

Contact: Eric Sloss
412-268-5765
ecs@andrew.cmu.edu

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Carnegie Mellon STUDIO for Creative Inquiry Fellow Leads Project To Theoretically Transform World's Highest, Largest Rooftop

Carnegie Mellon Students Design Sketches and Business Model for a Green U.S. Steel Tower Rooftop

PITTSBURGH—David Bear, STUDIO for Creative Inquiry fellow at Carnegie Mellon University, is leading a project titled “The High Point Park Investigation” that explores hypothetical options for transforming the presently empty, one-acre rooftop of the U.S. Steel Tower into a green, sustainable, all-weather, publicly accessible garden and viewing area.

“This rooftop venue could be a beacon for the progressive transformation the city has endured in the last few decades from a steel town to an innovative center for technology, art, education and green initiatives,” Bear said.

To assist in this theoretical rooftop transformation, 275 Carnegie Mellon School of Architecture students and faculty are participating in a four-day sketch competition (Jan. 11–14) proposing creative and sustainable uses for the rooftop space. School of Architecture faculty will choose several of the more than 30 unique proposals to be used in an Institute for Social Innovation (ISI) student case competition in Carnegie Mellon’s Heinz College. Both architecture and ISI students must analyze the realistic potentials and costs of developing the space, while considering self-sustaining structures, future programming and marketing possibilities.

This four-day competition will challenge five teams of graduate students interested in social innovation and entrepreneurship to conduct a business analysis of these rooftop sketches.

On Jan. 19, a panel of outside experts will judge presentations of these cases in room 6121 in the Gates Hillman Center at Carnegie Mellon, and results will be announced at 7:30 p.m. Cash prizes will be awarded to the first- and second-place finishers.

“This is a wonderful opportunity to challenge and excite creative minds to think how this rooftop space can be used,” Bear said. “We expect to get a lot of interesting material to help further our investigation and build research to support the reasons why this rooftop transformation could be important

Designed by the firm of Harrison, Abramovitz & Abbe, the unique triangular design of the 40-year-old structure makes its roof the “largest in the world at its height or above,” according to Daniel Kieckhefer of Emporis GmbH, the leading international data company on tall buildings. Bear envisions the rooftop facility as a local asset that showcases Pittsburgh as a regional, national and international leader in green innovation, redefining notions of public and private partnerships, and fostering re-evaluations of high rooftop use.

Architectural sketches and the competition results will be posted on the project’s Web site at www.highpointpark.org.

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About Carnegie Mellon: Carnegie Mellon (www.cmu.edu) is a private, internationally ranked research university with programs in areas ranging from science, technology and business, to public policy, the humanities and the fine arts. More than 11,000 students in the university’s seven schools and colleges benefit from a small student-to-faculty ratio and an education characterized by its focus on creating and implementing solutions for real problems, interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation. A global university, Carnegie Mellon’s main campus in the United States is in Pittsburgh, Pa. It has campuses in California’s Silicon Valley and Qatar, and programs in Asia, Australia and Europe. The university is in the midst of a \$1 billion fundraising campaign, titled “Inspire Innovation: The Campaign for Carnegie Mellon University,” which aims to build its endowment, support faculty, students and innovative research, and enhance the physical campus with equipment and facility improvements.

About the STUDIO for Creative Inquiry: Founded in 1989, the STUDIO for Creative Inquiry is a center for experimental enterprises across academic disciplines on Carnegie Mellon University’s Pittsburgh campus, the community of Pittsburgh, and internationally. The STUDIO’s mission is to support atypical, interdisciplinary, and inter-institutional research projects and educational initiatives at the intersections of art, science, technology and culture. The STUDIO advocates for interdisciplinarity throughout Carnegie Mellon by providing direct administrative and logistical support to visiting artists, faculty and staff engaged in hybrid research projects. For more, see www.cmu.edu/studio/.

About the School of Architecture: The School of Architecture graduates outstanding professionals with design creativity, historical perspective, social responsibility, technical excellence and global environmental leadership. The school is a global leader in the acquisition, generation and dissemination of knowledge of the built environment. For more, see www.cmu.edu/architecture/.

About the Institute for Social Innovation: The ISI is a research center dedicated to fostering entrepreneurship among organizations and individuals driven by a social mission. Heinz College students take courses in social entrepreneurship, attend lectures by experts in the field, and research strategies and tools to resolve existing social challenges. For more, see www.heinz.cmu.edu/institute-for-social-innovation/index.aspx.