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# Okanagan College partners to advance sustainable building agenda

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Four colleges partner to advance sustainable building agenda

Four of Canada's prominent colleges are joining forces to bolster the country's training and innovation in sustainable building technologies and renewable energy.

Okanagan College is joining with Ontario's Durham College, Alberta's Lethbridge College and Nova Scotia Community College recently signed an agreement linking the institutions' training and projects that are related to sustainable buildings and renewable energy.

Under the agreement, they will work together to plan and co-ordinate program development, applied innovation projects and connections with industry and various federal and provincial agencies.

The agreement was born when college executives realized that an ad hoc consortium was developing as the individual institutions shared successes, approaches and ideas with each other as they were developing programs and facilities.

"We're working closely together with each other and with industry in this area," explains Okanagan College President Jim Hamilton. "In many instances, we're at the leading edge of new sustainable facilities and want to ensure everyone benefits from what the others are learning and teaching."

Okanagan College's role in advancing sustainable building technologies is exemplified through two projects currently underway involving the institution.

The first is the \$28 million Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Building Technologies and Renewable Energy Conservation under construction at the while the other is the internationally-focused Resource Positive Architecture Project, which draws on \$500,000 funding from the federal government and matching amounts from Okanagan College and its partners and forms part of Canada's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 17 per cent by 2020 from 2005 levels.

The Centre of Excellence is a leading-edge sustainable building project that will be a net-zero energy consumer and which incorporates a host of innovative and sustainable design and material elements. The project is registered as part of the Living Building Challenge, which is the most advanced measure of sustainability in the building environment.

The Resource Positive Architecture project is a joint partnership between Okanagan College and the

Okanagan Science & Technology Council but includes architects, engineers, universities and colleges from around the world. It builds on existing domestic and international agreements between all Asia-Pacific Partnership countries to share research on green building envelope design (including walls, roofs and foundations).

“A strategic partnership of this calibre is not only beneficial to the sustainability initiatives of our institutes, but to all our students across Canada,” says Tracy Edwards, Lethbridge College CEO and president. “We’re working towards having a nation of socially responsible citizens and couldn’t be more excited at the possibilities.”

“This is a great example of co-operation among colleges across Canada which are committed to education and innovation vital to sustainability,” says James Knight, President of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges. “Each college is already demonstrating leadership in its region and province. Co-operating nationally with industry and other partners will add more value to their efforts.”

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