



For more information contact:  
Christina Starr or Sarah Murphy  
[cstarr@frause.com](mailto:cstarr@frause.com) / [smurphy@frause.com](mailto:smurphy@frause.com)  
206-352-6402

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **WoodWorks Announces Educational Partnership with California Polytechnic State University and Other Leading Colleges**

*Partnership to focus on offering coursework for designing with wood*

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**Pomona, CA (July 31, 2008)** – WoodWorks, an initiative of the Wood Products Council, has announced a partnership with California State Polytechnic University Pomona (Cal Poly) to develop a set of virtual educational courses covering the use of wood in non-residential building design. The courses are intended for initial use in undergraduate and graduate-level engineering programs, and for the continuing education of industry professionals. The design of commercial and other non-residential buildings with wood is typically not included in university curricula and this effort represents a unique cooperation between the forest products industry and educational institutions.

Although Cal Poly Pomona is taking a leadership role, the project will involve multiple campuses of California State University and the University of California, private universities and other colleges throughout the country. Prominent faculty members from several notable universities have also joined the effort of developing course content, including the University of California at Berkeley, Washington State University, Oregon State University and the University of Massachusetts.

“The long term goal is to ensure that emerging design professionals have the skills to design non-residential structures in all of the major building materials—including wood,” said Mikhail Gershfeld, professional practice professor of civil engineering at Cal Poly Pomona, who is leading the project. “When selecting structural materials for a project, designers need to consider a variety of factors. The lack of training and understanding of strength, limitations and proper use of a particular material shouldn’t be among them.”

Initiated by WoodWorks as part of its program to support the use of wood in non-residential buildings, the agreement includes the development of 30 learning modules for use as part of basic and advanced wood design courses. The courses are being developed under the umbrella of a newly established Wood

Education Institute that consists of an advisory and development committee represented by a number of universities, design professionals and wood industry representatives. The courses will be available for use by colleges nationwide and will be offered to practicing professionals as online, hybrid or conventional courses.

“Wood offers a number of advantages that make it a great choice for non-residential buildings,” said Bryan Schuyler, regional director of WoodWorks for the state of California. “But most design professionals don’t learn to work with wood as part of their formal educational training and there are a lot of misconceptions surrounding its use. Our partnership with Cal Poly will help fill a void in current design school curriculums while contributing to a broader skill set for architects and engineers.”

Participating universities currently include:

- University of Wisconsin (Madison)
- Washington State University
- University of Buffalo
- Oregon State University
- University of California (Berkeley)
- Colorado State University
- University of Massachusetts (Amherst)
- Cal Poly University (San Luis Obispo)
- Cal Poly University (Pomona)
- San Diego State University
- California State University (Los Angeles)
- Santa Clara University

“We want designers to consider wood based on its merits and applicability to the project,” said Schuyler. “Aside from its beauty, wood is the only major building material that’s both renewable and sustainable over the long term. It offers greater design flexibility than other materials, costs less and still meets code requirements. It’s also a great performer in earthquakes and, because wood products store carbon, it helps mitigate the effects of climate change. One of the benefits of this project is that design professionals will soon have greater access to the knowledge they need to make informed choices.”

For more information, visit <http://woodeducationinstitute.com>.

### **About WoodWorks**

WoodWorks, an initiative of the Wood Products Council, is a cooperative venture of all the major wood associations in North America, as well as research organizations and government agencies. It provides one-stop access to the widest possible range of information on the use of wood in non-residential structures. For more information, call 1-866-966-3448 or visit [www.woodworks.org](http://www.woodworks.org).

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