

## CAMPUS AS LABORATORY:

### Students Shape Carrier Dome Rain Capture Project

by Rachel May, April, 2014

*Sustainability at Syracuse University is a collaboration between our educational mission and campus operations.* One such exciting collaboration has been focusing on collecting rain water from the 7-acre roof of the Carrier Dome for use in flushing toilets during Dome events. Project manager Jack Osinski of Campus Design, Planning, and Construction welcomed the participation of engineering and design students, and their input has shaped the project for the better.



Communications Design students Tierney Latella and Sam Proctor worked with outside consultants from Environmental Design and Research to find effective ways of communicating to Dome visitors about the rain water project. As a result, the students will see their mural design gracing the walls of the Dome restrooms, and their simple but effective logo of water dripping from an SU “S” pipe will appear throughout the Dome and on other rain capture projects around campus.

Jane Rice of EDR praised the students’ professionalism and creativity: “I wish we could hire them after graduation,” she said, “but we are going to lose them to larger firms in NYC.” For his part, Proctor was delighted to have his work taken so seriously by the professionals in charge of the project, and he learned something about sustainability as well. “When I look at buildings now they are more than buildings,” he says. “I think about the infrastructure and how that is manifested on the surface.”

Engineering Senior Matthew Mitch got involved in the Dome rain capture project as part of a senior design course. His team, “Otto’s Army Corps of Engineers,” took on the task of creating their own design for the system. They found the project surprisingly complex, and were attracted by its

potential to make a real difference. “The Dome is a huge icon on campus and by using it as an example of SU’s dedication to sustainability it can change the way students think about sustainability,” says Mitch.

Poring over specifications and touring the Dome with building manager Pete Sala, “Otto’s Army Corps” came up with an innovative idea for placing the water tanks underneath the playing field, an idea that would save money by allowing for shallower placement of the tanks, since they would not be subject to freezing, and shorter pipes to the restrooms. Sala and the professional engineers in charge of the project were excited by this concept and it very nearly supplanted their plans to locate the tanks under the parking lot north of the Dome.

In the end, space limitations resolved the question in favor of the deeper tanks outside the structure, but the students left a very positive impression on everyone involved. Is Osinski open to involving students in future campus sustainability projects? “Absolutely!”