

What Is The Harriet Tubman Centennial Design Challenge?

The Primary objective of this challenge, involving architectural students from three U.S Universities, is to utilize and expand the vision of the William V.S Tubman University (WVSTU) planned library site to design an E-brary (digital library) that will emerge as a state of the art edifice to show case the innovative talents and expertise of young African Americans on the African continent.

Final year and graduate students at the colleges of architectural of Howard, Tuskegee and Morgan State Universities will use the William V.S. Tubman University library initiative as their studio project, and a design competition that will be judged by renowned architects from Africa and the US.

Participating students will benefit from an extraordinary experience in a new frontier emerging market place. They will be challenged to create an innovative design model taking into consideration local building construction practices and U.S. concepts.

The students and faculty will have the opportunity to travel to Maryland County, Liberia, for 10 days in January. This will provide an unique experience from their urban comfort zone to enhance their creativity while exposing them to new design ideas and construction practices. They will also have the opportunity to meet with local architects and construction companies, to understand the practicalities and efficiencies or deficiencies of the building industry.

The project is being initiated by William V.S. Tubman University Foundation Board. The Foundation is a US non-profit corporation established for the sole purpose: "to generate support for quality educational opportunity at William V.S. Tubman University that can transform lives in service to Liberia, Africa and the world".

Howard Tuskegee and Morgan State Schools of Architect are partnering with William V.S. Tubman University to make this project a success.

WVSTU was established in 2009 as Liberia's second public institution of tertiary education, committed to quality and excellence. It is located at the most southeastern tip of Liberia in Maryland County. Maryland in Africa was founded for freed enslaved Africans to return to liberty by the Maryland Colonization Society and the American Colonization Society.

There are six colleges within WVSTU, and a student population of eight hundred, revolving and growing. The faculty is led by President Dr. Elizabeth Davis-Russell, former Provost of State University, NY (SUNY). She is assisted with an international academic team; of which many are from the USA.

With the support of Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, WVSTU has embraced an innovative agenda that will show case American ingenuity in Africa. Some of the new areas WVSTU has embarked include a green campus, Rubber and Polymer Science and Engineering programs; Solar Biomass to Electricity model training; village living standard improvement and auxiliary enterprises development.

The goals of WVSTU are supported by a ten year master plan which includes a Hall Mark Library on the university campus. When completed, it will provide students, faculty and the community with a global link to the digital library of more than 100,000 e-books and over 435 academic, trade and professional publishers. It will also provide for a learning center and auditorium open to the local community.

The overall goal is to mobilize resources from international donors so as not to impede or delay the vision of this project.

Stages of funding:

1. Cost of administrating competition- Funded
2. Launching of competition and Gala Awards- Funded
3. Design winners award.- Funded
4. Students and faculty travel to Liberia (transportation, room and board at TU).
5. Construction of E-brary.

6. Computers, books, cataloguing for E-brary
7. Dedication ceremony (Naming of WVSTU E-brary).
8. Commemorative gifts at kick off and end of competition.- Donated