

Tsinghua University Team Wins Design Competition

The Center for International Business Ethics (CIBE) in Beijing, China, the Dynamic City Foundation, and Bentley Systems have announced that the project designed by the student team from the Architecture Department of Tsinghua University won top honours in the inaugural Future Cities China design competition. The competition was open to all students studying architecture and engineering in institutions of higher education. The program challenged students to use their design skills, along with Bentley software, to provide a master plan for the sustainable university campus of tomorrow.

The goal was to create a campus that could serve as the cornerstone of a modern 'green' Chinese city and help address the many challenges associated with complex, inner-city environments. Nearly 200 student teams from more than 70 universities submitted projects to the competition, which an independent panel of distinguished jurors narrowed to eight finalists. The finalists, which represented Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture, China Agricultural University, Harvard University, Jiangnan University, Tsinghua University, and Xi'an Jiaotong University, competed in a three-day forum held 24th to 26th August. The winning team receives an all-expense-paid, one-month internship at the US headquarters of Bentley Systems in Exton, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

Meng Ning, a member of the winning Tsinghua student team of two, said that the intensity of the competition and latitude for creativity were unprecedented. They learned through this experience.

The teams consisted of up to three students, plus a professor or infrastructure professional as mentor.

Each team submitted a proposed conceptual master plan for the sustainable university campus with the following elements:

- A logistic concept for the public space of the Future Cities campus, including its connections to the surroundings and a basic understanding of the landscape;
- A general massing study for the school's architectural program;
- An essay that describes the proposal's core concept, how the campus relates to the surrounding area and infrastructure, and how the proposal is sustainable.

The project site, Shuang Hua Yuan, is an underdeveloped plot in the heart of Beijing. It is disconnected from the city by large arteries, yet accessible by public transportation. The heavy infrastructural lines increase the complexity of the site, dividing it into four plots, typical of post-industrial cities in China. Alternatively, the site offers an open and green area on the edge of the central business district. The winning university campus design project, titled 'School in Between,' cultivated an integrated or holistic approach to urban issues. In this design, the university is no longer the ivory tower. Rather, it assumes the role of intermediary for cultural exchange and provides space and facilities for the environment around it.

Second- and third-place honours went to the teams from Beijing Institute of Civil Engineering and Architecture and Xi'an Jiaotong University, respectively. Each member of these two teams receives a one-month internship at a Bentley office in China.