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## Partnership & Synergies

By [Jon Wiener, AIA](#) October 24th, 2014 0 Responses

Bold ideas can come from anywhere. Opportunities abound with every project. What prevents them is not seeing them. You have to see the opportunities, connect the dots and pursue with vigor.

What first intrigued me about [Lane Community College's](#) plans to expand downtown was the prospect of designing a project in Eugene's urban core. Then the unique chance to combine student education and housing on the same site really caught my imagination—the possibility of creating a whole, distinct world.

The College has had a presence in Eugene's downtown core for many years, but when the City offered LCC a million dollar site for one dollar, both institutions knew their fates were deeply connected. The adjacent library, parking garages and public transit station all made it a perfect location for turning a vacant block into an urban campus and prototype for sustainable urban development.

This project was also unusual in bringing together three architects: SRG (academic); [Pyatok](#) (student housing); and [Robertson Sherwood](#) (local). We spent a lot of time on urban design issues, knowing that we were putting a lot on the site and dealing with competition for the ground floor spaces. It made sense to put the student store on the 100% corner, but better sense to put student admissions there. We wanted to capitalize on multiple opportunities and enrich the surrounding neighborhood. This required very careful planning and coordination so that each move added value and ensured special "place making."

We also wanted the design to announce LCC's ambitious goal to become carbon neutral by 2050. Key measures were purposely left exposed to engage and inspire environmental stewardship right downtown. A dramatic four story glass atrium is the project's lung, while a large solar collector, made of glass tubes integrated into the façade, provides hot water. This stunning feature makes a bold architectural statement and contributes to other tightly coordinated passive strategies. Ensuring LEED Platinum, we integrated natural ventilation, daylighting, rain water harvesting, building mass and geothermal heat exchange, and a high-performance envelope.

Having a like-minded client added to our pursuit of innovation. We envisioned and then realized a classroom on the academic building's top floor that's completely open to the lobby. Visitors can easily see what's happening inside and get drawn into the learning experience. Exploration and discovery are encouraged and underscore the bold moves that are this project's hallmark.

LCC's energy management students now have the chance to learn the intricacies of heating and cooling systems by exploring conventional systems, new technologies, and integrated passive strategies. The academic building gives them specialized hands-on instruction with a wide variety of HVAC systems, as well as extensive metering and monitoring, public live data displays, a lighting lab and a roof top observatory for mechanical equipment and photovoltaics.

What began as a dream to build a net zero energy building as a teaching tool for LCC's prestigious energy management program converged with the City of Eugene's desire to revitalize a struggling urban neighborhood. What resulted is a whole greater than the sum of its parts. Our integrated solution, joining education, urban planning, architecture, and engineering, has created a living/learning center, high performing educational laboratory, and \$50 million in new urban development.

A crowning accomplishment for this project is that it dispels the notion that a LEED Platinum building costs more than a conventional building. By combining systems for living and learning, it achieves synergies that lower costs for operations, maintenance and construction, and increases comfort and enjoyment.

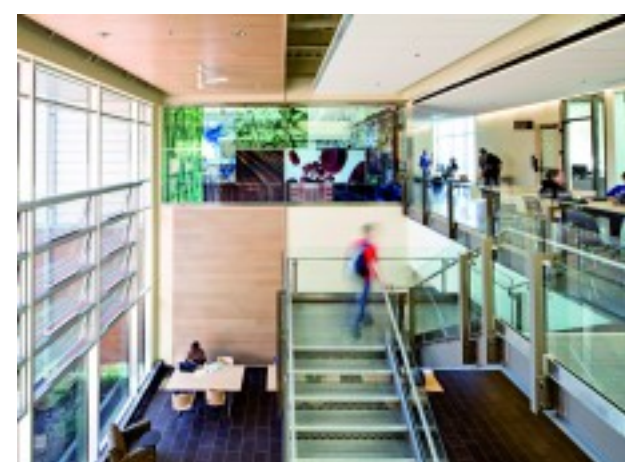
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**Jon Wiener, AIA** | Jon specializes in the design of facilities for higher education, particularly science and allied health buildings. A principal with over 30 years of experience, Jon is known for his ability to manage the design process and collaborate with a wide variety of clients and user groups. As a visionary leader, he is recognized for his unique approach to planning and design and significant contributions to sustainability. Jon is in charge of our education market sector and has worked primarily with colleges and universities for his career. Jon's work on the Lewis & Clark Law School was recognized as one of the best examples of green design in the Northwest, earning him the first-ever Award for Sustainable Design from General Electric.

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