

## **Net Positive Studio named recipient of 2025 Excellence in Engagement Award**

K-State's Office of Engagement is proud to announce that the [Net Positive Studio](#), led by Associate Professor Michael Gibson in the College of Architecture, Planning & Design, has been selected as the recipient of the [2025 Excellence in Engagement Award](#).

The award recognizes outstanding engaged scholarship that creates mutually beneficial partnerships between K-State and external communities. The Net Positive Studio exemplifies this mission by tackling one of the most urgent societal challenges: affordable, sustainable housing.

Founded in 2018, the Net Positive Studio integrates teaching, research, and outreach through a service-learning model that engages architecture students in the design and construction of high-performance, net zero homes in collaboration with nonprofit and workforce development partners. Through the studio, students gain hands-on experience while addressing real-world problems, applying cutting-edge sustainable design strategies to build affordable homes that strengthen communities across Kansas.

To date, the studio has completed 11 housing projects in collaboration with seven nonprofit partners and has received over \$200k in direct sponsorship and grants to support the studio's teaching and research mission. Its defining Workforce Solar Housing Partnership, which includes partners such as Habitat for Humanity of the Northern Flint Hills, Manhattan Area Technical College, and the Flint Hills Job Corps, has trained dozens of emerging trade workers while pioneering accessible, energy-efficient construction techniques.

"The Net Positive Studio is a model of engaged scholarship in action," said Michael McClure, Dean of the College of Architecture, Planning & Design. "Its impact is seen not only in the houses built, but in the students transformed, communities empowered, and systems challenged to do better."

Professor Gibson's work has garnered national recognition, including awards from Habitat for Humanity International, the American Institute of Architects, and the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Decathlon. Beyond awards and accolades, his efforts are reshaping how architectural education can directly serve communities in need.

The 2025 Excellence in Engagement Award recognizes the Net Positive Studio's exemplary track record of transformative, community-centered work. Through initiatives like the newly launched Better Housing Consortium and an upcoming open-access housing resource, the studio aims to share its strategies, partnerships, and innovations more broadly— helping communities across Kansas and beyond address the urgent need for affordable, sustainable housing.

For more information, visit [www.netpositivestudio.org](http://www.netpositivestudio.org) and [www.better-housing.org](http://www.better-housing.org).