

Andrews Students Honored for Excellent Design

Architecture & Interior Design students won award for project

[Campus News](#) | Posted on June 6, 2019



View of a proposed water plaza at El Caño Martín Peña in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The plaza design helps to mitigate storm water and promotes social, economic and recreational activities to help uplift this disadvantaged but vibrant community. (Photo by Kevin Leong. Designed in collaboration with the 2017 Urban Design Studio)

By: Congress for the New Urbanism

Students in Andrews University's School of Architecture & Interior Design have won a Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) Student Merit Award for their project El Nexo Martin Peña, which envisions new mixed-use development and housing in an area of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

CNU announced the winners of its 19th annual Charter Awards on May 22, 2019. Regarded as the preeminent award for excellence in urban design, the CNU Charter Awards honor a select number of winners and honorable mentions that embody and advance the principles of the [Charter of the New Urbanism](#).

The 2019 awards recognize architecture, planning, development and landscape designs that offer choices for affordable housing, a lively mix of uses, and public space in a wide variety of

settings. The winners—located in 11 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, as well as in Hong Kong, China, England and Mexico—will be announced at a ceremony at the Ali Center in Louisville, Kentucky, on June 14 during CNU’s annual Congress, a four-day event where more than 1,500 people discuss, debate, engage and advance innovations and strategies in city- and town-building.

Andrews University’s project focused on El Caño Martin Peña, a winding estuary tidal channel bordered by eight working-class neighborhoods that are constantly vulnerable to flooding. The student project took a turn for the urgent when Hurricane Maria hit just weeks before the students’ scheduled design charrette in Puerto Rico. The team swiftly went into action to help in any way it could, distributing food and supplies to residents of the affected neighborhood.

The students worked under the supervision of Andrew von Maur, professor in the School of Architecture & Interior Design, and in collaboration with the community groups Grupo de los Ochoes Comunidades Aledanas al Caño Martin Peña and Enlace del Caño Martin Peña. The design process resulted in designs for new housing and mixed-use development on a 3.3-acre site outside of the flood zone, combining owner-occupied townhomes with apartments, senior housing and subsidized affordable housing above commercial space. A central water plaza harnesses the presence of water to create civic space enlivened by a floating market barge, pedestrian bridges, food trucks and open space. The team expanded on this neighborhood vision by studying a 160-acre area for opportunities to catalyze broader redevelopment, especially of vacant lots.

El Nexo Martin Peña is among four student awards. In addition, the jury gave eight Charter Awards and five Merit Awards. The jury also gave a special award to recognize the long-term, transformative influence of Seaside, Florida, on the New Urbanism movement, as expressed through the completion of Phases Two and Three of the Lyceum complex, a central public space, cultural and educational center at the heart of the community.

“How a place is designed fundamentally shapes people’s lives,” said Lynn Richards, president and CEO of CNU. “That’s a profound responsibility, and Charter Award-winning designers take it seriously. We are gratified to see these students’ thoughtful design solutions to the challenges and possibilities of El Nexo Martin Peña.

Members of [The Congress for the New Urbanism \(CNU\)](#) help create vibrant and walkable cities, towns and neighborhoods where people have diverse choices for how they live, work and get around. People want to live in well-designed places that are unique and authentic. CNU’s mission is to help people build those places.

CNU’s 2,600 members are diverse global thought-leaders on design, development, policy, implementation and activism. They work in communities across the world—from major urban centers to historic small towns. From the annual Congress to strategic policy initiatives, CNU connects and empowers the professionals, leaders, advocates and citizens building places where people and businesses can thrive and prosper.

For a full list of winners, please contact Lisa Schamess, CNU national contact, at lschamess@cnu.org or 202-841-5583.

For more information on the Andrews University School of Architecture & Interior Design, please email architecture@andrews.edu or call 269-471-6003.