Partnered with the regional utility company to benchmark operations and used the information to revise operating sequences better suited to real-time situations.
- Registered the property with ENERGY STAR to continually review energy, gas, and water consumption.
- Added energy meters and weekly monitoring to ensure the HVAC system is utilized as designed.
- Purchased renewable energy credits for 25% of total electricity usage.
- Installed LED lighting fixtures throughout the property and added occupancy and daylight sensors.
- Created a robust recycling program that includes paper, cardboard, plastic, glass, electronics, batteries, and lamps, bulbs and ballasts.



Proven Perceptions

Gleacher Center's operating plans and procedures reduced its carbon footprint by upgrading the property in range of environmentally friendly ways. As a result, the center earned Three Green Globes for Continual Improvement of Existing Buildings (CIEB).

"Our high level of certification is based on our current practices and performance," Siragusa says. "I like that Green Globes rewards you for what you have put in place."

Although she has used other sustainability rating systems before, this was Siragusa's first encounter with Green Globes. "Green Globes is very streamlined, easy to understand, and gets to the point," she says. "You don't need a lawyer and a dictionary to get your documentation submitted and approved. And it's only a three-month process, so we didn't have to make a huge investment in time and money."

Working with a Green Globes Assessor who was dedicated to their project was also new to Siragusa. "It was nice to put a face to the process and understand what the Assessor was looking for in our documentation during his review," Siragusa notes. "I appreciated that there was actual human interaction involved. It was a great experience."

Siragusa is pleased that the center has proven, cost-effective solutions that positively impact the bottom line, and Greene is proud that they can publicly tout their efforts.

"It's great for the students and my clients to see a plaque on the wall that lets them know we have done the work and have sustainable measures in place," says Greene.

GREEN GLOBES RATINGS:

After the final assessment is verified by a third party, properties achieving a score of 35% or higher receive a Green Globes rating based on the percentage of total points achieved (up to 1000).



85-100%

FOUR GREEN GLOBES

Demonstrates world-class leadership in resource efficiency, reducing environmental impacts, and improving occupant wellness.



70-84%

THREE GREEN GLOBES

Demonstrates outstanding success in resource efficiency, reducing environmental impacts, and improving occupant wellness.



55-69%

TWO GREEN GLOBES

Demonstrates significant achievement in resource efficiency, reducing environmental impacts, and improving occupant wellness.



35-54%

ONE GREEN GLOBES

Demonstrates a strong commitment to resource efficiency, reducing environmental impacts, and improving occupant wellness.