

# UNB

ALUMNI NEWS



## It Begins Here

for Darien Edison  
and many more



# FUNDS RESEARCH IN OFF-SITE CONSTRUCTION

**T**oday's designers and contractors of the built environment are looking for more sustainable designs, not only to lessen environmental impact, but also to increase production efficiency and improve quality management. This often involves building in a controlled environment - producing components away from the construction site itself. Off-site production reduces waste, promotes sustainability, and overall, results in better quality products.

Recognizing opportunity for growth in this field, UNB and OSCO Construction Group have partnered in an initiative that aims to transform New Brunswick into a global leader in off-site construction. At a special event in September, UNB announced that the company has invested \$2 million to establish the OSCO Chair in Off-site Construction to lead the new Off-site Construction Research Centre at the University.

The OSCO Chair in Off-site Construction will be a leading specialist in the field and build on the faculty of engineering's current strengths in civil engineering and related pre-manufacturing technology. The chair will undertake research alongside partner organizations that will leverage emerging technologies to develop better products and

processes for delivering buildings and public infrastructure.

Funding from OSCO will also be used to hire an innovation director for the centre, as well as a post-doctoral research fellow who will help build UNB's international profile in this field. Researchers will seek additional corporate partners and pursue leveraging opportunities with external granting agencies to enhance the scope of the centre.

"This partnership will bring UNB to the forefront of innovation in the world and increase product export opportunities for New Brunswick manufacturing companies," says UNB President Eddy Campbell. "We are grateful for OSCO's leadership and contribution to advancing research in this area."

UNB boasts a unique combination of strengths in research, teaching and entrepreneurship that facilitates growth in this important sector of Canada's economy. Many civil engineering faculty members have international profiles, with expertise in the fields of construction, materials, structural, and transportation engineering.

Hans Klohn, president of OSCO Construction Group, believes that the investment in research at UNB will build critical capacity in this emerging area of construction.

"OSCO is focused on creating more valued-added construction solutions and improving the overall construction delivery model for our customers," says Klohn. "Designs which can optimize both off-site manufacturing & on-site assembly, are faster, cheaper, safer and better for the environment than using the traditional, 'stick-built' method. UNB is building innovative, applied research capacity in this area and we are pleased to partner with the university on this initiative."

The faculty of engineering has a vision to build more capacity, double research output, significantly increase the number of research centres, and grow its graduate student population. This is already underway in all of its departments, including civil engineering.

Chris Diduch, dean of engineering at UNB, sees the investment in off-site construction research as an indication of the strength of existing UNB research in the field. "UNB has worked diligently to create world-class research in the department of civil engineering," says Diduch. "It is very important when an industry leader such as OSCO recognizes and affirms the progress we have made and the potential of what we can accomplish with a further investment in research capacity." 