

UK to Compete in International Solar Decathlon

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LEXINGTON, Ky. (Jan. 29, 2008) – The University of Kentucky is one of only 20 university-led teams from around the world selected to compete in the [United States Department of Energy \(DOE\) 2009 Solar Decathlon](#) [<http://news.uky.edu/news/>]. This is only the fourth time the impressive Solar Decathlon has been held and the first time UK has applied to participate.

A biennial event, the Solar Decathlon brings together 20 teams in a competition to design, build and operate the most attractive and energy-efficient solar-powered house. Each team's house, which must measure 800 square feet in size and use only sunlight for power, is then assembled as part of a weeklong competition and exhibition in Washington, D.C. As part of a solar village on the National Mall, the university teams' houses showcase innovation in solar technology to the general public while concurrently being evaluated for the decathlon. The houses are judged and scored during this period in 10 different areas related to design, energy efficiency, and comfort. An overall winner, considered to have the most energy-efficient and innovatively designed house, will be announced at the end of the event.

"The university is excited about this selection as a participant in the 2009 Solar Decathlon, a prestigious competition that puts UK in very good company with remarkable institutions around the world," said [Provost Kumble Subbaswamy](#) [<http://news.uky.edu/news/provost.htm>]. "The project is an outstanding interdisciplinary educational experience for students and faculty. It will highlight the innovative work being done across the campus and engage the Commonwealth in a discussion on the value of solar energy."

Over the next 18 months, UK's team will develop its Simple, Modular, Affordable, Renewable, Transportable, Building, combining Living, Understanding, Energy-efficiency and Sustainability or SMART BLUES House. As part of the project, the student-driven "Blues" Team will ultimately design, fabricate, construct, and test their house at the university in preparation for evaluation at the solar village, where they will install their entry for public display in the early fall of 2009.

The Blues Team, an interdisciplinary group consisting of students, faculty and staff from six collaborating colleges and 16 centers and departments on the UK campus, was created to execute the decathlon project. The collaborative effort will be led by UK's three principal investigators: [Hilary Bryon](#) [<http://news.uky.edu/news/bryon.html>], lecturer in architecture in the College of Design; [Donald Colliver](#) [<http://news.uky.edu/news/default.htm>], associate professor of biosystems and agricultural engineering at the College of Agriculture; and [Gregory Luhan](#) [<http://news.uky.edu/news/luhan.html>], associate dean for research at the College of Design. Other colleges with faculty serving on the project are the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Communication and Information Studies, the College of Engineering, and the College of Medicine.

Members of the project are excited about the unique educational experience and believe the SMART BLUES House will promote the high caliber work students and faculty are doing at UK and in industry throughout the Commonwealth. "This project will promote interdisciplinary learning and inter-professional education at the university and enhance UK's stature among its peers both nationally and globally," said Colliver. "It will also provide an opportunity for international exposure and promotion of Kentucky-based industry sponsors."

The UK Solar Decathlon team will soon embark on the initial two stages of the project. First, the Blues Team will launch the "Open Ideas Competition: What about Blue is Green?" at noon Thursday, Feb. 7, at the Center Theater in the UK Student Center. The competition will solicit innovative design concepts from the university community



Solar Decathlon logo

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[<http://news.uky.edu/news/>]

and the state at large. Kentuckians will be asked to suggest resources unique to the Commonwealth that can best help the state utilize solar power for green and sustainable solutions. The ideas competition will be followed with a design competition.

The principal investigators have already secured \$100,000 in funding from the DOE. But as the total cost of the project is expected to exceed \$500,000, the participation of the community-at-large is encouraged to assist the UK endeavor through modes of support. Fundraising for additional funding will begin in the near future.

For more information on the UK SMART BLUES House, contact Donald Colliver by phone at (859) 257-3000 or by [e-mail](mailto:colliver@bae.uky.edu) [colliver@bae.uky.edu]. For more information on the "Open Ideas Competition," refer to the [team Web site](http://news.uky.edu/news/) [http://news.uky.edu/news/].

For a list of all 20 teams participating in the 2009 Solar Decathlon, [visit the DOE site](http://news.uky.edu/news/2009.html) [http://news.uky.edu/news/2009.html].

To see a list of all the UK faculty participants, visit the [UK Public Relations Web site](http://news.uky.edu/news/display_article.php?artid=3089) [http://news.uky.edu/news/display_article.php?artid=3089].