

HAMPTON UNIVERSITY  
HAMPTON, VIRGINIA 23668

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE  
(757) 727-5440

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Dear STARS representative,

Team Tidewater Virginia's entry into the 2011 Solar Decathlon is highly innovative – it represents one of the rare cases where multiple universities have joined to form a single team for the Decathlon. In this instance, both universities are classified as Master's level institutions by the Carnegie system (most participating teams come from Research intensive institutions). This project represents a way for the two universities to give their students hands-on experience conducting research and constructing green buildings.

In the process, undergraduate students from Hampton University and Old Dominion University are gaining first-hand knowledge in the areas of applied research, sustainable design, teaching, and providing service to the public. They must design and execute educational programs in addition to designing, constructing, and operating a net-zero home.

While it is true that other universities have entered the Solar Decathlon competition in the past, this particular team's entry is highly unique. Team Tidewater Virginia believes that detached single-family construction is not wholly sustainable over the long term, so they have designed a structure that can either stand alone (as the competition requires) OR it can become part of a six-unit housing complex.

The stand-alone version will be displayed publically in Washington D.C. during the fall 2011 Solar Decathlon. It will compete against 18 other solar homes, designed by 18 other university teams.

Pressing the issue of innovation, however, this particular team paid close attention to market viability (something that most past teams have overlooked). For the first time ever, the design will also be implemented as a multi-family housing complex. The team has been working with builders and with local housing authorities to plan construction of twelve affordable, net-zero housing units that integrate their design for the Solar Decathlon. Someday in the future, twelve Norfolk families will live in sustainable homes designed as a by-product of Team Tidewater Virginia's participation in the 2011 Solar Decathlon.

Although I have not been directly involved with the project, have observed progress across the duration of Team Tidewater's activities. I find that, without doubt, this project merits innovative credit through the STARS program. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Shannon Chance, PhD, AIA, LEED AP  
Associate Professor of Architecture at Hampton University  
Adjunct Associate Professor of Education at The College of William and Mary