

Media Contact:
Diana Bianchini
Architecture for Humanity
press@architectureforhumanity.org
+1 310.288.0077

Suzanne van de Raadt
Alcoa Foundation
suzanne.vanderaadt@alcoa.com
+1 212.836.2662

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Alcoa Foundation and Architecture for Humanity Announce New University-based Program to Realize the Future of Sustainable Communities

Pillars of Sustainable Education to Award Grants to Seven Universities Across the Globe to Explore Innovative and Integrated Building Designs, Systems and Materials

San Francisco, CA (December 10, 2013) – Pillars of Sustainable Education, a new \$1.5 million cross-sector program created by Alcoa Foundation and Architecture for Humanity to explore the use of sustainable materials in architecture and community design, launched today. Seven universities from five countries will each integrate curriculum about innovative building design and material use and then execute a community-based project that incorporates their research. The grants, totaling up to \$60,000 per year will support 1-3 year projects reaching approximately 150 participating students and faculty.

The selected universities are Carnegie Mellon University (U.S.), The Georgia Institute of Technology (U.S.), Purdue University (U.S.), Delft University of Technology (the Netherlands), Ostwestfalen-Lippe University of Applied Sciences (Germany), the University of São Paulo (Brazil) and Tsinghua University (China). Each school will expand the learning opportunity for the students with professional engagement activities, such as, guest lecturers from Alcoa executives, partnerships with a local nonprofit organization and involvement through the Architecture for Humanity network. Project examples include:

- The project team at Georgia Tech is addressing rising international concerns over energy availability and the need for market rate, carbon neutral urban housing. To address these issues, this project aims to fully design, engineer and student-build a 4-10 unit Net Zero Energy House Prototype that will become a living laboratory for ultra low energy efficiency testing, material study, and a demonstration model for market rate, status quo urban housing.
- In China, Tsinghua University is focused on lessening the energy consumption of affordable housing in Beijing through passive building design and the application of high-performance materials and green low-carbon technology while providing a comfortable indoor environment for occupants. Working with the Beijing Shengtao Education Development and Innovation Institute, architecture students will have the opportunity to promote, demonstrate and gain feedback related to their research project.

The various projects will be featured at www.pillarsofsustainableeducation.org and shared by university representatives at various professional conferences, the first of which was the annual [Design Like You Give a Damn](#) Live! event on November 7-9 in San Francisco, CA. The goal of the program is to inspire the next generation of architects, designers and building engineers to think about both the long-term environmental impacts of buildings as well as using community design to strengthen neighborhoods.

Furthermore, it will assist in sharing research, applications and materials across both professional and academic channels and ultimately, support the realization of real-world community-based projects.

“With 50 percent of the world’s population now living in urban areas, a number that keeps growing, a sustainable future will depend on better design in our cities,” said Tricia Napor, Vice President at Alcoa Foundation. “Through the partnership with Architecture for Humanity students and faculty get the opportunity to explore the role of architecture and design in buildings to enhance the environmental and social sustainability of cities.”

Lead by Architecture for Humanity, the submission, application, and grant award process for select universities closed in August 2013. The program intends to foster peer-to-peer dialogue, workshops, discussions and professional forums. As part of this, project teams in architecture, engineering, building sciences and technology departments will provide open-source updates and reporting on all levels.

“More recent changes to our indoor and outdoor environments, climate and natural resources increasingly impact our physical safety, security, health, and emotional and intellectual wellbeing,” said Alix Ogilvie, Studio and Program Manager, Architecture for Humanity. “Pillars of Sustainable Education offers enhanced learning opportunities for university students, future practitioners and stewards of the environment, to innovate and showcase the benefits of sustainable and integrated design, cross-disciplinary project teams and community engagement -- a more holistic approach towards a more safe, more just and more beautiful built world.”

For more information and project updates, visit www.pillarsofsustainableeducation.org.

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About Alcoa Foundation

Alcoa Foundation is one of the largest corporate foundations in the U.S., with assets of approximately US\$460 million. Founded 60 years ago, Alcoa Foundation has invested more than US\$570 million since 1952. In 2012, Alcoa Foundation contributed more than US\$21 million to nonprofit organizations throughout the world, building innovative partnerships to improve the environment and educate tomorrow’s leaders for careers in manufacturing and engineering. The work of Alcoa Foundation is further enhanced by Alcoa’s thousands of employee volunteers who share their talents and time to make a difference in the communities where Alcoa operates. Through the Company’s signature Month of Service program, in 2012, a record 60 percent of Alcoa employees took part in more than 1,050 events across 24 countries, benefiting more than 450,000 people and 2,050 nonprofit organizations. For more information, visit alcoafoundation.com and follow @AlcoaFoundation on Twitter.

About Architecture for Humanity

Architecture for Humanity is a nonprofit design services firm founded in 1999. By building a more sustainable future through the power of professional design, Architecture for Humanity taps a network of more than 75,000 professionals willing to lend time and expertise to help those who would not otherwise be able to afford their services. They bring design, construction and development services where they are most critically needed. For more information, please visit architectureforhumanity.org.