

The major theme throughout this year's NCARB Prize winning submissions was green; exploring environmentally responsible yet economically affordable solutions to modern housing across America.

## The Winning Green

The origins of the NCARB Prize can be traced to 2001, when then Council president Peter Steffian, FAIA, envisioned a program that would recognize excellence and innovation in academic activities that combine architectural education and practice. His inspiration was the 1996 Carnegie Foundation report, *Building Community: A New Future for Architectural Education and Practice*, written by Lee D. Mitgang and the late Ernest L. Boyer.

In the ensuing years, architecture schools with NAAB-accredited degree programs have been invited to submit established projects, completed or in progress by the end of the fall semester, that demonstrated creative initiatives that integrate the academy and the profession within a studio curriculum. To date,

NCARB has awarded a total of \$375,000 in prizes that have had a significant effect on furthering the Council's goal of increasing and strengthening the integration of practice with education.

In late March, former NCARB President Frank M. Guillot, FAIA, and jury Chair Barbara A. Sestak, AIA, announced the 2007 NCARB Prize winners at the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) national convention in Philadelphia, PA. The \$25,000 grand prize was awarded to University of Virginia (UVA) for their "ecoMOD" entry. Five other entries received \$7,500 each for their entries, most of which focused on sustainable design.



**GRAND PRIZE WINNER**  
**UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA**  
**“ecoMOD”**

This program teamed architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, historic preservation, environmental science, business, and economics students in a multi-year research and design/build/evaluate project. Together they designed affordable housing prototypes that are modern, modular, environmentally responsible, and energy efficient. Students worked closely with a variety of design and business professionals throughout all three phases of the project.

“Many people cannot afford well-built houses, much less the energy required to run them,” said UVA Assistant Professor and Project



Director John Quale. “New single-family, low-cost homes across the United States tend to be trailers or some variant of manufactured or modular housing. While they are affordable and easily installed in various locations, they tend to waste energy and water, and cause indoor air quality problems.”

The ecoMOD designs were site-specific homes that used natural lighting and ventilation, non-hazardous materials, renewable energy, and energy-efficient systems to help reduce environmental impact and improve occupant health.

The 2007 NCARB Prize jury noted that the UVA project involved “an extraordinary array of collaborators and a real balance among all the participants.” The jury also noted, “The product itself demonstrates that having a great process, responsiveness to environmental concerns, and other good intentions, does not compromise the design or the end result.”

**UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS**  
**COMMUNITY DESIGN CENTER**  
**“HABITAT TRAILS: FROM INFILL HOUSING TO GREEN NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN”**

Through a collaborative venture among architecture, landscape architecture, and ecological engineering departments, Habitat Trails objective was to provide Habitat for Humanity with a low impact development that offers high-value, affordable residential solutions to underserved populations and their surrounding communities. They also produced a studio publication that serves as a statewide advocacy platform for advancing low impact development (LID) protocols.

“LID is difficult to realize,” University of Arkansas Community Design Center director



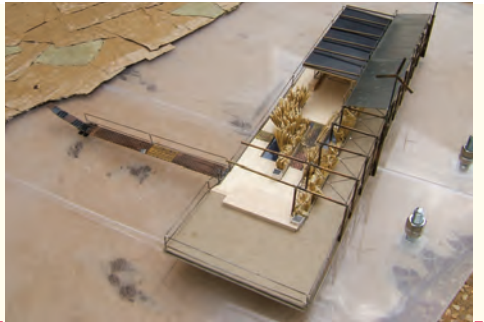
Stephen Luoni said, “because our entire development system from public works departments, codes, and engineering models is committed to the established infrastructural model governing street design. LID requires storm water runoff (now the costliest development expense and posing the greatest environmental liability) to be based on ecological engineering solutions rather than conventional civil engineering. Even though LID infrastructure costs less, improves safety, enhances aesthetics of street environments, and provides a superior storm water treatment system, the development system remains committed to the street as a hard-engineered drainage mechanism for transporting pollution problems elsewhere. Hence, our insistence on parks, not pipes!”

According to the jury, “Habitat Trails” is a strong design project. In addition to addressing sustainability and single-family housing issues, it extends the project scope to establish green development policy—a unique quality of the project.

**UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA**  
**“LEARNING BARGE”**

The purpose of this multi-semester, interdisciplinary project was to design and build the “Learning Barge,” a floating, self-sustaining field station located on one of the most polluted tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay. Moving to a different restoration site every few months, the “Learning Barge” is designed to teach the public about the tidal estuary ecosystem, wetland, and oyster bed restoration and remediation efforts. It also is designed to teach about sustainable power generation, water collection, and water filtration utilizing native plants.

“All the water, waste and power generation systems used onboard are completely appli-



cable to buildings on land,” said program coordinator and UVA Assistant Professor of Architecture Phoebe Crisman. “For instance, the rainwater collection and filtration system design, linked wind generator and photovoltaic array, and solar hot water/radiant flooring system would be appropriate for a small house.”

The 2007 NCARB Prize jury was impressed by the uniqueness of this floating design build project that provided students with the opportunity to learn about sustainable technology. According to the jury, “the project is a tremendous regional educational tool for the public at large and gives the public the opportunity to experience the waterway.”



**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE  
"REWEAVING THE NEIGHBORHOOD FABRIC:  
HOW MODULAR HOUSING CAN BUILD  
AFFORDABLE AND DIGNIFIED COMMUNITIES"**

Working through a process involving practitioners, community members, and home manufacturers, three teams of graduate students each designed an affordable, sustainable, and accessible prototype home for an inner-city neighborhood where affordable housing is scarce. Students presented the designs to local policymakers to work with them on pragmatic issues, and produced a set of working drawings for the modular home manufacturers to begin fabrication.

In the abstract, Assistant Professor Chris T. Cornelius wrote, "The program was created to offer citizens in communities across America an opportunity to celebrate their community heritage, address emerging architectural challenges and trends, and find their voices to help make their vision real for beautiful, safe, and livable communities."

According to the jury, the program's "strong points are the work with modular manufacturers and firms, its willingness to take on a variety of issues including sustainability, integration into the neighborhoods and material selection, and the emphasis on the process of building, particularly over a critical time frame."

The 2007 NCARB Prize jury was comprised of the members of the Council's Practice Education Committee and six deans (or department heads or chairs) of NAAB-accredited architectural programs chosen by NCARB's regional leadership. They reviewed 29 entries from 19 schools of architecture (six schools entering for the first time). In the six years since the NCARB prize program was launched, there have been 204 submissions from 78 of the 117 NAAB-accredited programs.

This year's entries, although fewer in number than in previous years, continued the trend of ever-higher quality of content and design. All winning entries have been posted on the NCARB web site.



**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
"RE-EXPANDING ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE"**

The school curriculum was redesigned to demonstrate the breadth of the architectural design profession and to encourage students to understand that they have the responsibility to maintain a broad understanding of design. To achieve this, a series of six mini-seminars were combined into a single course taught by faculty member and practitioner teams.

"For the first series, we selected a set of topics in the building sciences and technology," said Doug Noble, Associate Dean of the University of Southern California's School of Architecture. "For future series, we plan to include mini-seminars on subjects such as sustainability, building information modeling, practice management, and global practice."

The NCARB Prize Jury stated that the program "gives the students exposure to many subjects in one course," and "brings students into firm offices to work with practitioners in their own environment including evening and weekend charrettes."



**WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS  
"RESEARCH: PRACTICE-BASED STUDY IN THE  
ACADEMY"**

This program of independent studies for students provides research opportunities related to contemporary architectural design and technology in offices of practicing architects and engineers across the country. Students work with professional staff in the offices and with others in the building industry to facilitate their research through case-study analysis and theoretical investigation.

"The research exercises seek to bridge between the academy and practice; advance a culture of research in practice and architectural education; engage and support innovation in practice; and promote a culture of innovation in the design studio," wrote Paul J. Donnelly, FAIA, PE, in the program's abstract.

According to the jury, "while the curriculum generates the research, the individual projects generate new knowledge and/or new applications of prior knowledge and the students, in turn, present the information to the entire office." **DC**

In addition to the \$62,500 in prize money the Council awards each year to existing academic programs, the Council also awards up to a total of \$10,000 through one, two, or three grants to NAAB-accredited program(s) to support the creation of new curricular initiatives.

Complete details and downloadable applications for the NCARB Prize and the NCARB Grant programs are available on the Council web site ([www.ncarb.org](http://www.ncarb.org)). NCARB Grant submissions for the 2007-2008 academic year are due in the NCARB office on or before 5:00 p.m. EST, on Tuesday, October 16, 2007. Submissions for the 2008 NCARB Prize are due by 5:00 p.m. EST, Tuesday, February 5, 2008.