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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON BREAKS GROUND FOR NEW MILGARD HALL**

*ARO's design creates a learning lab for interdisciplinary study that is equipped to handle needs of a growing student body, while retaining values of engagement and sustainability*

Tacoma, WA - The University of Washington Tacoma (UWT) broke ground this week for a state-of-the-art STEM learning lab, Milgard Hall. Designed by New York City-based Architecture Research Office, the building will support design thinking at UWT by connecting students and faculty across the Milgard Business School, the School of Engineering & Technology, and the Global Innovation and Design Lab. Construction is scheduled to last 24 months and be complete in 2023.

Milgard Hall embodies UWT's mission as an "urban-serving university." The 55,000-square-foot building both responds to the need for STEM programming in the South Sound, while its mass timber construction addresses ambitious sustainability goals. Sustainability has been incorporated into almost every facet of the facility's design and construction.

"We defined a set of principles for this project with the university and the design-build team, to guide design and construction: innovate, educate, and engage," says Kim Yao,

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ARO Principal. “These became our touchstones in creating this active, student-oriented hub on campus.”

In accordance with the University's image as an “urban-serving university,” Milgard Hall's location was selected with thoughtful consideration of the community's needs. Located adjacent to the revitalized Prairie Line Trail, and surrounding historic warehouse structures, the design is rooted in Tacoma's history, including its connection to lumber trades and the terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad. The building is carefully sited to maximize access to daylight and views, and programmed relative to solar energy to reduce HVAC loads wherever possible. Classrooms, laboratories, and an outdoor Science Court are situated to be visible from the Prairie Line Trail, actively connecting the students to passersby. The “Connector” is an open, airy, common area that extends through the building and accommodates a natural path across campus, further activating the building as a student hub at the south side of campus. All departments converge in the Connector and it can be utilized simultaneously as a collaborative zone and for individual study and work. The Connector also welcomes the surrounding community, providing access to a large, flexible High Impact Practice Space and other flexible classrooms.

As a home for the expanding School of Engineering and Technology (SET), the building houses a lab wing providing new engineering spaces on campus. These include a machine and fabrication shop, and concrete and combustion labs, with exterior access to the street and Science Court. Additional labs ranging from Hydrology to Robotics are located on upper floors of the building. For the Global Innovation Design Lab (GIDLab), flexible spaces support a design thinking methodology, including an open assembly space and individual project rooms. Synergies between SET, GIDLab and the Milgard School of Business will be promoted in the building, intersecting also with the broader Tacoma community.

Located within a historic district, the building is situated to reinforce the continuity of the street and Prairie Line Trail within the urban campus, creating a new South entry. Exterior materials relate to both the existing brick structures nearby as well as the modern urban context, while also allowing glimpses of the wood structure through wider expanses of glass in select zones. Local brick is contrasted with profiled metal panels; large windows punctuate the façade, opening up towards the sky. Moments of color highlight specific areas of activity on the interior and complement the natural warmth and rhythm of the CLT panels and glulam column and beam structure.

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## About ARO

Architecture Research Office is the New York City firm led by Stephen Cassell, Kim Yao, and Adam Yarinsky. Since 1993, ARO has earned a reputation for architecture that unites beauty and form with strategy and intelligence. The firm's diverse project portfolio—spanning strategic planning, architecture and urban design—is united by a principled and engaged approach to design, collaborative process, and technical precision, always in an effort to achieve the greatest aesthetic impact with the fewest natural and financial resources. This philosophy has earned the firm over one hundred design awards including the 2020 AIA Architecture Firm Award, the AIA New York State Firm of the Year Award, and the Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt National Design Award for Architecture.

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