

August 9, 2011

## STARS Innovation

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to offer my highest possible endorsement of the Net Zero Project for a STARS Innovation Credit. The project is a bold initiative to upgrade the 48,000-square-foot, 1970 building that houses the College of Architecture + Planning into a net-zero energy facility. Our goal is to reduce energy use by 80%+ and generate needed energy from renewable resources on site. The project is serving as a national demonstration model not just because of its objectives but, even more so, because of our process for reaching them. We credit our successes to the early and active involvement of a broad range of stakeholders, including architectural and engineering consultants, faculty and students.

Our process began with extensive preliminary measures taken to explore possible solutions. This involved numerous considerations, including energy conservation and generation, facility and resource management, and user behavior. We were assisted in our planning by a volunteer technical net zero advisory committee comprised of 20 local architects, urban planners, engineers, academics, technical experts and policymakers. The committee contributed 400+ hours of time, including helping the College host a public symposium and workshop during which faculty and students worked with over 200 members of the professional architectural, engineering, planning, and energy management communities to identify and assess options.


The project also has the attention of Utah state officials and building professionals. Ten of the state's leading architectural and engineering firms have donated more than \$200,000 and 1,000 hours of time in professional services. State officials have altered long-standing practices to accommodate the project's goals. (For example, Utah state government did not permit solar panels on the roofs of public buildings because of roof maintenance concerns but changed that rule in response to a photovoltaic array planned for the project.)

With all of our stakeholders, our mutual goal has been to identify and remove barriers and to make the process transparent and replicable for others. To that end, and most importantly given our educational mission, students have helped to drive the project from the beginning. They served on net zero advisory committee and are working with CBP team members to document plug loads and other energy uses for the energy analysis. They have also created white papers and educational videos. These students will take what they have learned to the firms and agencies they ultimately join, accelerating the adoption of energy-efficiency strategies in the commercial marketplace and public sector.

Due in significant part to this broad involvement of stakeholders, the U.S. Department of Energy has designated the project an “exemplary retrofit” and selected it to participate in its highly competitive Commercial Building Partnership (CBP). The CBP program is tasked with improving energy efficiency of buildings throughout the United States by identifying new processes and technologies and by providing case studies that document risk and failure as well as success and possibility.

The Net Zero Project is a significant resource for training the next generations of architects, engineers, planners and policy-makers to develop more innovative, efficient and sustainable designs for our built environment. The gap between research and practice has been one of the greatest obstacles to the adoption of forward-thinking yet practical solutions to energy problems. The tools and knowledge that are being generated through the Net Zero Project are bridging that gap.

Sincerely,



Brenda Case Scheer  
Dean