



Team Alberta Solar Decathlon 2013

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June 6, 2013

RE: University of Calgary Supporting the Solar Decathlon Initiative

Since 2009, the University of Calgary has competed in the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Decathlon, a challenge for international student-led teams to design, build, and operate attractive, efficient and affordable solar-powered houses. Like the Olympic decathlon, the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon consists of 10 contests, including architecture, engineering and energy balance, to gauge how well the houses will perform and how liveable they are.

Entering the Solar Decathlon is like starting a small business. Teams must not only design and build a fully functioning solar powered home, complete with all the complex systems required to operate it, but also raise the required funds, and increase awareness of the benefits of sustainable design and alternative energy within their community. Student-led teams have just 2 years to complete all this, including have the home transported to the historic National Mall in Washington D.C., where the Decathlon takes place. Collaboration and interdisciplinarity work are key to this project. Multiple schools work together and the teams involve students and faculty from dozens of disciplines.

The University of Calgary was selected to compete in both the 2009, 2011 and 2013 decathlons. In 2013, Team Alberta, a partnership between the University of Calgary and Mount Royal University, is building Borealis. Like the previous University of Calgary entries, Borealis is built to address specific local housing issues. Borealis aims to solve the shortage of affordable quality housing in remote regions of Alberta by designing a 930ft² fully sustainable net-zero solar home.

By enabling students to learn more about sustainability through experiential learning, it shows that the University of Calgary is taking a truly innovative approach in making sure sustainability is part of the student experience. As such, I would recommend the University of Calgary for a STARS innovation credit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alexandre Ste-Marie'.

Alexandre Ste-Marie
Project Manager
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