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Dear Mr. Greg Johnson:

Please accept this report, “The Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability Retrospective”, summarizing our work for the Sustainable Building Sciences project course – MECH 550.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us via email at laura.fedoruk@gmail.com and paulsave01@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Laura Fedoruk and Paul Save

Abstract

This paper focuses on the availability of information to guide the decisions made regarding systems impacting space conditioning for the Center for Interactive Research on Sustainability (CIRS) building at the University of British Columbia (UBC). After interviews and numerous documents had been acquired, this data was refined to provide a representative timeline of events that took place through the CIRS' ten year project history which culminated with the building's opening in the fall of 2011. Particular focus was placed on the decisions surrounding the 2008 Energy charette and the financial impacts on the timeframe around this charette. The findings from deconstructing the information flows around this time period indicate the following four occurrences: 1) financial decisions and strategic partnerships greatly impacted the evolution of CIRS, 2) that much of the knowledge was shared from an individual to a group; as opposed to be being created in the group, 3) that pre-formed goals guided this process, and 4) to maintain these goals the options for heat sources for CIRS could be solar thermal, geothermal and waste heat; all of which are currently encompassed in CIRS.

May 10, 2012

MECH 550 – Sustainable Building Sciences Project Course

**The Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability
Retrospective**

Submitted By: Laura Fedoruk, Paul Save

Submitted To: Greg Johnson

Preface

The authors would like to thank Professors Ronald Kellett, Sheryl Staub-French, Maged Senbel, Rachel Pottinger, and John Robinson for their supervision, advice and support of this project. We would also like to express thanks to Alberto Cayuela for his assistance in retrieving documents related to the Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability and sharing of narrative information related to the project. Additionally, the assistance provided by Devon Miller and Mike Vander Laan for respectively creating Illustrator files for the timeline and building mock-ups was appreciated.

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Introduction

The CIRS Retrospective project emerged out of a larger project called IDEAS – Integrative Data-Enabled Approaches to Sustainability across Scales. The IDEAS project is a three-year initiative “to develop innovative processes, methods, and technologies to inform the systemic, integrative and collaborative decision-making crucial to planning, designing, constructing and operating sustainable buildings and communities.” As a component of this larger project, the CIRS Retrospective emerged as a way to look back at the processes that shaped the evolution of CIRS and to attempt to deconstruct some of the interesting storylines within the data of this process.

Project Summary

The Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability (CIRS) has been an ambitious building project, one that was conceptualized in 1999, had its first occupants in August of 2011, and officially opened in November. Over the ten plus years between the building’s conceptualization and opening, the plans for CIRS evolved and grew with the project team. In order to better understand the decision-making processes involved in the construction of innovative, high-performance buildings, this SBSP course project is analyzing the design through construction process using a retrospective lens. Through gathering of information sets such as project drawings and consultant meeting minutes, the CIRS Retrospective will deconstruct the information flows within the building’s timeline. Of particular interest to the project team is determining how information flows and decision-making processes shaped the elements related to the space conditioning system of the building.



Figure 1 The Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability (CIRS)