

News Release

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Baruch College, City University of New York, Awarded \$422,528 Federal Grant to Accelerate Energy Efficiency Training for Building Managers

Nationwide Benefits Foreseen

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The Steven L. Newman Real Estate Institute of Baruch College, City University of New York, has been awarded a 2-year, \$422,528 grant by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to design and deliver an online certificate program for commercial building operators, property managers, and portfolio asset managers that will equip them to plan a path toward net zero energy building operations.

The [New York State Energy Research and Development Authority](#) (NYSERDA) will contribute an additional \$50,000, for a total of \$472,528 in funding. The [CUNY Building Performance Lab](#) (BPL) is partnering with the Newman Institute on the project.

The DOE grant is one of 58, totaling over \$76 million in federal stimulus funds, [announced](#) by DOE Secretary Steven Chu on June 17. The federal grants will support advanced energy-efficient building technology projects and the development of training programs for commercial building personnel.

"The Newman Institute has long been an advocate for sustainable buildings and building management and has a wealth of knowledge and resources to apply to the launch of the Benchmark Green certificate program," said Stan Altman, President of Baruch College.

All of these projects will deliver four primary benefits, explains Jack S. Nyman, director of the Newman Institute. Reducing energy consumption will cut carbon emissions, and cut building operating expenses, thereby increasing asset values. Also noteworthy, equipping building professionals with energy management skills will contribute to long-term workforce development.

"We need to train a skilled workforce that can help the real estate industry meet an unprecedented energy challenge," Nyman continues. "The Institute and BPL aim to accelerate training by delivering instruction that's convenient for students. And because courses will be offered online, the benefits can extend nationwide," he notes.

The Benchmark Green certificate program will comprise three 15-hour courses – Energy Efficiency Management and Improvement, Introduction to Advanced Energy Technologies, and Building System Synergies and Integrations – designed to develop students' strategic problem-solving skills in tackling energy efficiency problems in actual buildings. The advanced web portal through which courses will be offered will facilitate timely instructor feedback to students and provide numerous communication tools and features.

And feedback will be two-way, Nyman stresses: what instructors learn from students will enable them to continuously refine course content, making the courses increasingly valuable. "We'll be developing a national resource," he predicts.

Nyman is Principal Investigator on the project. Co-Principal Investigator is BPL's director, Michael Bobker. The Project Manager is Emily Grace, the Newman Institute's Associate Director of Research & Grants. Grace observes that DOE's proposal evaluation process was prolonged and rigorous: the Institute's team submitted its application almost 10 months ago. She also notes that the grant is for the total amount of funding that was sought and that the Institute is the only real estate institute among the awardees, which include Fortune 500 companies and major universities – among them, United Technologies, Siemens, Phillips, Johnson Controls, Dow, 3M, General Electric, the University of California, the University of Southern California, and Purdue.

Bobker points out that a great strength of Benchmark Green will be collaboration with major players in the energy field and the real estate industry. In addition to contributing \$50,000 to the project, NYSERDA endorsed the grant application and committed to providing further support for training deployment.

Formal letters of endorsement include the following:

- [Grubb & Ellis Company](#), a firm which sees Benchmark Green as "an exciting and timely response to a need we have recognized for some time."
- Mychele Lord, President and Founder of [Lord Green Real Estate Strategies](#) and lead author on ASHRAE's *Energy Efficiency Guide for Existing Buildings: the Business Case* and the U.S. Green Building Council's *Green Office Guide*.
- [Time Equities, Inc.](#), which offers the "ability to test concepts internally."
- [Urban Green Council](#), New York City's chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council. (Nyman is Vice Chair of its board.)

Termed "participating members," these parties will help develop the curriculum and promote it through their own organizations and their extensive networking.

The Newman Institute and BPL have their own extensive networks within the real estate industry and the building performance community. "For commercial buildings, the energy goals of the federal, state, and local governments are aligned," Nyman reflects. "The challenge is to advance them, broadly and swiftly. We believe we're ideally positioned to do exactly this, and we have a sense of urgency about our mission. We urge more parties to join us in this exciting project."

The Steven L. Newman Real Estate Institute addresses issues important to the real estate industry and public policy, through interdisciplinary applied research and public events. It also offers New York state-approved professional education including certificate programs in real estate, sustainability, facilities management, and construction management.