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Community Engagement Programs in Sch

A Survey of

Newark Design
Hillier College of Arc

NJIT
New Jersey Institute
of Technology

hools of Architecture in the United States

28 Programs

Collaborative
hitecture and Design

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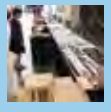
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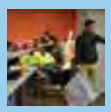
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INTRODUCTION

Since its founding in 1973, NJIT's School of Architecture has always included the City of Newark as a primary subject in its pedagogy. In 2019, with encouragement from Dean Branko Kolarevic, NJIT Professors Anthony Schuman, Darius Sollohub, and Georgeen Theodore began to formalize these efforts under a single organizational umbrella as the Newark Design Collaborative. The goal of this new entity is to coordinate community projects for the benefit of our students and the Newark communities we serve. The context for this endeavor is the university's classification as a "Carnegie Community Engagement Institution."

In spring of 2020, with a modest seed grant, we engaged four students in an effort to survey existing community engagement programs across the United States to inform our decisions about organizational structure, funding, and scope of activity. The student research team created an interview instrument and contacted community engagement programs listed on the ACSA website in spring 2021, and/or included in the *Sourcebook of Community Engagement Programs in Schools of Architecture in North America*, published by ACSA in 2000. Of forty schools contacted, twenty-eight responded to engage our students in substantive discussions about their program's approach, history, lessons learned, and intentions for the future. The students then distilled the collected information into concise profiles of each program, most of which are public land-grant research institutions. In fall of 2021, the faculty and students presented this information to a gathering of Newark stakeholders representing various sectors of urban life including arts and culture, community development, real estate, and city planning.

Since that presentation, the student research team completed the profiles of all twenty-eight programs and interpreted the results in graphic form and in the Executive Summary that follows. We present this document here for your review. If your program is among those profiled, we welcome your edits. If you are not yet included, and we recognize that we have only touched the surface of this movement, we encourage you to prepare a profile of your own program following our established format and send it to us for incorporation.

Beyond its utility for our own purposes, it is our intention to expand this modest start into an update of the initial *Sourcebook* published by ACSA over 20 years ago. Please assist this effort by sharing the particulars of your own programs with us, so that we all may benefit from connecting students with communities to learn and flourish via engaged design.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was underwritten by a seed grant awarded in 2021 and jointly sponsored by the Hillier College of Architecture and Design and the Office of the Provost at NJIT. With faculty supervision, the grant supported a student research team responsible for all aspects of the present report: program identification and research, interviews, data collection and analysis, graphic presentation of school profiles and data summary, and design of the final booklet. Extending well beyond the period of grant funding, the diligence and skill of these students accounts for the quality of this report:

Noelle Marzullo-Kruse, M.Arch '22
Silas McBride, B.Arch '22
Ebony Payne, B.Arch '22
Sam Roberts, B.Arch '22

On behalf of the Newark Design Collaborative, Profs. Anthony Schuman (Project Director), Darius Sollohub, and Georgeen Theodore served as faculty supervisors with editorial and logistical assistance from Amy Stinchcombe, Communications Coordinator at Hillier College.

We extend our gratitude to the leadership and staff of the participating school-based community engagement programs across the country for their enthusiastic responses. These individuals graciously participated in an initial interview and ongoing communication throughout the process. This document acknowledges and supports their important work to help all our schools engage more effectively with their surrounding communities. This report is dedicated to these programs.

Finally, we offer special thanks to those Newark stakeholders who attended a rollout of our initial findings in September 2021. Their invaluable feedback will guide the continued development of the Newark Design Collaborative as a tool for community engagement through design work facilitated by NJIT faculty and powered by NJIT students.

Newark Design Collaborative

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Successful community engagement benefits both students and the community by "bringing the studio to the street," utilizing the expertise of university faculty and staff and the local knowledge of community partners on the ground. Centers that do this work (including our own Newark Design Collaborative) can serve as a valuable community development tool, allying the abilities and resources of the academy with community initiatives. They present an attractive opportunity for students to learn how design can enhance the built and social environment of their city or town. Most importantly, this program type provides a setting for learning how to communicate and work with diverse constituencies toward common objectives.

In examining data about trends and guidelines of existing programs—from issues of scope and mission to practical details like funding and liability—we extracted lessons learned and tools utilized to steer our own fledgling program, as well as to share these findings with other schools hosting community engagement programs.

The school profiles yielded the following aggregated data; please see the research summary on pages 6-7 for individual school data.

- 82% of responding programs are housed in public institutions.
- 46% of the responding schools are land-grant institutions.
- 96% of the responding schools are housed in research institutions.
- 57% operate from an on-campus facility; 29% have an off-campus facility; 14% have no dedicated facility.
- 86% of the programs have student staff, with a mix of compensated work, volunteer work, and course credit.
- 29% have part-time or volunteer staff.

In the course of our research, several salient themes emerged consistently across all the programs. Here are our findings:

- TRUST - The key to a successful collaboration between an institution and the local community is trust. This is built on relationships that are established over time. The more stable the leadership, in both the schools and community organizations, the better the prospects for mutual understanding.

- FUNDING - Programs require adequate funding based on an accurate assessment of level of need. This often requires a staff member tasked with pursuing grants and other funding opportunities. Even when a grant application is not successful, it provides an opportunity to build bridges for future collaborations.

- CONTINUITY - Staffing and student involvement are key to building trust through consistent leadership, full-time staff, and engaged students. Maintaining continuity allows for a deeper understanding of challenges and opportunities that cannot be achieved in a single meeting or even in one semester or one project.

- LISTENING - A Center's goal must always be to listen and learn from community partners and let their ideas and needs guide the conversation. Strategies for community engagement are not universally applicable; what succeeds in one context may not work in others.

- COMMUNICATION - Working in a multidisciplinary manner helps employ various strengths of students and staff. It also teaches design students how to communicate ideas with non-designers.

- EXPERIENCE - For students, community engagement delivers a vital education in real world design. Students receive guidance from professionals as well as feedback from community clients so that they begin to see the impact of their design work on people's lives. This is essential to instill an understanding that professional designers have a responsibility to increase equitable access to quality design.

- LOCATION - Establishing a storefront-type facility is a Center's most powerful physical tool. This cultivates a neutral ground to facilitate freedom of conversation between staff, students, and community members. Functioning simultaneously as a hive of student involvement and as a facilitation platform for ongoing conversations with community partners help maintain links with community leadership.

- SCOPE - Taking on manageable projects with prospects for short-term success helps build trust alongside hope and excitement for future collaborations. Establishing an achievable scope at an appropriate scale helps create balance between academic responsibility and community needs.

- FEEDBACK - Soliciting and heeding feedback from community members, staff and students is essential in establishing and maintaining trust. Stable leadership of the school program is extremely important in maintaining continuous connections between the program and the community.

PROGRAM LOCATION MAP

University
of Minnesota
University
of Wisconsin-
Milwauke
University
of Detroit Mercy
University
of Michigan
Cornell
University
Yale
University
Penn State
University
NJIT
Washington
University
University
of Kentucky
Virginia Tech
North Carolina
State University
University
of Oklahoma:
Tulsa
University
of Arkansas
Georgia Institute
of Technology
Mississippi
State University
Auburn University
Tulane University
University of
South Florida
Florida Atlantic
University

RESEARCH SUMMARY

COMMUNITY DESIGN CENTERS AT A GLANCE

	University Type		Staff			Facility Type	
Name of University	Public	Private	Full-Time Staff	Student Employees	Part-Time or Volunteer Staff	On-Campus Facility	Off-Campus Facility
Auburn University	■		■	■			■
Cornell University		■	■				
Florida Atlantic University	■		■	■		■	
Georgia Institute of Technology	■		■	■		■	
Mississippi State University	■		■	■			■
Montana State University	■				■		
North Carolina State University	■		■	■	■		
Pennsylvania State University	■		■	■	■	■	
Texas Tech University	■		■	■		■	
Tulane University		■	■	■			■
UCLA	■		■	■		■	
University of Arizona	■		■		■	■	
University of Arkansas	■		■	■			■
University of Detroit Mercy		■	■	■		■	■
University of Houston	■		■	■		■	
University of Kentucky	■		■		■		■
University of Michigan	■		■	■			
University of Minnesota	■		■	■		■	
University of New Mexico	■		■	■			
University of Oklahoma (Norman)	■		■	■	■	■	
University of Oklahoma (Tulsa)	■		■	■	■	■	
University of Oregon	■		■	■		■	
University of South Florida	■		■	■		■	
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee	■		■	■		■	
Virginia Tech	■		■	■	■		■
Washington State University	■			■		■	
Washington University in St. Louis		■	■	■		■	
Yale University		■	■	■			■

	Funding Sources				Academic Engagement Strategies				
s	University	Grants	Endowments	Sponsors, Contracts, and Fees	Studio Courses	Design + Build	Research	Non-Local Engagement	Multi-Disciplinary Engagement

MATRIX BREAKDOWN

PRIVATE UNIVERSITY BREAKDOWN

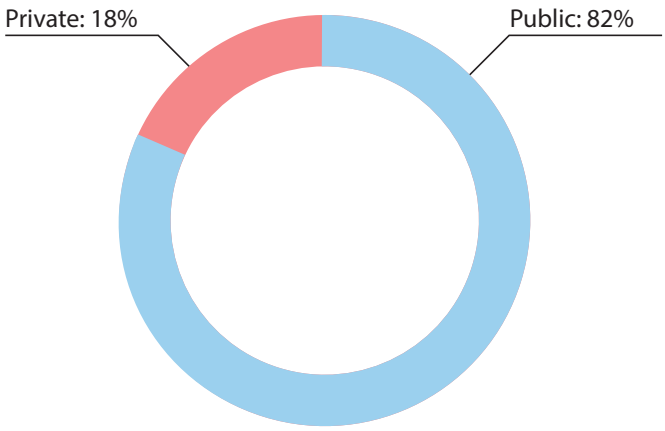
Name	Research	Land-Grant
Cornell U	■	■
Tulane U	■	
U Detroit Mercy		
WashU St. Louis	■	
Yale U	■	

PUBLIC UNIVERSITY BREAKDOWN

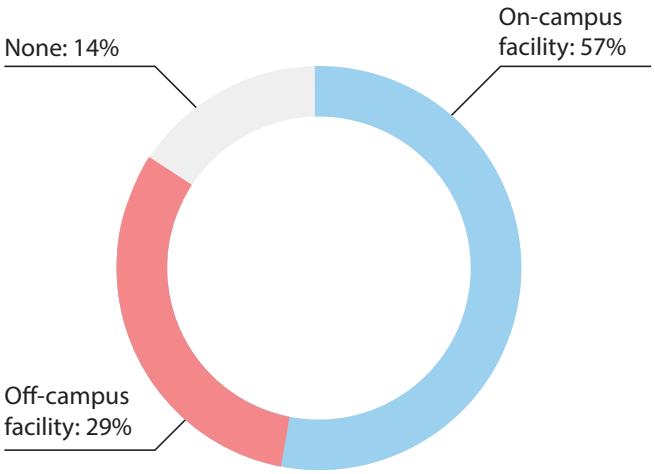
Name	Research	Land-Grant
Auburn U	■	■
Florida Atlantic U	■	
Georgia Tech	■	
Mississippi State U	■	■
Montana State U	■	■
North Carolina State U	■	■
Penn State U	■	■
Texas Tech U	■	
UCLA	■	■
U Arizona	■	■
U Arkansas	■	■
U Houston	■	
U Kentucky	■	■
U Michigan	■	
U Minnesota	■	■
U New Mexico	■	
U Oklahoma (Norman)	■	
U Oklahoma (Tulsa)	■	
U Oregon	■	
U South Florida	■	
U Wisconsin-Milwaukee	■	
Virginia Tech	■	■
Washington State U	■	■

STAFFING MODELS

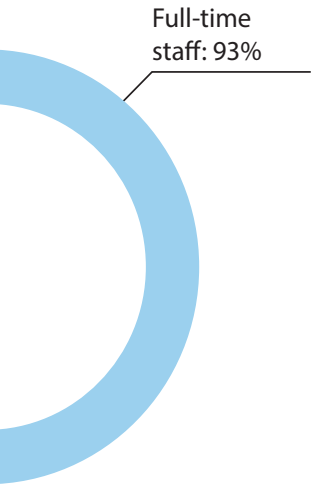
PRIVATE AND PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES



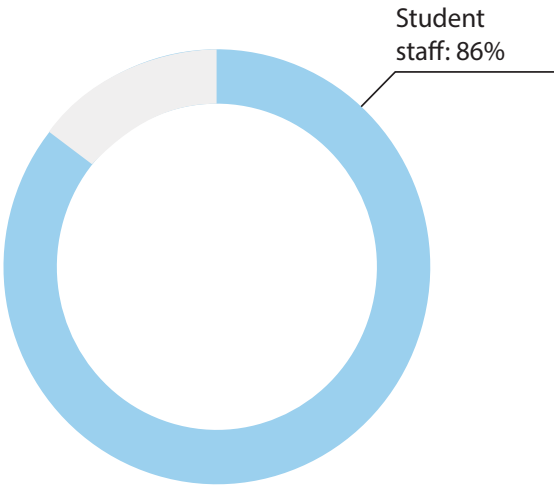
FACILITY LOCATION

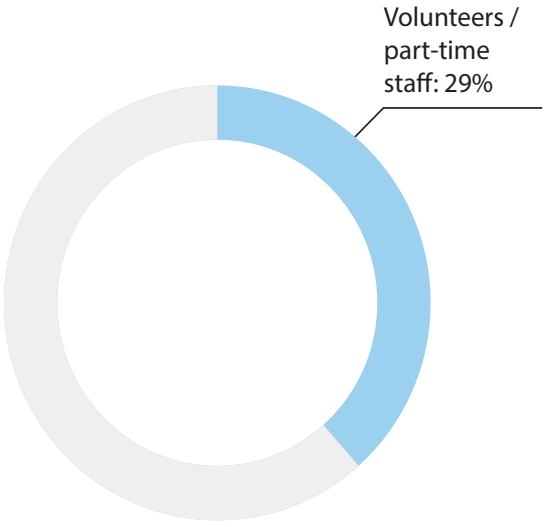


VOLUNTEER PRESENCE



STUDENT STAFF





PROFILES

URBAN STUDIO

Auburn University
https://cadc.auburn.edu/architecture/architecture-degrees-programs/program-of-architecture/urban-studio/
Birmingham, AL
Correspondent: Alex Krumdiek, Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
1991

STRUCTURE
Director: *Alex Krumdiek*
Additional Staff: *Associate professor John Pitari (Assistant). The studio currently shares the advisory board of the ACPLA, with plans to create their own. They are also advised by a pool of about 30 local firms that partner with the studio for the internship program.*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public land-grant research university

BUDGET
University funding
Grants
Community client fees

FACILITY
The new building housing the studio space is approximately 15,000 SF, and is located off-campus in downtown Birmingham (about two hours from campus).

PROJECT TYPES
Research
Studio courses
Planning/visioning services

Auburn University's Urban Studio, part of the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture, is a service-learning program focused on teaching and outreach. The mission is to provide planning and design services to underserved communities in Birmingham, with projects ranging from architectural design in an urban setting to broader urban design solutions. Students learn to take an asset-based approach regarding community development and planning as they and the university engage with the community through investigation of challenges related to revitalizing downtown neighborhoods.

PROCESS
Projects are brought to the Urban Studio by the community and also through communication between the administration and the mayoral staff as well as other stakeholders interested in downtown revitalization. Community groups and stakeholders come together to discuss what's happening in the downtown area, its development and impact on communities, and then projects are chosen based on their alignment with the goals of the university's curriculum and those of the Urban Studio.

Students are engaged in the third year for one semester (usually architecture projects in an urban setting); the fifth year program is the full academic year where students look at a district in Birmingham, document existing conditions, and then examine social and economic issues in the area. There is a good deal of research on existing conditions, then a 5-week period of strategic planning, and then the final 12 weeks devoted to individual projects. The project duration is 20 weeks plus an 8-10 week internship. The internship is $15 per hour paid through local firms that oversee the interns.

Deliverables: At the end of the project the students create a book so the studio has a record of all the work that's been done and what they have learned about community engagement practices and planning/design. The students provide direction, design visioning, and planning services to the community. Nothing is physically built by the studio, so there is no liability concern.

FEEDBACK LOOP
Working collaboratively with faculty, community members and professional partners, students participate in design visioning projects which can later be taken forward by a professional design firm. In this way, professionals, community members, and students learn how to work with and assist each other toward a common goal of revitalization. Future plans for the studio include a more multidisciplinary approach. Krumdiek hopes to include not only landscape architecture, interior architecture, real estate development, building science, and graphic design students, but also sociology, history, economics, and political science students as partners in collaboration for a revitalized Birmingham.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

The Urban Studio works through design to address racial equity, design justice and affordable housing. Students are provided with real world design challenges that match community needs, faculty interests and resources while teaching students how to do meaningful and successful community-based design work.

"The Urban Studio is neutral ground. It is the place where political positions don't matter. Old, preconceived ideas don't play into it that much. There is a freedom to have a conversation in the Urban Studio that probably did not exist or was heavily influenced in the professional environment."
-Alex Krumdiek

New Urban Center for the Urban Studio | Credit: cadc.auburn.edu, 2022

"[Partnering firms of the internship program] are quick to tell us what we're doing right and what we're doing wrong, and what we need to work on, and we try to address those things. But we are also not a practice, and we're trying to make sure that we maintain our educational component and academic responsibility."
-Alex Krumdiek

Dreams for the Future | Credit: https://cadc.auburn.edu/architecture/architecture-degrees-programs/program-of-architecture/urban-studio/, 2022

DESIGN CONNECT

Cornell University
https://www.designconnectcornell.org/
Ithaca, NY
Correspondents: Michael Tomlan, Faculty Advisor, and Jeffrey Chusid, Professor

YEAR ESTABLISHED
2009

STRUCTURE
Director: *Michael Tomlan*
Additional Staff: *Jeffrey Chusid (Associate Professor), and the students who run the rest of the organization*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Private land-grant research university

BUDGET
N/A
Expenses covered by Tomlan's salary and small fees from clients

FACILITY
120-sf office on campus, primarily used for storage

PROJECT TYPES
Research
Studio courses
Planning studies
Design visioning
Graphic design

Design Connect is a student-run, multidisciplinary organization that partners with local municipalities and nonprofits to provide design and planning services to communities in upstate New York and beyond. There are typically 3-4 projects running each semester (fall and spring), and the work usually extends beyond a single semester. The course runs through the Architecture, Art and Planning (AAP) college, with each student team choosing participants and setting their own expectations, schedule, budget, and deliverables.

Working with community partners, a maximum of around 35-40 students address problems and design questions brought to them by groups within the surrounding communities. The end result is the provision of ideas, designs, and information being passed back to the community, with the goal of informing them about their options and opportunities moving forward. Students learn about the benefits of effective community organizing.

PROCESS

Projects are selected by the student board based on the requests that come in as well as the team available and the skills possessed by those team members. Deliverables include design visioning, exhibition of designs, and virtual design build, idea generation, and opportunity identification. Projects vary widely and include park design, design of regulations for a mobile home park, study of an urban food desert downtown, historic preservation design and guidelines for design, and landscape or trail designs.

The students work with all types of organizations. Engineers, public health, and public policy professionals get involved. In some instances, when Prof. Tomlan sees a gap in the team, he asks students to reach out to other student groups to fill that gap. For example, public health students were invited to assist a healing garden project in association with a non-profit hospital.

Each team creates and signs a memorandum of agreement after negotiation with the community and sponsor they are dealing with. The MOA ties the students and the community together.

There are two reviews per semester (midterm and final), and sometimes the clients participate in those reviews at school; however, reviews are really meant for critical input from other students and professors/staff, and for the students to practice before presenting to the community. Liability is not an issue as there is no built product liability for off-campus activity; it is handled the same way as for field trips.

FEEDBACK LOOP

Student feedback indicates that they are enjoying/learning from the experience, and they use their knowledge to move forward in the professional realm. Communities in the area, region, and beyond provide informal feedback as they reach out to partner with/get help from Design Connect.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

Design Connect works on social issues: racial equity, design justice, affordable housing and issues of climate change, rehabilitation, community development and energy conservation.

"The students themselves have to understand the variation in the manner in which community engagement is realizable… and to understand the limitations. It's not a panacea for everything. It's just one way in which one begins to move through the world." - Michael Tomlan

"[Students are] required to get involved with the community sponsors. The challenge of the real world has another dimension because they also have to think about the amount of time they have to develop [the] project."
- Michael Tomlan

Credit: Design Connect Impact Report

METROLAB

Florida Atlantic University
https://www.fau.edu/metrolab/about/mission.php
Fort Lauderdale, FL
Correspondent: Francis Lyn, Associate Professor and Interim Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
2004

STRUCTURE
Director: *Anthony Abbate*
Additional Staff: one *student assistant*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public research university

BUDGET
$10,000-40,000/yr
Grants
Contracts
Fees-for-service

FACILITY
A ground-floor storefront on campus for activities, exhibitions, and lectures

PROJECT TYPES
Research
Studio courses
Design visioning
Graphic design
Planning studies

The MetroLAB Collaborative fosters collaborations between the university, teachers, students and community members in activities that engage with and aim to improve the community and region through visioning projects. Focusing on climate change and resiliency (especially sea level rise), students address real concerns not only prevalent in their own coastal community, but also relevant to every sub-tropical community. Project types vary greatly, with the common thread being the mutual benefit of the communities and the students through knowledge and research-based exploration.

The MetroLAB storefront offers visibility and a welcoming environment for community participation in the work of staff and students alike, from more urban design-focused and architectural work to planning exercises. Communities and stakeholders are provided the opportunity to understand their design options by exploring ideas that address certain problems or concepts. The goal is to foster the exploration and exchange of knowledge that could help solve problems which affect the local and global community, focusing on the resiliency and health of communities at big and small scales.

PROCESS

MetroLAB Collaborative is primarily an academic endeavor. The school is in an area with a lot of small municipalities that don't have the resources to go to a firm, so they often come to the school with a project idea. Many projects are derived via grant driven choices, but communities are also starting to reach out with projects. Typically projects are funded via faculty research in partnership with communities wanting to understand and learn about something, and then they work with their division of research to come up with a budget. That budget is paid to the University.

Deliverables include publications to document work and exhibitions, depending on requirements of the funders and/or presentations to the community. Academic reviews are held separately, but stakeholders and community members may come to the university, or the students may go to city hall to present as well.

FEEDBACK LOOP

The center receives direct community feedback during public charrettes and exhibitions. Community members are reaching out for help more and more now, providing informal and positive feedback.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

The MetroLAB Collaborative works to "engage faculty, students, and the community in collaborative activities that advance scholarship and improve the well-being of the community within a metropolitan sub-tropical setting. The MetroLAB Collaborative endeavors to discover knowledge through inquiry, guided by the disciplines at the university, to address local and global challenges; and to explore, exchange, and apply knowledge and information for the mutual benefit, resilience, vitality and health of our communities and the regional physical environment." *(Credit: FAU website https://www.fau.edu/metrolab/about/mission.php)*

"...Community engagement, it's a localized thing, it's about community, it's about the places where you live and work. Things that work here might not work elsewhere, but we can look at and identify strategies that could be applied in various places."
- Francis Lyn

Exterior of the Florida Atlantic University Higher Education Center building housing MetroLAB Collaborative space. | Credit: https://www.fau.edu/artsandletters/architecture/current-students/facilities/MetroLAB/

FLOURISHING COMMUNITIES COLLABORATIVE

Georgia Institute of Technology
https://fc2.design.gatech.edu/
Atlanta, GA
Correspondent: Julie Ju-Youn Kim, Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
2017

STRUCTURE
Director: *Julie Ju-Youn Kim*
Faculty Collaborators: *W. Ennis Parker, Jr.; Tarek Rakha, Stuart Romm; Frank Wickstead; Danielle S. Willkens*
Additional Staff: *graduate and undergraduate research fellows*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public research university

BUDGET
$150,000/yr
Grants
University support
Allocated faculty time
Sponsorships

FACILITY
On-campus studio spaces used ad-hoc

PROJECT TYPES
Research
Studio courses
Planning studies
Design visioning
Graphic design

The work of the Flourishing Communities Collaborative demonstrates the value of a computational, quantitative, and data-driven approach to solving social and cultural problems. The Flourishing Communities Collaborative (FC2) at Georgia Institute of Technology provides development strategies to local underserved neighborhoods by using the model of a teaching hospital to connect students, practitioners, and community members. An initiative driven by social change, the FC2 combines design, technology, research, and entrepreneurship to provide students the vision, skills and agility they will need to create relevance and shape the built environment. Backed primarily by grants and university support in the form of faculty resources, this academic lab functions on a 12-month schedule, beyond the academic year, to allow for flexible projects and the formation of long-term community relationships.

PROCESS

FC2 selects its projects in several ways – they deliberately seek out potential partners to establish relationships and they also review formal and informal requests. All projects are evaluated based on alignment with the FC2 model and priority to serve under-resourced communities. In the event that FC2 determines a project is not the best fit, they try to provide community leaders with a useful referral.

Projects vary greatly in scale and duration, ranging from logo design to single building plans to campus-scale and neighborhood design studies. Students are primarily involved through academic coursework, including electives that fulfill a practice requirement or advanced design studios. Because the collaborative runs beyond the academic calendar, grant-funded student employees continue working over the summer. Occasionally, the University supports graduate research assistants through stipends and tuition waivers. This allows for a longer project duration and gives students the opportunity to stay involved over a greater period of time.

Currently, FC2 is involved in its first multi-year, multi-phase project, where summer research assistants completed foundational material for a fall studio, which will be used to platform a new phase of work that will be further advanced by future efforts. Long term goals include expanding the collaborative to include a dedicated workshop course, a full design studio, and design-build efforts. This may involve firm partnerships down the line, which would allow them to transition the conceptual design to a professional practice who would then take the project forward through completion, or the evolution of FC2 to function independently, as a firm of its own.

FEEDBACK LOOP

Due to the varied nature of FC2's projects, the metrics for success vary greatly as well. What remains constant is that the FC2 ask themselves whether or not they have created a clear roadmap for moving projects forward at the end of each phase. In addition, they try to secure at least one new partnership with a community leader or non-profit organization every year. Projects are thoroughly documented and, if appropriate, compiled in publications available on their website.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

The FC2's work imagines a role for the architect where the act of design is an entrepreneurial and innovative endeavor, specifically for those who are underserved or lack access to resources. FC2's values are rooted in the long-term; they strive to maintain communication with partners after projects are completed. They view urban communities as platforms for positive design and seek out the strengths of surrounding neighborhoods through the resources of their lab. The "teaching hospital" model also fills a void for students in architecture education, where hands-on experience is a crucial part of the learning process.

Practitioners are an important part of each project; they provide guidance and expose students to best practices firsthand.

The Power of Place and Social Production: Designing the Equitable Home | Credit: Monica Rizk, Fall 2021

Social Resilience: Community Center | Credit: R. Noah Sannes & Christopher Tromp, Spring 2019)

Credit: FC2

GULF COAST COMMUNITY DESIGN STUDIO

Mississippi State University
http://gccds.org/our-work
Gulfport, MS
Correspondent: David Perkes, Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
2005

STRUCTURE
Director: *David Perkes*
Additional Staff: *one licensed architect, two planners, one licensed landscape architect, and a graphic design intern*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public land-grant research university

BUDGET
$500,000-600,000/yr
Grants
Contracts
University support

FACILITY
2,500-sf dedicated off-campus space

PROJECT TYPES
Design-build
Research
Planning
Studio courses
Policy proposals

The Gulf Coast Community Design Studio (GCCDS) is a professional service and outreach program that was founded in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina with the goal to focus on the larger issue of resiliency and rebuilding post disaster. The center works to strengthen the region through physical building as well as through research, planning and policy proposals that incorporate social and health measures affecting communities. Unlike most university sponsored community engagement programs, this is mainly a professional service and outreach practice. Teaching is not the focus but is incorporated when possible.

With service at the forefront, the GCCDS provides year-round professional practice, operating outside of the academic calendar and relatively independently of the school itself. The center operates with a full time staff, and has a facility that doubles as a storefront with space for community gathering as well as an office with workspace. The center provides design assistance, education, community outreach opportunities, and leadership, all with the goal of addressing issues such as neighborhood and urban development, affordable and resilient housing, and the design and preservation of public space.

PROCESS

The center typically pursues its own projects and also collaborates with local professionals who solicit the center's engagement and/or partnership on certain projects. Partners and clients are provided with research assistance, planning and design services, and community engagement opportunities. If the community member or group does not have the budget or is in need of different services, they receive advice on where to go for planning or architectural services. For example, the GCCDS partnered in providing architectural services to build and rehabilitate hundreds of houses in the wake of Katrina. They also designed Sarracenia Nature Park, a 30 acre site consisting of various native habitats, in the neighborhood of Escatawpa in Moss Point.

The GCCDS is innovative in promoting community engagement. For years the Center provided "Friday Morning Cereal", welcoming community members into the center space every Friday to eat cereal and to listen to a guest speaker. Every week a different community member would discuss interesting work they do in the community or greater region. This helped make the center known as a community gathering place. The GCCDS also mounts public exhibits at the Center and teach courses in middle and high school classrooms on the human impact on watersheds.

Students can get involved in three ways: (1) A group of students can live on the coast and do a one semester design build studio (2) When a studio on campus does a project focused locally, Perkes will collaborate with faculty who are on campus,

and the students will come for a few visits (3) Internship/certificate program (for students with a degree in Arch, Landscape Arch, or planning) during which students work in the office on the coast. They are paid ¾ time and ¼ they do 18 credits of coursework.

Students are covered by the university for liability. All of the center's programs run through the university's office of sponsored programs, so all the legal and accounting elements run through the school and not the center.

FEEDBACK LOOP

Community groups and local professionals have asked GCCDS to be a part of larger projects because the center has demonstrated its capability. Community members show support in consistent appearances at events, exemplified by the success of the Friday Morning Cereal event).

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

GCCDS works closely with community partners to ensure that they are in the driver's seat, in particular helping Mississippi's three coastal counties rebuild and revitalize post Katrina.

They welcome students into the inner workings of a professional practice, teaching them how to work in the interrelated fields of architectural design, landscape design, and planning services. The GCCDS shares knowledge with the students on how to do community-minded work, how to maintain long term community connections, and how to design for and with the public, and it offers opportunities to make professional connections, Areas of expertise cover issues related to climate change, resiliency, planning, urban design, and affordable housing.

"We see grant applications themselves as part of how we build partnerships, and we have found, even if you don't get the grant, the work you've done has now given you something to build on."
- David Perkes

GCCDS design-build house | Credit: http://gccds.org/new-index-1#/biloxi/

COMMUNITY DESIGN CENTER

Montana State University
http://arch.montana.edu/cdc/
Bozeman, MT
Correspondent: Brian W. Bush, Studio Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
1976

STRUCTURE
Director: *Brian W. Bush*
Additional Staff: *Other professors engage in community partnerships under the CDC banner*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public land-grant research university

BUDGET
Contracts
-2-4 a year at $5k-$10k each
Grants

FACILITY
No facility: a cost saving measure to keep the program nimble with its finances

PROJECT TYPES
Design-build (occasionally)
Research
Studio courses
Planning
Schematic Design

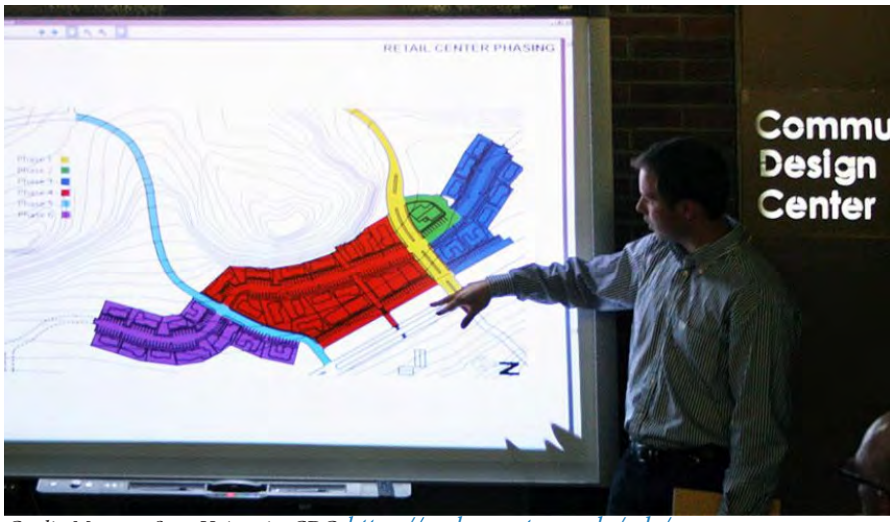
As the state of Montana transitions from agriculture to tourism and other sources of employment, the Community Design Center (CDC) works with nonprofits and government agencies to support communities in the cultural and economic changes they face. Through advanced studios and research projects the CDC is able to demonstrate the potential for projects, thus aiding in the development of partnerships and communities.

PROCESS

Projects come in from the community and are usually not refused, no matter how small the scale. There is currently a waiting list of several years. Project deliverables are established in a formal contract with fees of $5,000-10,000, generally covering conceptual and schematic design, research, regional plans, and site plans.

Students are involved via studios of 8-14 students with multiple iterations of the project providing the client a breadth of vision. Students are also engaged through independent research projects. Liability is covered by the university under all scenarios.

A project was recently completed for the National Institute of Health (NIH) for a research facility with a historic log cabin from the 19th century on the property. The CDC was hired to envision its expansion into a center for visiting researchers, with offices, housing, event, and exhibition spaces, etc. The CDC developed 8 student projects over the course of the semester, complete with a presentation to the Director of Facilities and others at the NIH.



Credit: Montana State University CDC https://arch.montana.edu/cdc/

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

The CDC focuses on affordable housing, regional planning, and sustainability (both environmental and cultural). In particular, there is a focus on preserving the cultural identity of a community that is undergoing significant change. The value to students is through a better understanding of community engagement, and the work provides students with real world experience working on specific locations and with clients within the design scope. Communities benefit from receiving design work at affordable rates, especially in rural areas where those resources are not available, and the ability to continue the relationship with a major institution that can continue to invest in their community and provide research and resources.

"Don't say no to projects, say yes to everything and make it work, not only from an organizational point, but make sure the students have a great experience."
- Brian W. Bush

"Make the experience memorable and enjoyable for the students, because that is how you keep it alive. Student and public reaction is the most important way to create longevity in a program. "
-Brian W. Bush

Tiny Shelter Prototype | Credit: Montana State University CDC https://www.montana.edu/assets/images/kdzf1/image3.jpg?t=1525463202

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

North Carolina State University
https://outreach.design.ncsu.edu/ah+sc/
Raleigh, NC
Correspondent: Thomas Barrie, Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
2007

STRUCTURE
Director: *Thomas Barrie*
Additional Staff: occasional
university-funded interns

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public land-grant research university

BUDGET
$7,000-30,000/semester
Sponsorships
Contracts and fees
University grants

FACILITY
On-campus studio spaces

PROJECT TYPES
Research
Studio projects
Public programs
Educational forums

Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AH+SC) is a research and design program of study at North Carolina State University that builds an online library of public educational tools and hosts local symposia, workshops, and presentations on the issues of spatial justice and equitable urbanism. The online library consists primarily of the compiled research and design concepts completed in Tom Barrie's graduate housing studio. The studio annually teams up with a sponsor and focuses on a specific prompt for the duration of the studio. The student work is supplemented by longer-term funded research centered on housing as a lever to sustain healthy communities.

PROCESS

AH+SC studio projects are selected based on educational merit and whether the semester-long studio's research and design scope will be applicable and helpful to the community partner. AH+SC looks to partner with non-profit housing and community development organizations, municipalities, and community-based advocacy organizations across the state that share the perspective of housing as a critical component of equity. AH+SC and the partner agree on a time-constrained, sponsored project that the studio can deliver. AH+SC studios typically use some of the sponsorship fee to bring in external, project-relevant, professionals who form an advisory committee.

The studios begin with a project kick-off where students are introduced to, and receive their prompt directly from, the project sponsor. This collaborative tone is carried through a four-week team-based research period. AH+SC studios view research as an approach to design that opens the students' minds beyond their personal aesthetic. The research targets aspects of the built environment relevant to the project. The student teams present their research to the advisory committee, who are then engaged with the design charrettes.

Projects are resolved through iterative conversational presentations at the studio's closing. Students have an academic presentation to professors a couple of weeks before their final presentation to the sponsor and advisory committee. Then the students' work is compiled and published, sometimes exhibited in free space downtown, and uploaded to the website as a public educational tool on specific issues.

FEEDBACK LOOP

The advisory committee of external professionals provides every AH+SC sponsored studio a relevant third-party who forms an ongoing relationship with the students and guides the direction of the student work.

AH+SC sets its goal to effectively research, design, and visualize the most appropriate solutions for specific, sponsored projects centered on equitable design through affordable housing. Archived on their website, the solutions to these projects are documented and disseminated in the form of multimedia publications that reflect their own processes and results, affordable housing and sustainable community models and prototypes, compilations of design solutions and best practices, and educational symposia, workshops and presentations. Apart from building a library of educational materials, AH+SC evaluates its specific response to the sponsor by tracking how its work was applied.

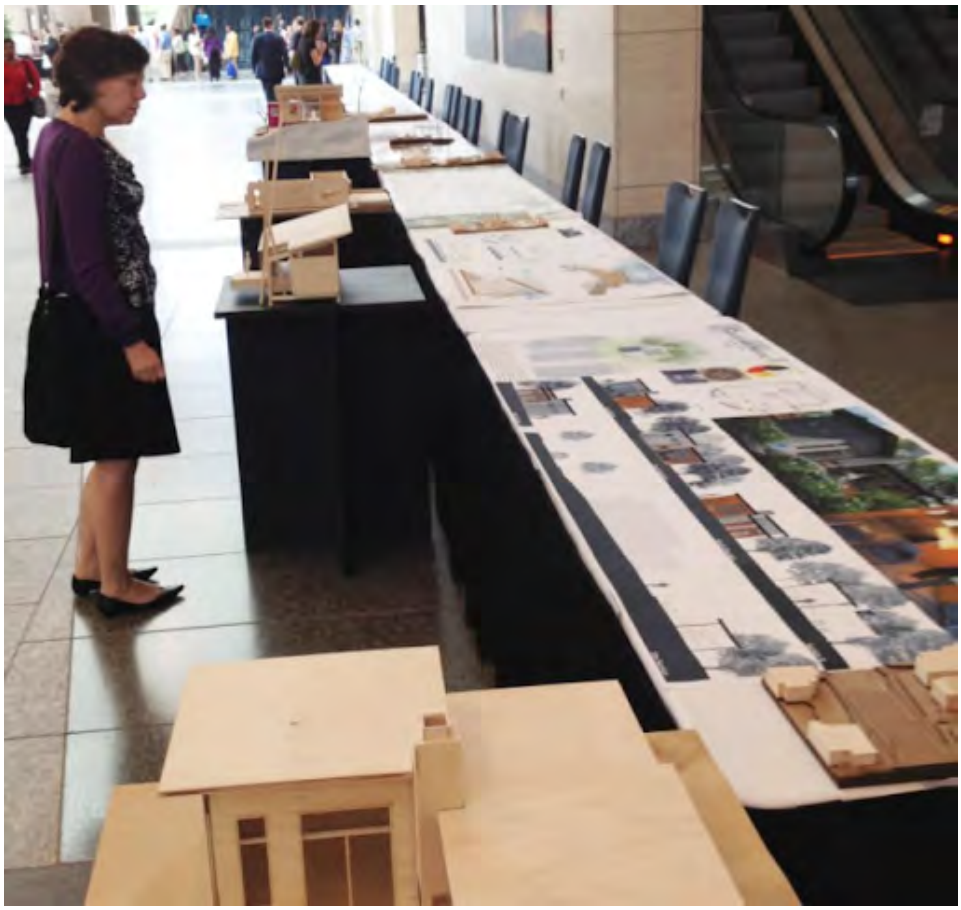
The studio also looks internally on the unique experience it offers students through their evaluations at the end of the course.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

AH+SC consistently adds to the readily available educational resources concerning the built environment's role in sustainable communities for the public at large through its navigable website and for the local community through its educational symposia. These efforts give communities the vocabulary necessary to propose new and convincing solutions in their development. The AH+SC studio serves as North Carolina State University's primary housing studio, taking a critical perspective on design justice.

"We partnered with a local equitable policy organization to form a task force of twenty people, [which] consistently went to council meetings, and eventually, the new elected mayor was from our group. After that political shift, the first city council meeting met to address accessory dwelling units. Now they are legal city-wide."

- Thomas Barrie



Exhibition of The Mordecai Backyard Cottage Project | Credit: https://outreach.design.ncsu.

HAMER CENTER FOR COMMUNITY DESIGN

Pennsylvania State University
https://sites.psu.edu/hamercenter/
University Park, PA
Correspondent: Lisa Domenica Iulo, Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
1998

STRUCTURE
Director: *Lisa Domenica Iulo*
Additional Staff: *one staff assistant and additional part-time staff as needed*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public land-grant research university

BUDGET
$100,000/yr
University support
Grants

FACILITY
2,500-sf of dedicated space on the ground floor of the architecture building

PROJECT TYPES
Research
Studio courses
Design visioning
Graphic Design
Planning studies
Exhibitions

The Hamer Center utilizes the expertise of faculty and students to address a range of issues impacting the quality of communities, with a focus on issues of relevance to the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Projects (which are research-based and curricular) address community problems in such areas as community-focused design/planning, affordable housing, development of design guidelines, sustainability, park and recreation planning, and environmental and ecological analysis. If asked by the community to do a project, the Hamer Center will match the project with a class.

The goal of the center is to support community-engaged research efforts via service-learning opportunities that encourage building community through sharing knowledge. There are opportunities for students to take a service-learning studio for credit through the programs supported by the Hamer Center, and the work manifests as applied research and theoretical investigation regarding topics like community outreach and empowerment, public education, and dissemination of research. The center functions like an academic think-tank, a hub for the student community and beyond, and serves as an intermediary between community groups looking for design assistance and university students and faculty, allowing communities to come to the center with their needs and try to connect with faculty or classes doing work that could align.

PROCESS

It was important to the initial donor who endowed the center that it address issues of relevance to the commonwealth of PA, so this is key in project selection. The needs of the community are processed through research projects and engagement activities. There is no community board, but there are long-term stakeholders providing feedback and advice. Examples include long standing relationships with local foundations, community planning staff, affordable housing organizations, and other Penn State Centers and institutes.

At this time the Hamer Center does not collect fees from the community as it would become "sponsored research" with expected deliverables. Without a fee the Hamer Center can pursue the research they deem most meaningful and useful. Sometimes they work with a community group or industry partners to pursue a grant to further fund a project or research. There are many models in practice, and the director tries to figure out which approach makes the most sense in order to "do rigorous research that addresses community design, while to the best of our ability assisting the community partnerships that we have" (Iulo). Projects in the Hamer Center are transdisciplinary, frequently engaging multiple disciplines from across the university with community groups, organizations and representatives.

The workforce of the Hamer Center is composed of students who are working on projects through research assistantships or grants. Professional undergraduate and masters students are limited to 10 hours a week.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

"(1) The Hamer Center serves as a laboratory for community partnerships that integrate socio-economic and environmental conscious resolution to design and planning problems. It is an incubator for exploring ideas, a classroom, and a real-world link; viewing the activities of teaching, research and service as interrelated in investigating issues of community design and planning.

(2) The Hamer Center seeks to empower communities by providing information for responsible development through research and analysis of specific issues and by providing planning and pre-design services.

(3) The Hamer Center serves as a clearinghouse for research, projects, and case summaries related to community design and planning. The Hamer Center compiles research and community design/planning documentations for dissemination, summarizes documents relating to topics or themes and relates the material back to community issues in the Commonwealth and its unique regional conditions." (*Credit: Hamer Center Website* https://sites.psu.edu/hamercenter/about/)

The goals of the Hamer Center are both community outreach and empowerment as well as public education and dissemination of research related to community design and planning. Consistent with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the strategic plans for the university, issues of sustainability and equity are overarching issues. Research arms housed under the umbrella of the Hamer Center for Community Design include Energy Efficient Housing Research Group (EEHR), Resource and Energy Efficiency Lab (RE2) and Ecology+Design (E+D).

"The most important thing, and sometimes the most challenging thing with community design work, is ensuring long term relationships and understanding unique community needs."
- Lisa Iulo

Community, faculty, and students gather for a presentation in the Hamer Center for Community Design. | Credit: https://www.acsa-arch.org/2019/03/18/pennsylvania-state-

URBAN TECH

Texas Tech University
https://www.facebook.com/TTUUrbanTech
Lubbock, TX
Correspondent: David A. Driskill, Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
2010

STRUCTURE
Director: *David A. Driskill*
Additional Staff: *1-3 graduate assistants*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public research university

BUDGET
$20,000/yr
Endowment
Client fees

FACILITY
Drafting office, conference room, and studio space in the TTU Downtown Center

PROJECT TYPES
Research
Studio projects
Educational studies

Urban Tech provides a space, a collage of ideas and information, and a process of civic engagement and exploration led by Professor David Driskill with a team of graduate assistants. The design studio is mainly concerned with community redevelopment in its hometown of Lubbock. Urban Tech generates the foundation of projects by drawing the attention of municipalities, non-profit organizations, and professional organizations through their ability to translate community needs into visions of what might be possible.

PROCESS

Projects typically approach Urban Tech, who decides which projects demand priority. Once a project is selected, Urban Tech often charges a $1,000 fee for service with a memorandum of understanding to ensure that the board of the client is involved in the effort, not just the executive director, which helps communicate the project's legitimacy.

Projects are often run first through an educational studio which generates research, ideas, concepts, and trajectories. These studios do not address the full scope of the project, but provide a loose and diverse response to the prompt. The following semester, the project is run through Urban Tech's design center consisting of Prof. Driskill and his staff of graduate students. This team works to resolve the stances taken in the studio and transform them into design visions that meet the criteria of the client. Often the visions come back to the design center multiple times for further refinement if the project gains more public interest.

Urban Tech consistently participates in Lubbock's "First Friday Art Trails", a city-wide community day every month, by being one of the many community center's to open their doors, offer beverages, and solicit feedback on exhibited work. A popular method of amassing feedback on design concepts is offering green and red dots to the public which allow them to directly express support or concern on specific aspects of the work on display – creating conversation around areas of tension or interest.

FEEDBACK LOOP

Urban Tech's participation with the "First Friday Art Trail" provides continual and consistent community feedback.

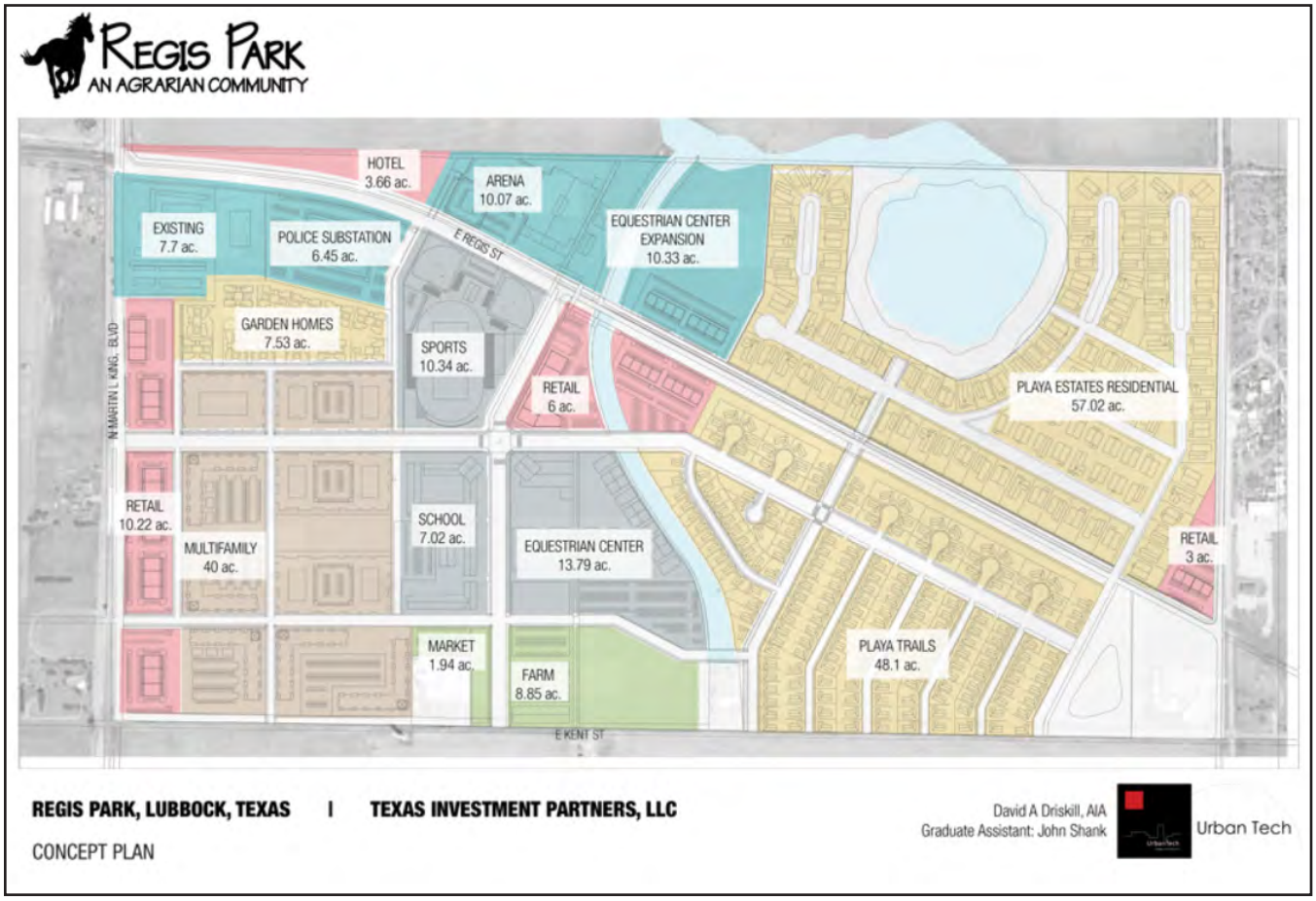
The working relationships that evolve and often continue between Urban Tech and its partnered community organizations after a project's initial presentation and application illustrate the benefit of Urban Tech's work. For example, Urban Tech took on the design of a community center for a neighborhood organization in

Lubbock which is currently moving into construction; in response to the positive experience, the organization is asking for another design vision at a different site.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

Urban Tech provides community organizations with strong design visions for free, or for a $1,000 fee to activate the involvement of the organization's board. This low-cost service is a strong community asset as it allows for design thinking to be applied to projects within a community that typically do not have enough traction to generate public awareness and support. Urban Tech links students to the context of these design projects through a studio course that fits within their core curriculum as well as offering employment opportunities during the school year and summer for graduate students that result in tangible presentations of applied-planning and design.

"Urban Tech makes clear the public benefits of architecture, promotes the creation of new knowledge, and serves as a laboratory for ethical professional behavior where community needs supersede private agendas."
- David A. Driskill



Regis Park redevelopment visioning plan | Credit: Urban Tech

THE ALBERT & TINA SMALL CENTER FOR COLLABORATIVE DESIGN

Tulane University
https://small.tulane.edu/
New Orleans, Louisiana
Correspondent: Ann Yoachim, Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED

2005

STRUCTURE

Director: *Ann Yoachim*
Assistant Director, Design-Build: *Emily Taylor Welty*
Additional Staff: *collaborative projects manager and program manager*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE

Private research university

BUDGET

$600,000/yr
University support
Endowments
Individual donors
Contracts and fees
Grants

FACILITY

7000-sf storefront, off-campus, rented in Center City

PROJECT TYPES

Design-build
Visioning
Graphic design advocacy
Public programs
Urban design/planning
Research
Courses

The Albert and Tina Small Center at Tulane University is an initiative that uses an engaged design process to produce tangible results. By collaborating with non-profits, community groups, and local governments, among other partners, the Small Center moves community-driven ideas forward. The Center also provides technical assistance on engagement to architecture firms. Teams of staff, faculty, and students work with partners to define a clear path to success that guides each project, resulting in a variety of deliverables, from graphic design, to visioning, to built works. The Center's work offers the opportunity to train the next generation of architects to think critically about their role as designers and for whom and how they design. The Center's facility, operations, and programming are funded by the School of Architecture, a named endowment, along with individual donors, corporate and foundation giving, fee for service work, and research grants.

PROCESS

The majority of the Center's pro-bono projects come through an annual request for proposal. New Orleans's nonprofit organizations bring a diverse range of design/build and architectural visioning projects for consideration, and a jury of past partners, former students, faculty, and community score and rank projects based on the categories of the CAN (applicants capacity, the budget, timeline, and scale of the project), the WANT (the potential for design and student learning), and the NEED (how the project challenges systems and increases equity). Selected projects launch a partnership with the Small Center. Teams are a combination of Small Center staff, students, and faculty of the School of Architecture with external contractors including landscape architects, engineers and others when needed. The Small Center brings its design expertise to bear and the non-profit organization is a partner in all phases of the design process from ideation to completion,

Students have several pathways to get involved, including design-build studios, seminar classes, independent study, and public service, as well as paid work, including internships, summer fellowships, graduate research and project-based work. In early 2021, the Center also ran a design competition for a community project. Most courses, with the exception of the design-build studio, are open to non-architecture students.

For design-build projects, liability for staff and students is covered by the University policy; this includes drawings stamped by Assistant Director of Design Build and Professor of Practice Emilie Taylor Welty. One built project is the Hotel Hope Playscape, which transformed the parking lot of transitional housing into a safe play space for children. Another project created a playroom and education space for children at Hagar's House, a transitional home. The Small Center's visioning projects support non-profit organizations in developing drawings, plans and documentation to support promotion and fundraising efforts.

FEEDBACK LOOP

Projects are well-documented on the Center's website, with photographs and summaries of the work. On their web portfolio, they explicitly describe the outcome of each project, which relates back to their results-oriented approach. Essays and publications further detail their work and mission, also available on their site. Currently, the Center is conducting an impact evaluation to mark 15 years of operation. According to Yoachim, the research has not yet been published, but it includes hour-long interviews with over 50+ of their past partners, conducted by an outside researcher. Through this, one of the key questions they hope to answer is, "What changed after your Small Center project?"

The Small Center's visioning projects support non-profit organizations in developing drawings, plans and documentation to support promotion and fundraising efforts.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

Founded just prior to Hurricane Katrina, the Center's commitment to collaboration and long-term partnerships; its effort to shift power dynamics between the academy and community through pedagogy; and its focus on scaffolding small-scale projects with tangible outcomes are a direct response to the post-Katrina planning era, when many residents spent hours sharing their visions, hopes, and dreams for the city that still remain unrealized.

Two tenets underscore the Center's work: 1) each of us should have the right to shape the places where we live, work and play, and 2) engaged design processes can build capacity and coalitions to address inequity in the built environment. The Center has worked with a diverse range of non-profit organizations, including homeless shelters, transitional housing, and cultural institutions. Through the Center, students may fulfill service-learning requirements, conduct research, participate in public programming, collaborate with community partners, and gain hands-on experience in design, exhibitions, and construction. Community organizations realize projects, connect to broader networks, leverage additional resources, and engage with the design professions.

Hotel Hope Playscape | Credit: The Small Center, 2019

DRACHMAN DESIGN BUILD COALITION

University of Arizona
https://www.uadesignbuild.com/
Tucson, AZ
Correspondent: Mary Hardin, Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
2006

STRUCTURE
Director: *Mary Hardin*
Additional Staff: *rotating staff as secretary and treasurer*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public land-grant research university

BUDGET
$150,000/project
Money loaned to the non-profit, then repaid upon sale of the built house
Donations from material suppliers

FACILITY
Allocated work area in the school's makerspace

PROJECT TYPES
Design-build
Studio courses

The Drachman Design Build Coalition (DDBC) creates economic mobility for the population earning below 80% of the median income in Pima County, Arizona, through offering them home ownership of student designed and constructed residences for the cost of materials. The Drachman Design Build coalition operates as a non-profit organization, led by Professor Mary Hardin, that is coordinated with studio courses at the University of Arizona.

PROCESS

The non-profit chooses vacant project lots based on price and proximity to the city center. They are often parcels that are undesirable to private developers because they are an odd shape in plan. The first semester, spring options studio engages the project neighborhood in a sort of design charrette where DDBC shows past projects they have completed and the community talks about what they would like to see constructed, providing input on color, types of outdoor spaces, general material use and massing.

As the first semester design concepts develop into schematics, the projects are shown once again to the neighborhood in order to gather further input and refine the designs. The first semester studio closes out by resolving one design to move forward with.

Over the summer, the DDBC applies for a building permit and orders materials, often receiving donations from the suppliers that Hardin has on-going relationships with, which are stored in the school's makerspace. The next two option studios in the fall and spring take responsibility for building the residence. The makerspace provides them with a workshop to test-build mock details before applying the methods on site. Tools are stored in a mobile 8' x 20' storage container which allows for their efficient delivery to building sites. The construction liability for the project, around two million dollars, is covered by the public, land-grant university which sees it as a pedagogical expense for public service and the education of their students. Students finish building the residence during the fall and spring option studios. Rather than the typical formal presentations that end a studio course, the students, public and the neighborhood residents are invited to the open house that announces the property on the market.

FEEDBACK LOOP

Economically, the project proves itself as a community asset through implementing affordable housing in a model of discounted ownership. A family that makes less than 80% of the local median income, $54,000 in Tucson, Arizona, who cannot afford a three bedroom house at market price, can purchase one for just the cost of its materials. After ten years there, the family gains the house as equity which creates a tangible asset for the family in Arizona's economy.

For the school's visibility, the year and a half long projects are slowly building a unique web-portfolio of built residences that go beyond the typical small-scale of design build projects.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

Students are provided the invaluable experience of learning design through fabrication, a principle of the University of Arizona. The conceptualization and construction of a local residence links them directly to the immediate community of their university through service learning. The project reminds students that professional goals should include giving back through pro-bono work. The Drachman Design Build Coalition grows this incentive by providing students with the exciting and meaningful experience of putting together a home.

"We try to instill in the students the notion that as a professional you should give something back. That should be part of your professional goals."
- Mary Hardin

DDBC Residence 3 Exterior | Credit: Drachman Design Build Coalition, 2008

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS COMMUNITY DESIGN CENTER

University of Arkansas
http://uacdc.uark.edu/
Fayetteville, AR
Correspondent: Linda Komlos, Executive Assistant

YEAR ESTABLISHED

1995

STRUCTURE

Director: *Stephen Luoni*
Executive Assistant: *Linda Komlos*
Additional Staff: *4-6 full-time, including executive assistant and 4 designers; 1-2 part-time students*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE

Public land-grant research university

BUDGET

$600,000/yr
University support
Endowment
Grants
Contracts

FACILITY

Off-campus office space in a university-owned building

PROJECT TYPES

Research
Studio courses
Planning studies
Urban and regional design
Exhibits
Visioning

The Community Design Center at the University of Arkansas (UACDC) provides planning strategies for historic downtowns, rural sites, highway/rail infrastructure, and watersheds within the state. The center acts as a teaching office, akin to a teaching hospital. Studios operate out of a university-owned building in the downtown area, placing students in close contact with the community. The CDC as a whole is financially supported by the University, contracts, and awarded grants.

PROCESS

The UACDC selects its projects based on requests from community leaders. These projects often focus on low-impact development, watershed urbanism, and agricultural urbanism, as well as other locally relevant issues. During this process, the CDC helps community leaders apply for grants when necessary. Occasionally, the CDC takes on non-local projects, including several projects in Hawaii sponsored by the Hawaii Department of Agriculture.

Once projects are selected, students get involved through advanced studios in the off-campus facility for the duration of the semester, usually in numbers between 5 and 15. Student engagement is complemented by the work of the full-time staff, composed of dedicated project designers and project architects. The University provides a hard budget that covers a little more than one-half of the center's operating expenses. Partial funding of the UACDC director's salary is provided by an endowment. Any additional funding needed to support center operations is derived from contracts and grants from sources such as the National Endowment for the Arts and the Environmental Protection Agency. This mix of support allows projects to carry on for varying durations, often taking one to three years to complete.

As projects progress, community stakeholders may be invited for charrettes. Deliverables are kept within the realm of visualization, such as drawings and models, rather than built works, which removes questions of liability. While the CDC does not stamp drawings, they have at least one licensed architect on staff.

FEEDBACK LOOP

For the UACDC, evaluation and feedback involve awards submissions; they submit as many of their projects as possible to design competitions. This creates a space for third-party recognition and also draws publicity to the initiative, attracting new students and community leaders alike. The initiative has raised over $70 million for 50 different clients.

Projects are catalogued on their website under eight different "place-making models", and the UACDC has produced three books so far that provide guidelines for future designers.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

The UACDC values design as a way to "enhance the physical environment," as per their mission statement. This leads them to tackle the large-scale issues of the modern world, including affordable housing, urban sprawl, and environmental planning. Students who pass through the advanced studios learn these concepts while receiving hands-on experience with community design, working with professionals and community members. In addition, communities gain access to grant-based support and creative solutions.

A full-time staff is an important asset and commitment to make; applications for grants and awards submissions would not be possible without them.

UACDC Office | Credit: University of Arkansas Community Design Center, 2016

The CDC's facility "belongs in the downtown, in the middle of it all," Komlos notes.

UACDC Office | Credit: University of Arkansas Community Design Center, 2016

CITYLAB

University of California, Los Angeles
https://citylab.ucla.edu/
Los Angeles, California
Correspondent: Gus Wendel, Assistant Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
2006

STRUCTURE
Director: *Dana Cuff*
Assistant Director: *Gus Wendel*
Additional Staff: *2 full-time associate directors and 6-12 student workers*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public land-grant research university

BUDGET
$250,000-300,000/yr
Grants
University

FACILITY
On-campus old faculty offices, about 400 sq feet.

PROJECT TYPES
Research studio projects
Project prototypes

UCLA's CityLAB is an interdisciplinary research center which attracts architecture, planning, and humanity majors to come together and think about projects related to five core initiatives: spatial justice, the post-suburban metropolis, rethinking green, urban sensing, and new infrastructures. CityLAB involves students within the classroom through the Urban Humanities Initiative, an interdisciplinary certificate program, and outside the classroom with student hires. The lab's interdisciplinary research projects generate prototype designs that are aware of their impact on the urban context and planning which forms their foundation.

PROCESS

CityLAB has a defined approach for calibrating a project's scope, addressing rigorous scholarship, practical implementation, design and theory, and formal exploration of cultural and political consequences of the project. This approach, the "CityLAB Operating System", has five steps: (1) Focus, (2) Tactics, (3) Gathering Support, (4) Selecting Levers, and (5) Design Demos. CityLAB gives an example inserted into these steps to better understand the language: (1) Focus: target the issue of affordable housing in cities worldwide, (2) Tactics: explore solution-thinking by looking into the latent potential of underused land held publicly in school districts, (3) Gathering Support: pull together experts, stakeholders and activists, (4) Selecting Levers: select sites for case studies, create a toolkit for designing on these various sites, (5) Design Demos: produce a pilot project by partnering up with an architecture firm or fabricator. While students build prototype models, the CityLAB's partnerships with architects and fabricators remove the concerns for covering student construction liability.

Public projects begin by engaging with stakeholders, setting up shared end goals, and a report or presentation to the city or stakeholders. CityLAB then coordinates the formation of a steering committee composed of stakeholders who evaluate and assess the work as the project develops.

The projects' durations range from one quarter to several years depending on the funding source. CityLAB's work is often structured by stipulations within grant agreements and additional specific agreements. In order to freely invent and realize relevant projects that do not have an immediate benefactor, CityLAB sets aside "seed money" to self-fund quarter-long projects during the summer when the center ramps up in operation. These projects allow for the center to begin an academic trajectory that often gains financial support once it is started. CityLAB will also generate interest and find potential partners for projects through hosting and competing in competitions.

FEEDBACK LOOP

CityLAB regularly convenes steering committees, groups of stakeholders and experts which review projects' development and execution. Convening steering committees is one of CityLAB's primary ways of ensuring that every public project and its process are assessed. Since CityLAB's engagement often goes beyond just touching ground with the immediate stakeholders, the center is now asking questions about how it can structure a respectful interface with the surrounding communities and related projects. CityLAB is looking into the idea of public projects having a kind of community review board which could give CityLAB more feedback on how it uses information from interviews and conversations – guiding the research center's interaction with the community.

"The city is our collective laboratory."
- Gus Wendel

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

CityLAB provides a space for UCLA students to practice taking spatial justice seriously. It is an interdisciplinary space that explores the motivations of design. The rigorous research that comes out of the lab makes the argument that design must be aware of, and engage with multiple pressures at a time in order to appropriately address the dynamic urban setting. CityLAB's portfolio of research and prototypes shows implementation of this theory in pilot projects, while providing an educational tool which articulates multi-issue design concepts.

Backyard Homes project | Credit: cityLAB

DETROIT COLLABORATIVE DESIGN CENTER

University of Detroit Mercy
https://www.dcdc-udm.org/
Detroit, MI
Correspondent: Ceara O'Leary, Co-Executive Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
1993

STRUCTURE
Co-Executive Directors: *Ceara O'Leary & Christina Heximer*
Additional Staff: 6 Full time *design members, administrator, dean, and 2-4 full time students on a semester to semester basis*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Private university

BUDGET
$700,000/yr
Project fees
Direct grant funding to subsidize rates

FACILITY
-On campus office in the school of architecture
-Off-campus office shared with a community development organization located in the neighborhood with grant funding suppot

PROJECT TYPES
Design-build
Studio courses

The Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC) provides design expertise to communities in Detroit through a firm-like model based at the University of Detroit Mercy. DCDC works on a wide variety of projects including architecture, landscape and urban design, infrastructure and community engagement strategies. They work with community groups and nonprofits charging reduced rates subsidized by grant funding. DCDC prepares clients for success by offering the option to pair with a firm after completion to continue implementation of the project.

PROCESS

Projects are selected from community groups and nonprofit organizations across Detroit, where the scope of work is developed through a series of conversations. The work generally includes conceptual and schematic designs for a variety of projects lasting from 6 weeks to a year. The goal is to provide groups with the resources and materials to seek funding and potentially partner with a traditional firm after completion. Students are engaged by working full time with the group and can gain knowledge by taking a course or the public interest design studio taught by one of the faculty. Engaging community members is done through events and feedback. All liability is covered through the university and drawings are signed by 1 of 2 licensed architects who are part of DCDC.

Deliverables: Design expertise, conceptual and schematic design, visioning/ advising.

FEEDBACK LOOP

For the community, evaluation is built into their engagement processes, with surveys after events or during phases of the project. For students, questionnaires are completed throughout the semester. Success in a community is measured by the ownership and use of the space as well as ownership of the decision-making process. Engagement strategies are focused on guiding and educating communities so they can meaningfully participate in design decision making Over 200 projects are posted on the DCDC website along with regular publications of featured work.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

DCDC believes that everyone deserves access to quality design and works with partners to provide access to design services. Goals for students working for DCDC include a better understanding of the community engaged design processes and seeing what collaborative design looks like. The DCDC also continues to share the work through presentations and engages with the community overall so they can see the impact of good design strategies and become inspired to push for changes in their communities.

"We believe that everyone deserves access to quality design."
- Ceara O'Leary

"We liken ourselves to a teaching hospital. Students are really learning the work by doing the work."
-Ceara O'Leary

Southwest Detroit Immigrant and Refugee Center Engagement + Conceptual Design (SWIRC) | Credit: https://www.dcdc-udm.org/projects/southwest-detroit-immigrant-and-refugee-center

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

COMMUNITY DESIGN RESOURCE CENTER

University of Houston | Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design
https://www.cdrchouston.org/
Houston, TX
Correspondent: Susan Rogers, Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
2005

STRUCTURE
Director: *Susan Rogers*
Additional Staff: *1-2 full-time team members and 2-4 part-time student workers*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public research university

BUDGET
$100,000-$200,000/yr
Grants
Fee-for-service contracts

FACILITY
Highly visible on-campus office on the ground floor of the architecture building

PROJECT TYPES
Community planning
Community-based research
Studio courses and seminars
Public art installations

The Community Design Resource Center's (CDRC) mission is to work collaboratively with community partners to define, develop, and apply transformative design strategies that bring us closer to a more just and equitable city, at every scale. By combining design education, practice, and research, the CDRC is a facilitator for hands-on student experience and a conduit for grounded community development, design, and visioning projects in the Houston region. Relying on grants, revenue contracts, and the efforts of students, team members, and volunteers, the CDRC produces work that spans scales, including participatory community plans, place-based research, design concepts and visioning, and public art installations.

PROCESS

Most of the projects the CDRC takes on come at the invitation of community and non-profit partners. With nearly two decades working in Houston, the CDRC has built strong relationships and trust with organizations across the city. This process ensures that the CDRC's projects serve the public interest, as opposed to the interests of private developers or other niche stakeholders. In addition, the CDRC works side-by-side with partners to ensure there is agreement on the scope of work, each party's responsibilities and expectations, resources, and the potential impact of the results. This is particularly important when students are engaged through a studio or seminar, as the CDRC faculty find it critical to maintain a pedagogy that centers on exploration and innovation.

Projects are completed through a combination of studio coursework, volunteer engagement, and the CDRC team. For example, Prof. Rogers teaches a Community Design Workshop course, which introduces students to participatory community design and planning. The content and geographic focus area of the Workshop is typically shaped through partnerships with a specific community. Community members often provide a tour and join the class a minimum of three times over the course of a semester. In a continuous dialogue with the community, students have the inspiration and information necessary to shape their analysis and design concepts.

Other projects, such as the Black Towns Matter mural and Zona de Juego, rely on volunteer support, sometimes in collaboration with student organizations such as NOMAS and Future Women in Architecture. Both projects are small-scale installations—one a street mural supporting the movement for Black lives and the other the transformation of a sidewalk into a zone for play. These types of projects range in cost and duration, often landing in the $2000 to $5000 range and taking anywhere between a few weeks to several months to complete.

FEEDBACK LOOP

The CDRC's projects are often well-documented online and accompanied by a publication, which is both printed and uploaded to their website. Because the majority of the CDRC's work is collaborative, they do not claim sole ownership of projects and some remain unpublished and insular to partner communities. This allows the center to maintain trust with local partners.

Some of these publications include Briefing Books, which provide residents with a snapshot of their neighborhood's assets as illustrated by mapping exercises and data analysis. The Briefing Books provide a foundation for informed decision-making at the community scale. Typically, Briefing Books are a first step on the path to a participatory community planning process. For example, Briefing Books were developed for the ten Complete Communities Action Plans, each of 20 Collaborative Community Design Initiative neighborhoods, and three Quality of Life Agreements. The process to create participatory community plans requires robust engagement with stakeholders, including identifying neighborhood strengths and challenges and developing a vision, goals, and strategies for the future. The majority of the plans are crafted to be primarily used by community leaders to advocate for the public and private investment needed for transformative change.

"The more we talk to people, the better the work gets."
- Susan Rogers

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

The CDRC values architecture, design, and planning as tools for transformation that bolster communities. They believe in the power of the small scale to create powerful change. Students walk away with a new perspective on design and community partners gain access to thoughtful design strategies. The CDRC values its deep roots within the local context of Houston, which allows them to meet people and work from a perspective of shared place.

Driving Jensen Project | Credit: Anibeth Turcios | Instagram: @cdrc_htx

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY POP-UP STUDIOS | STUDIO LOUISVILLE

University of Kentucky
https://design.uky.edu/studio-louisville/
Lexington, KY
Correspondent: Jeffrey Johnson, Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
2017

STRUCTURE
Director: *Jeffrey Johnson*
Additional Staff: *ad-hoc staff comprised of internal and guest professors*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public land-grant research university

BUDGET
$200/mo (operating costs)
University support
Endowment

FACILITY
A former boys' club in Louisville, used as a satellite location for studios

PROJECT TYPES
Studio courses
Design visioning
Long-term public infrastructure and planning

The pop-up studios at the University of Kentucky provide an immersive academic experience that brings students into direct contact with underserved communities through an upper-level studio. The primary program—Studio Louisville—operates within the Portland neighborhood of Louisville, KY, using an off-campus building as a satellite. There are plans to expand into other locations with Studio Appalachia. These efforts are funded ad hoc by the University and by an endowment that sponsors visiting professionals who teach the studios.

PROCESS

From the beginning, the advanced pop-up studios were designed to operate within one specific community at a time. Studio Louisville became the first of these due to the ideas of the previous director, David Biagi, and the Brown Forman endowment, which specifically supports projects within Louisville. The project selection process is informal; the five directors of the design colleges (Architecture, Interiors, Urban Design, Product Design, and Historic Preservation) meet with the dean to discuss potential leads, and they try to involve stakeholders and community leaders when possible.

Projects run entirely through an upper-level studio course that spans the five colleges. Up to 45 students opt in at a time, and projects last one to two semesters. The off-campus facility—a former boys' club located 1.5 hours away from the main Lexington campus—acts as an immersive workspace, closer to the project site. In ideal circumstances, students would live full-time in Louisville during the semester, using the facility for all of their work. However, logistical challenges have led the space to function more like a satellite, with students taking field trips to Louisville for pin-ups, field research and lectures.

For each studio, the University collaborates with visiting professionals, who they hire through the endowment to lead the studios. Prior projects have been run by Jeanne Gang of Studio Gang, Dan Wood of WORKac, and Peter Zellner of Zellner and Co. Deliverables have included documentation for long-term public infrastructure planning and design visioning, and they are working toward a design-build effort in the future. For example, one project, which focuses on Louisville's many shotgun houses and vacant lots, has advanced to the level of detail and fabrication drawings. In addition to design-build, the University is looking for other locations where pop-up studios may occur, starting with Studio Appalachia.

FEEDBACK LOOP

While there is no formal assessment procedure, the pop-up studios self-evaluate using metrics of success that differ between individual projects. The primary

challenge the initiative faces, as Johnson explains, is the struggle of moving students back and forth between Lexington and Louisville consistently over the course of the semester.

Projects are catalogued on their website, often with video recaps of the students' work. Additional community interaction takes place at the Louisville Public Library, where lectures are occasionally conducted for the public.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

This initiative views architecture as a way to foster the health and identity of communities. The topics of projects are relevant to the local context, which, in the case of Louisville, includes affordable housing, community development, and reimagining defunct industrial sites. Underserved communities gain access to planning strategies, while students learn public engagement and immersion within the needs of a community. As the initiative expands, the University will create a network of multiple community-focused studios across the state.

Johnson describes a future vision in which U Kentucky hosts several pop-up studios in different locations, creating a "constellation of engagements across various contexts."

Collaborative meeting in progress | Credit: "Our Neighborhood," Studio Louisville: https://design.uky.edu/studio-louisville/

21st century shotgun house models | Credit: "Our Neighborhood," Studio Louisville: https://design.uky.edu/studio-louisville/

MICHIGAN ENGAGING COMMUNITY THROUGH THE CLASSROOM

University of Michigan
https://taubmancollege.umich.edu/research/engaging-community-through-classroom-mecc
Ann Arbor, MI
Correspondents: Paul Fontaine, Program Manager and Melinda Verhage, Project Manager

Michigan Engaging Community through the Classroom (MECC) is a multidisciplinary initiative at the University of Michigan that brings together students from different degree programs to provide planning and conceptualization services to local communities. Funded entirely by grants, the program functions through existing courses that expose students to real-world situations involving social, cultural, and environmental issues.

PROCESS

MECC has a general, six-step process for project completion. This involves the identification of community needs, the university's response, a project preparation phase, stakeholder collaboration, project launch, and semester review. Stakeholder meetings are of particular importance, as they allow community members to decide what issues should take precedence, and MECC prefers to formalize agreements with MOUs. However, this process is flexible based on individual project needs. Two full-time faculty members act as principal investigators who oversee ethics and proper use of budget along the way.

Once projects are selected, faculty members encourage student involvement through existing courses—typically for upperclassmen—from multiple disciplines. Most often projects include minimal numbers of architecture students; MECC sources whatever skills would make the largest impact for a given project, working frequently with law, business, and engineering majors. Students may be paid researchers, graduate students in courses, or students in a law clinic. This multidisciplinary approach teaches them not only to listen to different perspectives, but also to better articulate their own perspectives to a team that may not be familiar with degree-specific terminology.

Deliverables are currently in the realm of analysis, planning, visioning, and documentation. Analyses reflect a wide range of participant backgrounds, as they extend far beyond architecture and often address issues of public health and policy, social work, and information. One project culminated in a strategic redevelopment framework for Willow Run—a former manufacturing complex and current airport—and its adjacent neighborhoods, involving adaptive reuse proposals for existing structures, health impact assessments, and thorough analysis of national brownfield redevelopment sites. Design-build projects seem to be in MECC's future, as well, which would involve the signing of an AIA memorandum between the student(s) and a participating licensed practitioner.

YEAR ESTABLISHED
2013

STRUCTURE
Program Manager: *Paul Fontaine*
Project Manager: *Melinda Verhage*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public research university

BUDGET
$120,000-$150,000/yr
Grants

FACILITY
No dedicated space

PROJECT TYPES
Research
Studios
Courses
Planning
Design visioning

FEEDBACK LOOP

There are multiple degree programs involved, occasionally with project related publications. The online documents and plans created by students and staff become platforms for community growth. Recently, the initiative has hired an unaffiliated evaluation team to provide an honest assessment of their progress so far, which is currently in the works at the time of this report.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

The MECC's multidisciplinary approach is a key component of the program. It allows for diverse projects that cover many bases, and it provides students with a chance to tackle complex, real-world issues. Students learn to collaborate across fields, and community members gain access to planning, site analysis, and conceptualization. The initiative has worked with several communities within the state of Michigan, in both rural and urban locations. It often focuses on natural assets, such as the Detroit River, which is a significant environmental, social, and cultural asset.

Working with students from other disciplines teaches students how to "listen with respect" and "speak without jargon."
- Paul Fontaine

Willow Run Redevelopment Projects | Credit: MECC, https://taubmancollege.umich.edu/college/faculty-research/engaging-community-through-classroom-mecc/mecc-past-projects

MINNESOTA DESIGN CENTER

University of Minnesota
https://design.umn.edu/minnesota-design-center
Minneapolis, MN
Correspondent: Thomas Fisher, Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
1986

STRUCTURE
Director: *Thomas Fisher*
Additional Staff: *3-4 full-time staff, including the administrator, head of studio, and grant admin; 4-8 part-time students*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public land-grant research university

BUDGET
$900,000/yr (on average)
Grants
Endowments

FACILITY
On-campus co-working and studio space on the lower level of the architecture building

PROJECT TYPES
Research
Urban-scale visioning
Advising
Planning

Founded in 1986, the Minnesota Design Center (MDC) functions as a multidisciplinary platform for large, urban-scale and systemic design strategies. Backed heavily by grants and an initial endowment, the MDC keeps a small full-time staff and hires student employees often sourced from topical courses who assist with projects. The initiative runs out of an office and studio on the lower level of Rapson Hall, which they envision as a flexible and accessible co-working space.

PROCESS

Along with RFPs, the MDC takes an active approach to selecting projects; they often submit proposals to competitions, which they win about a third of the time. A group of roughly twenty "affiliates"—composed of practitioners, community members, and multidisciplinary representatives—acts as an informal board for the initiative, meeting monthly to advise and participate as projects progress. Affiliates are unpaid unless they formally join the MDC efforts as researchers, which opens a platform for maintaining connections between community members and the center.

Once obtained, the MDC posts project roles for student applications. While the MDC does not run its own courses, equity-and inclusion-focused studios and classes are scanned for potential hires, and AIAS and NOMAS students are frequently recruited. Projects operate from the MDC office and studio in the College of Design building, where they aim to meet twice a week. The process is supported by an endowment that goes towards staff and core operations, as well as large grants that help defray additional costs.

MDC projects are broad in scope, often involving systems and government. For example, one project is a redesign of the 911 system to allow mental health experts and addiction specialists to be more involved. Another project is the creation of an "innovation lab" that would train government leaders in design thinking. Other projects focus on walkability, autonomous vehicles, healthcare, housing, and homelessness. Because they operate at such a large scale, deliverables come in the form of advising, planning, and visioning, rather than built works.

FEEDBACK LOOP

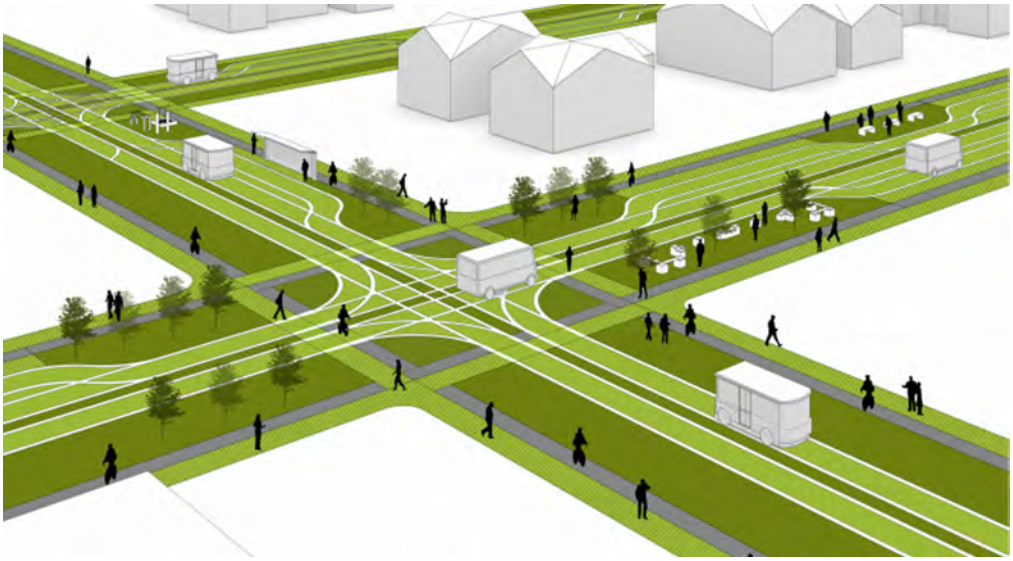
The MDC's emphasis on continued communication with community members contributes to a feedback loop. They measure success based on what community members tell them directly, and those who become affiliates go on to influence future projects. The decision to operate as a multidisciplinary, open platform creates accessibility and allows for more expansive projects. Projects are catalogued on their website, along with a list of their primary funding sources, among them Target, the Bush Foundation, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

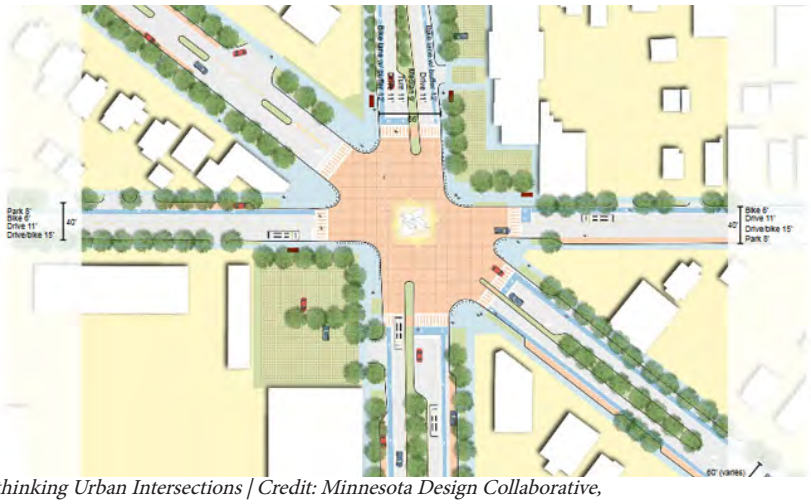
The MDC values diversity, equity and inclusion, especially among its staff and advisors. Many of their staff members are BIPOC, and they want to create stronger pathways for pre-college students of color to get involved. This parallels their multidisciplinary focus, which values a wide range of perspectives.

MDC is committed to listening to the needs of underserved communities, facilitating connections and uncovering possibilities. In turn, students learn about the complexity of design in the real world.

Fisher notes that the MDC is future-focused; they view design as a "way to reveal opportunity" and reimagine the future.



Future Streets Project | Credit: Minnesota Design Collaborative,
https://design.umn.edu/minnesota-design-center



Rethinking Urban Intersections | Credit: Minnesota Design Collaborative,
https://design.umn.edu/minnesota-design-center/projects/rethinking-intersection

DESIGN AND PLANNING ASSISTANCE CENTER

University of New Mexico
https://saap.unm.edu/research/centers/dpac.html
Albuquerque, NM
Correspondent: Michaele Pride, Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
1969

STRUCTURE
Director: *Michaele Pride*
Advisory Committee
Additional Staff: *graduate assistant*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public research university

BUDGET
< $20,000/yr
Endowment
Grants
Sponsorship

FACILITY
N/A

PROJECT TYPES
Applied research and design
Studio projects

The Design and Planning Assistance Center delivers design and planning services to low-income communities throughout the state of New Mexico. The services are delivered through academic research and service at the university, student interns and an interdisciplinary studio that focuses on tactical urbanism – bringing together architecture, landscape architecture, and planning students. DPAC's services integrate students and their work directly with the community outside of the school – engaging with their requests at the scale of urban design in interdisciplinary teams.

PROCESS

Work comes to DPAC on an ad hoc basis presently, but DPAC is currently looking to set-up an online request form that allows community organizations to apply for services and makes visible what the center can offer as a university-based community design service. Prospective projects go through a cost/benefit analysis by DPAC's advisory committee who evaluates if the project will be taken on, and if so, what the service's capacity needs are and what student groups could be attached to it.

Primarily operating at the scale of urban design, DPAC's services focus on research, community engagement, site planning and programming. DPAC considers the urban scale by looking at regional trends and characteristics, transportation issues, economic conditions, unique development and architectural patterns, local history, community climate and goals and by listening directly to the stakeholders.

DPAC's clients are mostly in the public realm. DPAC works with municipalities and community organizations, looking at policy strategy, and gets involved with grassroot organizations at times to propose alternatives or resistance to government proposals.

While DPAC mostly works within contractual relationships with local governments, they also put together "Partners Agreement(s)" with existing community organizations that lay out values, principles of engagement, and expectations from each other. The agreement is signed without monetary value, centering the structure on relational value.

Sponsored projects are typically of one semester duration, six months including planning and reporting, but have spanned to three years with additional funding. The spring DPAC studio contributes to the project, either at the beginning or closing, which the center ultimately packages outside of the semester schedule with faculty research, service time and student interns.

FEEDBACK LOOP

DPAC uses an action-research framework to set-up a reflective practice. DPAC establishes research and design intent questions at the beginning of a project and reflects at the end what learning was derived from the experience and how their methods can evolve.

A volunteer at DPAC is currently looking at how their projects could be evaluated more thoroughly by following up with the client and community partners. This follow-up evaluation will provide DPAC with more feedback on methods of engagement, project implementations, and general client commentary.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

DPAC addresses community design projects that otherwise would not get the professional attention they require due to budget constraints. Working with communities that are at an economic disadvantage, the projects promote economic development while emphasizing health, community, and place concurrently.

"We tackle the design process at multiple scales as we consider regional trends and characteristics, transportation issues, economic conditions, unique development and architectural patterns, local history, community climate, and community goals via the stakeholders."

- Michaele Pride

Site plan of rail yard, Downtown Revitalization project | Credit: https://saap.unm.edu/research/centers/dpac.html

INSTITUTE FOR QUALITY COMMUNITIES

Univeristy of Oklahoma
http://iqc.ou.edu
Norman, OK
Correspondent: Shane Hampton, Director, AICP, CNU-A

The Institute for Quality Communities (IQC) focuses on providing quality design to communities throughout the state of Oklaoma. Each semester, through an RFP process, the IQC receives many proposals and assigns a number of studios to reach many communities. IQC assists in creating design visions and schematics for each group's needs, working on a wide range of projects including districts, buildings, streets, public spaces and research. IQC also hosts a biennial conference on placemaking where students, civic leaders and professionals come together to learn about techniques in community development.

YEAR ESTABLISHED

2008

STRUCTURE

Director: *Shane Hampton*
Additional Staff: *3 full time staff, 2 non staff appointments with other faculty engaging with the program through informal means. 4-5 graduate research assistants throughout the year at 20 hours a week.*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE

Public research univeristy

BUDGET

$350,000 - $450,000/yr
University + Endowments
Fee for design assistance projects

FACILITY

Dedicated suite on the ground level of the College of Architecture building often mistaken for lobby as it is open and inviting, and 4 private offices.

PROJECT TYPES

Research
Studio Courses
Other Courses

PROCESS

Through an annual RFP process The IQC receives proposals to be addressed during the academic year. The process helps to create a threshold for communities and to evaluate whether it is a good fit for the program. IQC works to pair the program directors with a project they would be interested in order to deliver on as many as possible during the semester. Deliverables are established during initial discussions and are generally limited to conceptual and schematic designs with fair warning that they are not "shovel ready". Students generally engage with the projects through studios, as graduate research assistants or in courses that might have a service-learning component. Community members are generally involved through discussions and travel visits during the semester as well as in follow ups after the project is completed.

FEEDBACK LOOP

General feedback is done through surveys for both students and community members. Students are also asked to write reflective narratives and journal entries throughout the process reflecting on their professional development. Projects are posted on IQCs' website with other regular posts from the community. Success is measured by the progress of built outcomes and if the community has received other positive results.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

The Institute for Quality Communities focuses primarily on allowing the community to drive each project. Working with marginalized communities, IQC is dedicated to developing public spaces, commercial districts, commercial revitalization and tactical urbanism, while addressing macro issues such as public health, economic development such as functioning commercial districts, social cohesion and local heritage. Through service learning or community engaged learning students benefit from fulfilling the needs of a community rather than their own design ideas. The value to communities and the state is the access to resources and high-level design expertise to be able to advocate for those ideas in the public realm.

"The very act of reshaping our public spaces can galvanize community ties and spur further positive impacts."
- Shane Hampton

"Walk and Talk" with community residents & leaders in Tullahassee, Oklahoma
Credit: IQC

Student presenting design concepts to community residents in Westville, Oklahoma.
Credit: IQC

OU URBAN DESIGN STUDIO

Univeristy of Oklahoma
https://architecture.ou.edu/urban-design/
Tulsa, OK
Correspondent: Shawn Shaefer, Director + Associate Professor, AIA, AICP

The OU Urban Design Studio works with communities primarily in Oklahoma to take on projects that create impact, bring communities closer together, and increase equity. The OUUDS conducts studio courses that focus on service-learning, during which students engage with communities and understand the impact of their designs on peoples' lives. Their work includes urban planning, city parks, housing developments, public awareness, and art exhibits. As a small organization they focus on empowering communities to continue the work, connecting them with partners and stakeholders to push forward ideas with concrete goals and strategies.

YEAR ESTABLISHED

1988

STRUCTURE

Director: *Shawn Schaefer*
Additional Staff: 1 full time faculty member, 2 part time appointments per semester (adjunct faculty)

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE

Public research univeristy

BUDGET

$240,000/yr
State funding primarily
Grants (average $40,000/yr)
Contract work
Endowments ($420,000: generating approximately 4.5% annually

FACILITY

The urban design studio at the OU Tulsa Campus is about 1,800 sf, consisting of a studio and offices.

PROJECT TYPES

Research
Design Build
Studio Courses

PROCESS

Projects are brought to the college through informal and formal proposals, as well as via faculty or student interest in the potential of a project in the region. OUUDS works with the Institute for Quality Communities in Norman that has established relationships (with the Mayors Institute, the Oklahoma Municipal League, and the Congress of New Urbanism) which help to identify potential projects. Selection is determined by: the pedagogical goals of the courses offered by the program, assurance that the students will meet their objectives for the class, the significance of the impact of the project on the community, and whether it represents different constituencies. It is important that any group they are involved with is truly invested in working with communities (including city planning offices and other stakeholders), and care is taken to confirm with other consulting firms and municipalities to ensure they are not competing with or taking away from another group's work.

Projects are completed primarily through studio courses and the faculty, and may continue over multiple years. Multiple groups of students may be working on projects ranging from urban planning, city parks, housing developments, and art exhibits. Undergraduate students from the Gibbs College of Architecture in Norman participate through courses averaging 12-16 students and work in groups to complete various projects. Students can also apply for grants for projects that support graduate research assistantships as well as gain involvement through the student-run Society of Urban Design Students. Individual community members and stakeholders are engaged through community events, workshops, charettes, models, booths, surveys, and community sketches that run throughout a project. This helps Schaefer and the students see how hopeful the people are and how a design studio can help push the project forward, creating a path to implementation and the agency to make things happen.

FEEDBACK LOOP

The reviewing process is conducted through formal evaluation at the University level, with pre and post tests for the students to ensure they learn and achieve the learning objectives for the course. Students also have the opportunity to fill out surveys at the end of the course to discuss opinions and ideas for future

iterations of the course. For the students, a successful project means achieving growth, learning new skills, and seeing the feedback to their work and designs and the impact they can have on communities through adopted legislation, social awareness, or approval of their designs. Evaluation by the community is determined through the deliverables and how well they worked for the community. Opinions are gathered at a debriefing session with the community partners towards the end of the project or after deliverables are completed. Setting communities up for success is key to a successful project. By recommending strategies that keep time investment and necessary budgets as low as possible, communities can see that small successes are possible, emboldening support to build upon them. Additionally, finding other stakeholders and resources for the community to use during and after OUUDS involvement helps communities continue to be supported while moving forward on new projects and initiatives.

The OU Urban Design Studio website publishes reports and documents for all major projects. They also have an annual print and digital publication that provide additional sources of feedback from the larger public and community. The group also maintains various social media accounts and weekly publications in the college of architecture's newsletter.

"The community is the expert; we generally know very little when entering a project, so listening to them as the expert and utilizing our expertise in design is the most effective way to progress a project."
- Shawn Shaefer

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

The OU Urban Design Studio follows the mission statement of Oklahoma University; the Education of urban design professionals ensures well-rounded students who are taught how to create impactful projects that benefit communities. Fostering Research in both scientific and creative projects to explore new ideas and knowledge in urban design. And Service to provide assistance to local communities and to create a cohort of urban designers who value the built environment and work towards improving equity in the state.
As a small program their goal is to create a reciprocal model: community partners provide the opportunity for students to engage in service learning as the best form of hands-on learning, and in return the organization provides technical and research services.

Chapman Green: Interactive Stick Sculpture | Credit: OU Urban Design Studio/Urban Core Art Project (UCAP) https://iqc.ou.edu/project/muskogee/

A notable project is the Muskogee Downtown Masterplan, beginning in Fall 2016 and completed in spring 2017. The City of Muskogee wanted to revitalize it's downtown and believed community cooperation to be the most effective way to engender positive change. City officials reached out to the OU Urban Design Studio and The Institute for Quality Communities. Work with the community revealed several key priorities with the eventual publication focusing on the topics of increasing activity downtown, making better walking and biking travel to encourage more street activity between destinations, saving historic buildings to preserve Muskogee's legacy, introducing engaging green spaces, and restoring the existing mall to enhance the existing commercial and public experience. (https://iqc.ou.edu/project/muskogee/). The eventual proposal was adopted by the city and is still a major blueprint for the city as it has been a guiding force for stakeholders for more than half a decade.

SUSTAINABLE CITY YEAR PROGRAM

University of Oregon
https://sci.uoregon.edu/sustainable-city-year-program-0
Eugene, OR
Correspondent: Marc Schlossberg, Co-Founder/Co-Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
2009

STRUCTURE
Director: Marc Schlossberg
Additional Staff: 1 *full-time program manager and 3 part-time student workers*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public research university

BUDGET
$250,000-300,000/yr
Contracts
Grants
Private donations

FACILITY
On-campus office space

PROJECT TYPES
Applied research courses

The Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) harnesses the innovation and energy of University of Oregon students and faculty to provide ideas that address critical projects and support progressive and sustainable initiatives in Oregon communities. What differentiates SCYP from other community efforts that are university-based is its scope. SCYP is not limited to a single host department, rather it operates as a school-wide initiative that annually partners faculty and their courses with the staff of a local municipality on diverse projects that involve the fields of business, planning, architecture and landscape architecture, community development, geography and law.

PROCESS

SCYP begins its engagement with the stakeholder community by connecting with an entity that has power to make change within the community: the city itself, a tribe, a transit agency, or another large organization. A roundtable meeting between SCYP leadership and the community partner establishes the interpersonal tone of the relationship and an understanding of the work being undertaken. The community partner invites the municipal departments and other stakeholders to the meeting where SCYP asks them about the challenges they face; what is in their work plan that they have had a hard time getting to and can't figure out how to address, what is on their plate that they need help with. Operating since 2009, SCYP now shares a 10-year portfolio which helps the city see how the program can get involved. After the discussion, SCYP asks for a follow-up list of projects to be sent to them, each having a one paragraph synopsis. The community partner is encouraged to think broadly about the program's initiatives in community development and sustainability when drafting the list. The list then gets forwarded to the faculty of the school and a back-and-forth dialogue between city-staff and faculty members results in one-on-one partnerships.

Since the University of Oregon works on a quarter schedule, the scope must reasonably fit within a 10-week course, with a student-hire from the course compiling the work during the following quarter. SCYP makes it clear that in order to get faculty involved, the projects must work seamlessly with a traditional course timeline without generating extra work.

After the projects are set-up, individual courses and projects begin their own community engagement strategies such as interviews or board presentations within community spaces to gain proximate feedback. SCYP also asks the primary partner what stakeholders ought to be involved in the project notwithstanding whether the city has a good or bad relationship with them, since both will ultimately be involved in implementation. The students act as a neutral medium which engages both sides; they are often able to present a stance that incorporates new ideas with the existing, often conflicting, perspectives.

At the end of each partnership year, the SCYP makes their work transparent to the community through a celebration in a public space. The celebration includes a brief presentation from every course project, invites feedback from attending partners and stakeholders, and features summary posters exhibited throughout the space. Around ten weeks later, all of the project reports are synthesized and delivered to the community partners.

After those deliverables are received, the partner often will ask for additional engagements with SCYP as the city realizes the value of the university partnership. These projects operate more like consultant work with a clear and limited scope.

"If you limit things to a department, you're really missing the opportunity to impact change in a community, the orientation of the university, and accessibility to students across disciplines."
- Marc Schlossberg

FEEDBACK LOOP

The end of the year celebration exposes each course's work to feedback before being synthesized and delivered to the city. SCYP follows up with interviews after the city receives the deliverables, and again the following year, and a few years later. These interviews reveal the projects' impacts: whether direct or indirect implementation took place, or if the student efforts resulted in more of a social product – energizing staff and/or bringing together opposing stakeholders.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

SCYP provides a diverse and generative service to Oregon communities which link the university's academic efforts to tangible and local results. With regard to students, they sign up for courses participating in SCYP partnerships without applying any extra effort. They gain access to and ownership of the work involved in community-based prompts as they seek to fulfill requirements for their major.

SCYP opens up real world learning to students who otherwise wouldn't have this opportunity. It does not require extracurricular time which becomes an issue of equity. Their engagement with SCYP becomes an applied professional experience on their CV demonstrating experience working in collaborative groups, meeting with and presenting to city staff/city council, engaging with clients, and delivering against deadlines. This is a rare and meaningful opportunity for undergraduate students to begin thinking about their future.

Image credit Sustainable Cities Institute Reports *https://sci.uoregon.edu/sustainable-city-year-program-0*

FLORIDA CENTER FOR COMMUNITY DESIGN & RESEARCH

University of South Florida
http://fccdr.usf.edu/
Tampa, FL
Correspondent: Taryn Sabia, Associate Professor of Research

YEAR ESTABLISHED

1986

STRUCTURE

Director: *Taryn Sabia*
Additional Staff: *3 full-time faculty in the Florida center, in addition to an administrative assistant and 6-18 part time graduate assistants*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE

Public research university

BUDGET

$85,000-$87,000/yr
University funding
Contract work

FACILITY

2,500 SF space on campus comprising 8 faculty office spaces, open office, conference room, studio space, and equipment room. In the process of creating a satellite office

PROJECT TYPES

Design-build
Research
Studio Courses

The University of South Florida: Florida Center for Community Design and Research (FCCD+R) utilizes its large team and a number of design studios to provide designs to vulnerable communities that focus on resilience and equity. Supported largely through a university budget and contract work, the group is able to provide affordable designs ranging from master plans, to policy and code work, particularly around sea level rise, to meet the needs of the expanding communities in their state.

PROCESS

The FCCD+R selects its projects based on interest of faculty, needs of local municipalities or nonprofits that generally focus on resilience and equity, and vulnerable populations in the region. After getting a sense of the project intent, the main idea and budget are developed. Then through several meetings, the staff decide whether or not to move forward with the project.

Once approved, a scope of work is developed with a contract through the Department of Sponsored Research at the University of South Florida. Smaller scale projects may then become part of a sponsored studio within the semester framework plus an additional month of prep and wrap up. Larger projects may be taken on by the FCCD+R itself with durations ranging from 1-3 years. Types of projects and deliverables might include master planning and visioning, policy work, research, charettes, design build, and code development, all with the goal of assisting architects and designers in promoting resiliency. Community engagement occurs through workshops, presentations, and receiving feedback to actively include the community in the design process. Engagement also occurs through local governments with an emphasis on making connections between different departments.

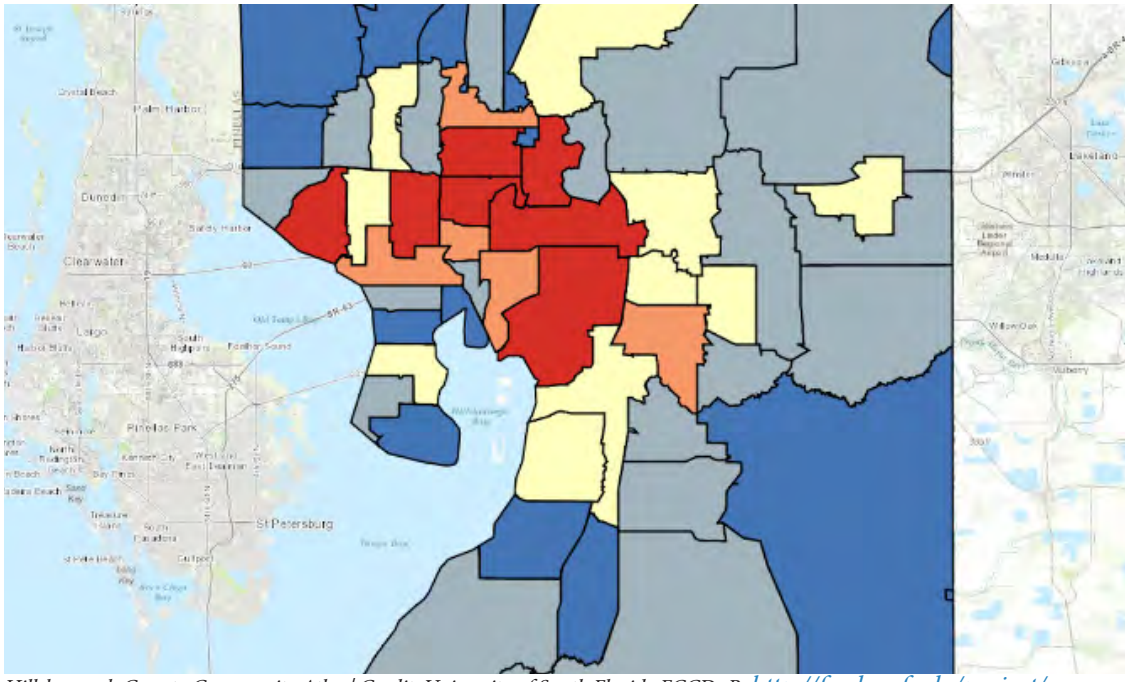
FEEDBACK LOOP

Success is evaluated through presentations, community engagement levels, the number of student and faculty hours spent supporting the project, and whether the project generated any policy implementation or adaptation, economic development, monetary or grant rewards for the client. Projects are also documented on the FCCR+R's website portfolio.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

The FCCR+D provides design expertise, technical assistance, applied research, and community engagement services to Florida's growing communities in order to address urban challenges related to the built environment. FCCD+R employs research faculty, professional and support staff, and graduate students from multiple departments across the University. This has led to work on a variety of projects from building design to master plans, policy work, and code work, particularly around sea level rise. This work provides students with a wide variety of skills relating to community engagement, facilitation, and presentation in a professional environment. The community and region benefit from this engagement through access to design technology and information about urban resilience. The community benefits from access to new information and designs for their specific needs, as well as engagement with the school and its resources. The students benefit from the exposure to service learning and experience as facilitators in conveying ideas to community members.

"We want to teach them (students) how to work with community, how to talk with community members and how to convey ideas in ways that general community members can understand."
- Taryn Sabia



Hillsborough County Community Atlas | Credit: University of South Florida FCCD+R, http://fccdr.usf.edu/project/hillsborough-county-community-atlas/

COMMUNITY DESIGN SOLUTIONS

University of Wisconsin Milwaukee
https://uwm.edu/community-design-solutions/
Milwaukee, WI
Correspondent: Carolyn Esswein, Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
2000

STRUCTURE
Director: *Carolyn Esswein*
Additional Staff: *2-4 part-time student project assistants*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public urban research university

BUDGET
University funding
Contract work

FACILITY
600 SF studio space located on campus with 3 workstations and 2 conference meeting areas. Shared with the historic preservation institute.

PROJECT TYPES
Research
Studio Courses

Community Design Solutions at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee is a small team that works with underserved communities and nonprofit organizations in the metropolitan area. Student-led Quick Response Teams are the core of the group, meeting with clients and developing skills to engage with communities that are often working with a minimal budget for a project. The group is financially supported though the school and contract work.

PROCESS

The selection process at Community Design Solutions is done through an initial request form submitted a minimum of two months prior to service. CDS evaluates the project and whether it fits into their mission regarding community benefit and their schedule. If moving forward a meeting is held between the proposed client and a CDS administrator and a graduate student usually at the site of the potential project. The general scope of project, timeline and costs are discussed. A draft Letter of Understanding is then created that contains the scope of work, budget and responsibilities of the client and CDS and once finalized the graduate student/project manager will then contact the client to start work. The client generally pays upfront for the service fee or 50% if they are a repeat client.

The project manager plus 2-3 students form a Quick Response Team (QRT) and will work on the project to completion with the director, Carolyn Esswein, overseeing all the projects. Students meet independently with the client and run the project with a high degree of autonomy. Deliverables generally include basic design and planning services, education, training and occasionally community-based applied research.

FEEDBACK LOOP

Projects are evaluated on their stated outcome and if the project is able to meet that intent. Many of the groups that work with CDS have serious budget constraints, being underserved communities, so whether the design is kept true to the needs of the client is important as well as how the community can move the project forward. Ultimately watching how it starts to help transform a corridor, block or neighborhood is the most important part. The project is also cataloged in a digital portfolio on the CDS website with quarterly newsletters that help projects reach more people. Community members benefit from the lasting partnerships and additional information researched and provided by the teams.

"That's how we're going to rebuild this city, one block, one neighborhood at a time"
- Carolyn Esswein

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

The main objectives of the CDS are to be a catalyst for underserved communities, form partnerships, and to stimulate/inform communities about the existing design and construction process. Students benefit from the independent relationships with clients that allow them to gain professional skills when working with communities and developing design solutions and finding additional resources and information for groups. Communities generally benefit from the low cost and ability to gain access to a professional environment and resources.

Fondy Food Market | Credit: CDS Spring Newsletter, 2021, https://uwm.edu/community-design-solutions/wp-content/uploads/sites/314/2021/07/Newsletter_Spring-2021-CDS-3-compressed-1.pdf

"Sometimes it's the small gestures that mean the most, long term."
-Carolyn Esswein

COMMUNITY DESIGN ASSISTANCE CENTER

Virginia Tech
cdac.aad.vt.edu
Blacksburg, VA
Correspondent: Elizabeth Gilboy, Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
1998

STRUCTURE
Director: *Elizabeth Gilboy*
Additional Staff: *2 full-time staff (director and landscape designer), 2 part-time staff, and students depending on project needs*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public land-grant research universary

BUDGET
$175,000-$200,000/yr
University funding
Grants
Contracts

FACILITY
2,280 SF, off-campus on Main Street in downtown Blacksburg

PROJECT TYPES
Conceptual design assistance

The Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC) at Virginia Tech's College of Architecture, Arts, and Design provides conceptual design assistance to underserved communities throughout the Commonwealth. Assistance is provided in the areas of landscape architecture, interior design, architecture, and planning to community groups, non-profit organizations, and government agencies. Students are hired to work on the projects and are engaged in the participatory process as well as design work. The concepts can then be used to leverage funding for next steps.

PROCESS

The small communities CDAC serves are competing with larger communities that have the staff to prepare grant applications. Communities first fill out an application form to briefly explain their needs and initial ideas. The CDAC will then determine if the project seems like an appropriate fit for CDAC. After a meeting and site visit, a proposal is submitted that explains what CDAC will do, deliverables, and the cost. Deliverables include conceptual proposals for landscape design, architecture, and interior design of new or existing spaces.

Students apply and are interviewed for projects. Project teams are typically 2-4 students, depending on the scope of work. VA Tech faculty provide guidance on the projects. Communities are involved in the design process. This can include in-person or remote community or stakeholder meetings and in-person or remote presentations of design work.

Perspective View of Self-Serve Cafe. Part of the conceptual redevelopment plan for the Dante Depot. | Credit: CDAC

FEEDBACK LOOP

CDAC follows the progress of previous projects and measures success based on whether their concepts help the community, if they are able to leverage additional funding, move to next steps, and assist the overall improvement to the community. CDAC provides a report that describes the process and design concepts. Each project is cataloged on the CDAC website for easy reference, coupled with an annual newsletter summarizing each of the projects.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

Vision: CDAC believes every community deserves quality design that promotes a healthy, sustainable way of life.

Mission: CDAC assists communities, civic groups, and nonprofit organizations in improving their natural and built environments through research, community engagement, and interdisciplinary design. We provide opportunities for students to engage with communities, connecting university knowledge with real world experience.

We value:

- The environment
- Community heritage
- Partnerships
- Collaborative design processes
- Student mentoring and real world experiences
- Creativity
- Diverse voices

"It's not about us, it's about the community."
- CDAC student employees

"Having a vision in graphic form that was developed through a participatory process provides communities with a solid concept that can be used in grant applications."
-Elizabeth Gilboy

An example of the impact of CDAC's work is the former coal community of Dante in southwest, Virginia (population about 600). In 2017, a team of landscape architecture students worked with the community to create a conceptual downtown master plan. Included in that master plan was a new town entryway sign, the idea of renovating the depot, a new playground, and a relocated coal miners' memorial, which have all been implemented. The community applied for and received grants for the entry sign, playground, and memorial relocation. In 2018, a team of interior design students worked with the community to come up with ideas for re-using the former depot, which included turning the historic building into a general store and self-serve cafe which will eventually serve both the local community and visitors who will be using ATV and pedestrian/biking trails that will eventually come into town. The concept was used as part of an application for grant funding to renovate the depot, which they received. CDAC has continued to work with Dante on additional projects.

Dante conceptual downtown masterplan | Credit: CDAC

RURAL COMMUNITIES DESIGN INITIATIVE

Washington State University
https://ruraldesign.wsu.edu
Pullman, WA
Correspondent: Robert Kirkac, Associate Professor + Co-Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
2008

STRUCTURE
Co-Directors: *Robert Krikac + Michael Sanchez*
Additional Staff: *student employees*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Public land-grant research institution

BUDGET
$30,000/yr
Contract work
Grants
Sponsors
Fees

FACILITY
250 SF space on campus

PROJECT TYPES
Research
Conceptual design: adaptive reuse, parks, new construction (community-oriented buildings – libraries, community centers), Main Street character improvements to boost economic development, design standards, etc.

The Rural Communities Development Initiative at Washington State University hires students from a variety of degree programs to develop designs for underserved rural communities in the Pacific Northwest. The goal is to enhance the economic, cultural, social and natural development of communities and to attract further investment. The group is financially supported through regular contract work in creating an affordable framework for communities to develop their vision before engaging qualified firms.

PROCESS

A wide range of projects is accepted from community leaders, with projects only being rejected if they are run by private developers or if there is a conflict of interest. The team assigned to the project will travel to the site to establish a clear understanding, with liability for travel being covered by the university. A formal contract with project deliverables is then established with an average fee of $5,000. Teams are made up of a lead faculty member and 2-3 students who may shift from one project to another depending on the work requirements at that time and phase of the project. Work is conducted year round allowing for an average of 6 projects to be completed each year, with projects on average lasting one year. Deliverables generally include localized research, schematic design and planning services. The community is engaged through a series of workshops and interviews conducted throughout the project.

A recent project was a community park and library in Royal City, WA. The goal of this project was to help the community decide on the better of two possible sites for a new park and library. Conceptual designs for two sites were developed through workshops where stakeholder input drove the design concepts. Public presentations of the designs led to unanimous agreement on one site that the city is developing.

FEEDBACK LOOP

Successful projects are determined based on how well the students followed the needs and intent of the communities. With a variety of project types the other metric is the ability of the group to create a successful roadmap for communities to continue the development of their projects once they engage qualified design, planning and construction firms to implement the community vision. Evaluations are conducted via interviews with the community partners post project. Recent projects have been cataloged on the RCDI website and social media accounts.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

RCDI's goal is to promote economic prosperity in small and rural communities throughout the Pacific Northwest. This is done via community visioning through participatory design and capacity building through community build projects at low cost to enable communities to explore design options before finding a firm or partner. Students who work for RCDI receive hands-on experience working with community members and meeting their individual needs in a professional environment.

On being able to develop trust with communities: "RCDI is generally seen as a neutral player with people listening to them."
- Robert Krikac

Royal City Library and Park Analysis | Credit: https://ruraldesign.wsu.edu/past-projects/royalcity_wa/

OFFICE FOR SOCIALLY ENGAGED PRACTICE

Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts at Washington University in St. Louis
https://samfoxschool.wustl.edu/engage
St. Louis, MO
Correspondent: Liz Kramer, Past Associate Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED
2015

STRUCTURE
Associate Director: *Matthew Bernstine*
Additional Staff: *2 part-time coordinators*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE
Private research university

BUDGET
$70,000/yr
Private gifts
Central University funding

FACILITY
On campus Suite with 300 SF (private office, conference, shared space)

PROJECT TYPES
Studio courses
Design-build
Exhibitions
Events & Programming
Research

The Office for Socially Engaged Practice (OSEP) at Washington University in St. Louis (WashU) is a hub and a resource to connect students and faculty around socially engaged practices of art, architecture, and design. OSEP provides a structure and front-door for students and faculty to connect with our regional communities and partners. The office provides direct support to faculty to connect their engaged teaching and interest to their research and creative practice. To do that effectively, we work to ensure that our students and faculty have the tools, resources, and structures to thoughtfully and meaningfully engage with communities and partners towards equitable and mutually beneficial outcomes with resource guides, coaching, management of design/builds, administrative assistance, and graphic design. The office manages several programs, including CityStudioSTL, Pulitzer Endowment, University City Public Art Series, and the Alberti Program: Architecture for Young People.

PROCESS
Project opportunities and collaborations are developed through a number of formal and informal ways. Community organizations and individuals submit a request via an online form where we evaluate each request on a rolling-basis and work to align with current faculty or student interest. Collaborations are also generated through faculty and student research and interest topics, themes, or current events in the St. Louis region. OSEP works closely with the City of St. Louis Municipal departments, community networks, and professional firms to identify potential projects and research collaborations. Deliverables range from design concepts to design/builds and include planning studies, exhibitions, zines, and public events.

Students are engaged by working with OSEP as an intern, enrolling in a socially engaged course, as a research assistant for a faculty member, or through independently funded fellowships. The office provides support to faculty in setting up the project expectations and responsibilities, and assists faculty with developing a timeline, budget, liability insurance, and meeting coordination. Syncing community timelines with academic semesters is a constant struggle for community engaged teaching. Developing longer-term partnerships has proven to be beneficial in developing more robust collaborations and products. A well-known project is Spectroplexus, a 100-foot public sculpture commissioned by the St. Louis Lambert International Airport. The art installation was created by instructors Lavender Tessmer and Jason Butz through a studio course that included 8 students who digitally designed, modeled, hand-assembled, and installed the sculpture.

FEEDBACK LOOP
Success is evaluated through the annual collaborators survey, with larger programs independently evaluated for outcomes for students as well as long term impact. Students are evaluated through the college.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

OSEP provides a structure and methods for students and faculty to practice meaningfully engaged work and address inequity in the built environment. Engaging communities directly with students and faculty provides a praxis for students to develop strengths in meaningfully engaged work, for faculty to develop expertise, experience, and research, and for community members with conceptual ideas to advance their projects and aspirations. Students benefit from the unique nature of each studio and project, working closely with faculty and community groups to achieve their vision. The value for the community and region comes from the personal connections with faculty and students, the input of new ideas and thinking, and access to creative design concepts that assist efforts towards implementation. The range of collaborations and projects shows the depth and breadth of the types of partnerships that architecture and art can support.

"Seeing people care about the things that you care about is really meaningful and important."
- Liz Kramer

Public Space &Ecological Knowledge | Credit: https://samfoxschool.wustl.edu/the-school/news/243-public-space-ecological-knowledge, 07/06/2021

High-Design Bird Blind | Credit: https://source.wustl.edu/2013/09/high-design-bird-blind/spillover

YALE URBAN DESIGN WORKSHOP

Yale University
https://udw.architecture.yale.edu/
New Haven, CT
Correspondent: Andrei Harwell, Director

YEAR ESTABLISHED

1992

STRUCTURE

Directors: *Alan Plattus (founding), Andrei Harwell (executive), Marta Caldeira (research), Elihu Rubin (planning & advocacy), Matthew Rosen (assistant)*
Additional Staff: *Elise Barker Limon (Fellow in Housing & Urban Design), 14 student "design assistants," 2 post-grad associates*

HOST UNIVERSITY TYPE

Private research university

BUDGET

$150,000 - 250,000/yr
Fee for service
Grants
Institutional support

FACILITY

Off-campus, down the road from the school of architecture which is critical due to staff coming and going.They lease a second story property: drafting room with 5 workstations, an office, library, conference room, storage area, and little a kitchenette. Set-up like a small architecture office.

PROJECT TYPES

Applied research
Planning
Urban & Architectural design
Clinical course

Yale University Urban Design Workshop (YUDW) engages with communities, primarily in Connecticut, on issues of urban design and planning. The Workshop provides design expertise to groups that are under-served: neighborhoods, governments, non-profit developers and municipal companies. From very small projects like garden sheds to master plans of entire districts, YUDW's work is focused around three major themes: strategies for regeneration in postindustrial cities and towns, particularly in New England; the relationship between preservation, cultural heritage, redevelopment, tourism and identity; and coastal and neighborhood adaptation in light of climate change and issues of social and environmental equity.

PROCESS

Typically, work comes to the YUDW. If the Workshop sees a potential to collaborate, they will meet with the client's steering committee and ask that each project have some kind of community advisory board. To illustrate the workshop's range of scale and the consequent structures it becomes a part of, an RBD (Rebuild by Design) project in Bridgeport had a community advisory board, a technical advisory board, a steering committee and a client board, while a neighborhood plan they worked on simply had a community advisory board of five.

YUDW's projects create a conceptual frame for a communities' intent that captures a clear urban strategy for implementation. The Workshop differs from conventional firms by not being bottom-line budget-driven consultants. The Workshop has found that ideas for design and implementation take time to surface during conceptual framing – that a deep understanding of a place requires development. Projects range from one to three years, at least. The workshop is not bound strictly to the academic schedule as it operates independently from courses as a staffed operation. Apart from the faculty directors, staffing consists of post-graduate associates who are hired full time for one to two years and student fellows who are paid hourly. The "design assistant" students work 10 hours per week. Staffing and the Workshop's overall budget are flexible and swing greatly depending on the requirements and funding of each year's projects.

An example of the creativity that emerges from a flexible approach and listening intently to clients is the Workshop's response to a house museum along the Thames River in Groton, CT that was experiencing limited visitation. The museum board wanted to become more visible and effective as a community institution. The Workshop identified a strategy for the house museum through research concerning its larger context, extending the scope of the project to look at all of the cultural and historic sites along Thames River on the Groton and New London banks. Through a planning process funded by the museum's board, the Workshop developed a plan for a disaggregated "Thames River Heritage Park" that created a network of different historical sites linked by water taxis that connect the sites, a system of graphically consistent signage and wayfinding, and a platform for shared programming between sites.

Beginning in fall of 2022, a clinical course called "Housing Connecticut" was offered, coordinated by Harwell, and including Alan Plattus, Anika Singh Lemar from the Law School, and Kate Cooney in the School of Management. This clinical course is offered under the aegis of the Yale Urban Design Workshop, and students work in multidisciplinary groups (4 architects, 2 law, 2 management) directly with local non-profit developers to create innovative affordable housing proposals that include site selection, neighborhood analysis, architectural design, pro forma, and financing. The course is offered with the support of the Connecticut Commissioner of Housing, who has made funding available to each of the three teams.

FEEDBACK LOOP

During the projects' development, the client steering committee and community advisory board work together to inform and provide feedback to the Workshop. To investigate the projects' community impact, the workshop is considering setting up a system of post-occupancy evaluation. YUDW suggests structuring these publications early on because they take time and resources but would be incredibly useful to public relations and illustrating the effect of this method of planning to potential clients and donors. Despite not having a formal evaluation process for projects, the Workshop keeps up with its past clients and keeps their work visible through their web based portfolio containing project boards and a write-up on their approach.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

By framing development and redevelopment projects through the lenses of preservation, adaptation and resilience, environmental justice, cultural heritage and identity, YUDW's methodology looks for ways to integrate and address multiple issues and themes synthetically through design, while being deeply grounded in and committed to community based engagement processes. The Yale students are given a high level of responsibility within these projects, oftentimes employed as project managers, interfacing directly with community members, an activity which they would otherwise not have as part of their architecture education.

Birds Eye View of the Thames River Heritage Park | Credit: https://udw.architecture.yale.edu/projects/thames-river-heritage-park-plan

"We stay with people for a long, long time. We think that's important because there are some things you cannot discover in just spending a few weeks with somebody. It takes time for things to sort of bubble-up and gain an understanding for a place."

- Andrei Harwell

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