

College of Engineering and Computing

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FIU at the Forefront of Technology: Representing the United States To Build Energy Efficient, Sustainable “Future House” in China

Miami, FL (February 27, 2007) - Florida International University announced today its distinct honor of representing the United States as part of the Future House Community project in Beijing, China, to be located near the site of the 2008 Olympic Summer Games. It is the only university in the U.S. to be invited to participate. Not only is FIU at the forefront of technology by building an energy efficient and sustainable “Future House USA,” but the state-of-the-art house will be visited by millions of people during the Games and for years to come. The official construction opening ceremony will be held on March 16, 2007.

To build Future House USA, FIU has teamed with the Alternative Energy Living Foundation in Moline, Illinois, as Principal Managing Sponsor; and the National Defense Council Foundation in Washington, D.C., as Principal General Sponsor.

The Future House Community project, which will include 10 houses from 8 countries, along with a commercial office area, supermarkets and a park, was prompted by China’s need to address its pressing energy and environmental concerns. To that end, China, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and the U.S. will each design and build a house that reflects its own technological capabilities and aesthetic sensibilities.

FIU attracted the attention of the Chinese Ministry of Construction by winning first place in Energy Balance in the National Solar Decathlon in Washington, D.C., in 2005. It was the only university from Florida and all of the southeastern U.S. to take part in the competition which required student teams to design, build and operate a solar-powered house.

Dr. Yong Tao, Professor of Mechanical and Materials Engineering at FIU, and Dr. Yimin Zhu, Assistant Professor of Construction Management, under the leadership of Dr. Vish Prasad, Executive Dean of the College of Engineering and Computing, will be directing both the design and construction of the Future House USA Project which will feature Frank Lloyd Wright and Chinese Feng Shui design themes, focusing on originality, unity with nature and the smooth flow of air and light. The U.S. team will apply an integrated and comprehensive approach in design, construction and operation of the house and surroundings, incorporating a wide range of features from ultra-efficient geothermal heat pumps to passive and active solar systems. Despite the extensive use of advanced technologies, construction costs are consistent with those of homes that do not include such features.

Also joining FIU in the Future House USA project as the title sponsors are the American Council on Renewable Energy; the Consumer Energy Alliance; and the Environmental Study Institute.

Construction of the U.S. house will begin in early 2007, with completion anticipated by fall 2007, one year prior to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. In the future, FIU and other organizations will use this house for education and training purposes. The Future House Community is sponsored by the Ministry of Construction of the People’s Republic of China.

For more information on the Future House USA project, contact Professor Yong X. Tao at 305-348-3015, or taoy@fiu.edu

For more information on the College of Engineering and Computing at Florida International University, please visit our website: www.eng.fiu.edu/ad/FHUSA

Florida International University is one of the 20 largest universities in the U.S. and is ranked as a Research University in the High Research Activity category of the Carnegie Foundation’s prestigious classification system. The College of Engineering and Computing at FIU offers more than 30 degrees through its baccalaureate, master and doctoral programs. Over the last five years, the College has been awarded nearly \$50 million in external research funding from a variety of government and corporate sources.