



The Green Architect

By Blair Seibert, AIA, LEED AP

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Sustainable Building Advisor Program

The United States Green Building Council (USGBC) is a twelve year old non-profit organization based in Washington DC whose mission is “to transform the building marketplace to sustainability”. Its 30+ board members represent a variety of industries and they work in conjunction with their 9,000 member organizations to create and refine the LEED™ Green Building Rating Systems.

With over 70 local affiliated chapters spreading their message, the USGBC’s influence was amplified with the introduction of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design New Construction (LEED-NC) rating system in November 2002. The Cascadia USGBC Chapter challenged all industry professionals to design and build beyond the LEED NC Platinum level to a “Living Building” standard last year at the GreenBuild convention in Denver. I had not heard of the Cascadia USGBC chapter and was very surprised at their assumptive nature. How did they think the rest of us could meet a standard that requires Net Zero energy and Net Zero water consumption?

They recognized that many LEED Platinum buildings were being built for little or no additional cost and yet fell short of making the buildings truly sustainable. See this link for information about the Living Building program:

<http://www.cascadiagbc.org/resources/living-building-challenge-page>

Seven years ago the Cascadia chapter developed a comprehensive continuing education course for design professionals, building owners/ managers, developers, contractors, utility representatives and other industry professionals called the Sustainable Building Advisor Program. It provided a deep understanding of the issues and realities of building sustainably. The nine-month course was offered one weekend a month and was taught by a variety of experts in their respective fields. Topics included site design, energy efficiency, ventilation and air quality, green cleaning and facility operations among others.

Classes were limited to 35 students to allow for on-hands instruction and included field trips to green buildings, communities and construction sites. The program was so popular that students flew in from Illinois and Montana to take the class.

The classes are still going strong. To support the distribution of this valuable information, the Chapter formed the National Sustainable Building Advisor Program. This non-profit agency works with Community College’s continuing education programs across the country to providing curriculum materials and faculty support. In addition, at the completion of the course students are eligible to take an exam for Certified Sustainable Building Advisor (CSBA) status.

The exciting news is that Santa Monica College is going to be offering the course this fall! The classes will take place on the first Friday and Saturday of each month beginning October 5th. I am assisting the college in acquiring teachers for the course. With 120 classroom hours and eight distinct Units of study, over 25 faculty members are required. The classes will include lectures, videos and field trips. Outside work includes reading, homework and team projects. Commercial, institutional and residential

markets will be represented. To learn more about the program itself or read testimonials visit: <http://www.nasbap.org/>

Guest speakers will include professionals practicing energy efficiency and environmental design. Currently representatives from Rana Creek, Green Guard, the City of Santa Monica and SoCal Edison have already made commitments to teach.

For those of you that are interested but may not have time to take the class, the following list is the suggested reading list:

Construction: Principles, Methods and Materials by Harold Olin and H. Leslie Simmons

Fundamentals of Building Construction: Materials and Methods by Edward Allen and Joseph Aano

Encyclopedia of Construction Methods and Materials by William R. Spence

Ecological Design by Sim Van Der Ryn and Stuart Cowan

The AIA has approved the course as an acceptable continuing education program.

Although information is not yet available on the SMC website, it will be included in their Fall Continuing Education Schedule. If you are interested in finding out more or would like to be invited to the "SBAP Information Meeting" being scheduled in July, please contact me at the information below.

Blair Seibert, AIA, LEEP AP is a member of the San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles AIA. If you have any questions or comments about this article or would like to be notified of local "green building" events, contact her at: 310-422-2417 or blair@verdearchitects.com.