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International architects bring design innovation to U of C

The University of Calgary is hiring world-renowned architects to bring visionary design to major projects in the campus's \$1.5-billion capital expansion.

Montreal-based Saucier + Perrotte and American firm KieranTimberlake Associates will work with local architectural firms in a partnership model that is unique in Canada.

"Our objective in bringing in these international names under this new model is to ensure a new standard of architectural quality for all future new buildings on campus," said U of C President Harvey Weingarten. "Students have told us that the beauty of a campus is important to them – and we know that the functionality of campus space plays a vital role in enhancing the learning experience. We believe Calgary deserves an exceptionally well-designed campus."

Saucier + Perrotte will work with Calgary firm Kasian Architecture, Interior Design and Planning on the Campus Calgary Digital Library (CCDL), the \$140-million facility scheduled to open in 2009. Philadelphia-based KieranTimberlake Associates will work with Calgary's Cohos Evamy (in association with Busby Perkins + Will) on the \$283-million building to house ISEEE, the Institute for Sustainable Energy, Environment and Economy, as well as on the first phase of the \$300-million Experiential Learning Centre.

The university's new International House residence is being designed by Baird Sampson Neuert of Toronto, an acknowledged leader of green design in Canada, in association with Calgary firm Riddell Kurczaba.

This partnership model, which adds international experience to local expertise, is unique in Canada, although used widely in Europe.

Brian R. Sinclair, dean of the faculty of environmental design and presidential advisor on design at the U of C, spearheaded the new approach. "By pairing international and local firms, we will have incredible buildings, functional and magical spaces, and a sustainable campus which supports academic and individual excellence," he says. "Working with some of the best in world will also allow us to achieve LEED platinum, the highest standard of sustainable building in North America."

Saucier + Perrotte is known for cultural and institutional buildings such as the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics in Waterloo, Ontario, and a variety of buildings at McGill University and the universities of Montreal and Toronto. The firm's work has received three Governor General's Medals in Architecture, the OAA and OAQ Awards of Excellence in Institutional Architecture, and several Canadian

Architects Awards of Excellence. Saucier + Perrotte's projects have been published in books and journals throughout the world.

KieranTimberlake Associates has designed residential and teaching facilities at Cornell, Yale, Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania. The firm has received over fifty national design awards and projects have been published in *Architectural Record*; *Architectural Journal*; *Architectural Digest*; *Interiors* (Taiwan); *Werk, Bauen + Wohnen* (Switzerland); *I.D. Magazine*, *TIME*, *WIRED*, and *World Architecture* (Beijing).

Under the partnership model, local or "executive" architects were hired by the U of C following a standard procurement process. These firms then worked with project stakeholders to select "signature" architects—firms with international expertise and experience. The signature firms bring design leadership and innovation; they'll work with the local architects who will oversee building implementation.

It's a method that works quite well in Europe, says Gilles Saucier of Saucier + Perrotte. "For a project of this size and scope, it's very effective for us to work with a local firm."

Sinclair says the U of C's decision to deliberately seek out diversity of expertise in the design world is part of the university's "Extraordinary by Design" commitment.

"Building these teams allows the final result to be greater than the sum of the parts, during the design and building process, but also for the future of the university, which itself gets remarkable results when work crosses disciplinary boundaries," says Sinclair.

All the architectural teams will incorporate the university's high sustainability standards, part of a comprehensive framework to help the university become an economically viable and environmentally and socially sustainable institution.

James Timberlake of KieranTimberlake Associates says he is thrilled to be working with Cohos Evamy and Busby Perkins + Will, one of Canada's sustainability experts.

"We have tremendous respect for their work," he says. "Doing the right thing at the University of Calgary is really important – culturally, environmentally and historically. Together we'll capture the language of the campus."

Media availability:

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