

Dean's Message



We offer DCP students incredible, indeed life changing, experiences through our various off-campus programs. Late last month, I visited our Vicenza and Paris programs in time to review their end of semester projects and to better understand firsthand how these programs function. It is unquestionable that we have carefully crafted two top-notch offerings.

Vicenza serves a large bulk of our architecture students, while the Paris program is centered around issues most relevant to landscape architecture students. The Paris program opens up tremendous possibilities for all of our programs because of its location in the heart of one of the world's major urban centers and because it is part of the larger Paris Research Center, or PRC, which supports our entire campus.

Vicenza is a world heritage city located about 60 kilometers west of Venice ("Venezia"), which students are using as the site for their major project this semester. The students regularly travel to Venice by train to study the city and project site, but right in Vicenza they have the constant stimuli of walking daily by buildings and spaces designed by world class architects, especially the 16th century giant, Andrea Palladio. Living and studying in "Palladio's City," students have access to an exquisite studio space and other support facilities, and are mentored by our rotating resident faculty and the indomitable local director, Franca Stocco.

In addition to experiences of Vicenza and nearby Venice and Padua, students take organized and self-guided excursions throughout Italy and Europe during the semester.

Students based in Paris have an equally energizing environment but on a scale far larger than Vicenza. There, the program is housed in the Paris Research Center in the Montparnasse section of Paris, a stunning facility with a library, conference and classroom spaces, and studios comparable to the Vicenza set up (and as both sets of students professed, better than what we have back here).

The PRC also is equipped to support small faculty projects which would benefit by having a base in Paris. It is widely used by other UF colleges, but our Fall semester landscape architecture program is considered one of their jewels because it is the only overseas program which is run directly by a department of landscape architecture from the United States. And Paris as a laboratory for understanding all aspects of urbanism, both from a historical perspective as well as contemporary innovations, is second to none. As with the Vicenza program, the Paris students are connected to the entire European experience, not only through travel but also by taking classes with other UF students there to study other dimensions of Paris.

We need to embrace these programs to the fullest extent possible, and in both places, there are possibilities to involve other units in DCP to a greater extent. There is no doubt, at least in my mind, that these world class programs elevate all of us. And they can do even more as we apply our creative genius to these wonderful components of DCP education and research. I was inspired by eloquent testimonials of our students about what these programs have meant to them. None should be denied the opportunities that they have had.

Wishing you an enjoyable and rejuvenating holiday season!!

Christopher Silver, Ph.D., AICP
Dean and Professor

Landscape Architecture Studio Investigates Stormwater Management

LAE professors Tina Gurucharri and Kevin Thompson are challenging third-year undergraduate and first-year graduate students to think outside the box about stormwater. The students took part in a Fall 2007 studio which aimed to find creative and more effective ways to manage stormwater.

As the state of Florida continues to face rapid growth, conventional development practices are depleting natural resources and critically impacting the health of ecosystems. This depletion and impact are found even here in Gainesville, specifically in the area of East Gainesville where Newnans Lake recently was declared the most polluted water body in the state. According to Gurucharri, much of the pollution is being caused by insufficient stormwater treatment which causes severe pollution problems in waterways, creeks and lakes.

Using East Gainesville and the Newnans Lake area as the basis of the studio, the 33 students each created and tested

development schemes to integrate progressive stormwater management strategies within a cohesive and socially driven public open space system.

These investigations interrelated concepts the students explored in LAE professor Glenn Acomb's construction studio.

The designs help to reinforce the effectiveness and potential of progressive stormwater management strategies to local government planners and private developers. These investigations illustrate that beyond all the environmental benefits, the ideas can markedly increase property values and create a sense of community within the neighborhood plan.

Acomb, Gurucharri and Thompson will be presenting a poster based on their research in this and other studios, titled "Aesthetics & Ecology: Landscape Architects Rethink Stormwater Management Design," at the first ever UF Water Institute Symposium on Feb. 27-28, 2008.

Minchin Named to Review Board

BCN professor Edward Minchin has been named to the Regional Disputes Review Board (DRB) for the state of Florida. The DRB is a panel of three experienced, respected and impartial reviewers appointed by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Florida Transportation Builders Association (FTBA).

In case of a conflict between FDOT and a contractor working on a transportation construction project in Florida, DRB members are provided with the contract documents and become familiar with the project procedures and the participants. Members are kept abreast of job progress and developments and meet with owner and contractor representatives during regular site visits to encourage the resolution of disputes at the job level.

The DRB process helps the parties head off problems before they escalate into major disputes. If the parties are not able to resolve their differences, the DRB conducts hearings and rules on entitlement, cause/effect and quantum. DRB decisions are not binding, but the judgments of the panel are usually accepted by the parties.

Acomb Designs for Efficient Communities

LAE professor Glenn Acomb, working with UF's Program for Resource Efficient Communities, recently completed a \$10,000 grant from the St. Johns River Water Management District to prepare water conservation site designs for prototypical single-family lots. These designs will provide layout and performance data to measure sustainable landscapes, irrigation construction impacts and will be used by the District in providing models for sustainable land development and homebuilding practices.

School of Architecture Draws Prominent Visiting Faculty

The School of Architecture received two professors from Latin America during the Fall semester.

Professor Carlos Campos is attached to the Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina, as Head of Catedra Campos in Architectonic Representation, and Adjunct Professor at the Catedra Solsona in Architectural Design. His latest book, "Before the Idea: Steps Towards Designing Methodologies," has just been published in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He has been awarded in multiple design competitions (ccamposarq@yahoo.com).

Professor Pablo Herenu, originally from Argentina, practices and teaches in Sao Paulo, Brazil. He is a member of the Escola da Cidade, AEAUSP, Associacao de Ensino de Arquitetura e Urbanismo de Sao Paulo. Despite his youth, he has an extensive and repeatedly awarded professional practice in Brazil (pablo@cooperantes.com.br).

Both gave presentations and directed design studios at the School of Architecture.

For the Spring semester, the School is receiving additional notable architects, including: Milton Braga from Brazil, Ruben Otero (currently practicing in Sao Paulo, Brazil) from Uruguay, Brendan MacFarlane from France, Juan Herreros from Madrid and Shigeru Ban from Tokyo. In addition, Juan Palomar from Guadalajara, Mexico will visit the school on Jan. 14, co-sponsored by the Preservation Institute: Caribbean, and the school's lecture series will host Jurij Kobe of Slovenia, Agostino Bossi of Italy and Max Underwood of Arizona.

■ Spring BCN Career Fair

The Spring 2008 Rinker School of Building Construction Career Fair will take place Feb. 12, 2008 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Stephen C. O'Connell Center. To register or check out companies attending, please visit: <http://www.bcn.ufl.edu/jobplacement/>

■ Kohen Serves on Juries in France

ARC director Martha Kohen will serve on two doctoral level juries in France this month: Universite de Paris 3 – Sorbonne Nouvelle IHEAL/Institut des Hautes Etudes de l'Amerique Latine on Dec. 3 and Ecole Enperieure d'architecture de Paris la Villette on Dec. 19.

■ Ries Presents at SETAC Annual Meeting

BCN professor Robert Ries gave two presentations at the 28th annual meeting of the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) - North America, held from Nov. 11-15 in Milwaukee, Wisc. The papers were: "Life Cycle Assessment as a Decision Tool: Case Studies in Green Building Design and Construction" and "Incorporating Spatial and Temporal Resolution in Impact Assessment of Tropospheric Ozone in the Life Cycle Assessment of Buildings."

At this meeting, Ries also was elected as Chair of SETAC's North American Life Cycle Assessment Advisory Committee, of which he has been a member since 2001. He also was nominated to the Program Committee for the 29th annual meeting, to be held in Orlando in November 2008. SETAC is an international professional society in environmental science, technology and management.

■ Hailey Participates in Jury Exchange

ARC professor Charlie Hailey and ARC alumnus Chris Whymms-Stone (ARC 1994) of the University of Technology, Jamaica participated in a week-long exchange under a new collaborative agreement signed in April 2007. Hailey was a visiting critic in studio presentations at the UTECH campus in Kingston, while Whymms-Stone was in Gainesville for the School of Architecture year-end design reviews.

■ Lagueux Presents Guest Lecture

URP alumni Scott Lagueux, AICP, presented a guest lecture on Nov. 28 to DCP students and faculty on "Realizing Icons: Planning and Design in the Middle East and Asia." Lagueux also spoke to URP professor Richard Schneider's colloquium class. He is a member of the Department's Advisory Committee and has extensive international experience in port and maritime facility planning and design. He is a senior associate at LandDesign, Inc., a 300-person urban design, engineering, landscape architecture and branding firm based in Charlotte, NC.

■ Historic Preservation News

DCP professor Roy Eugene Graham, FAIA, participated in a four-day workshop on heritage values, focusing on how contemporary society values the past. The international panel represented the world heritage sector including archaeology, law, economics, historic preservation, education, tourism, and indigenous populations. The panel prepared papers and met to discuss how the past is valued and how such values can be defined, measured and applied to public policy, spending, management, education and training of heritage sector professionals. The workshop was held at Cumberland Island National Seashore in November and was sponsored by the National Park Service and the World Archeological Congress, among others. The papers will be published in the International Journal of Heritage Studies.

Graham also was a featured speaker in the fall lecture series of the College of Architecture and the Arts at Florida Atlantic University. His lecture was entitled "Redesigning World Heritage Cities." In November, he made a presentation to the Board of the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training at their meeting in San Juan on the College Historic Preservation Program's Traditional Building Field School in Mt. Lebanon, NY. While in San Juan, Graham participated in the Association for Preservation Technology annual meeting and an associated meeting of Docomomo-Puerto Rico which took place at the La Concha Hotel, now under restoration.

Also while in Puerto Rico, Brian Scott Robinson, a DCP Ph.D. student concentrating in historic preservation, was elected president of the Association for Preservation Technology, International at the organization's annual meeting in San Juan. APT is a cross-disciplinary, membership organization dedicated to promoting the best technology for conserving historic structures and their settings.

IND professor Marty Hylton was a honored guest of the Board of Trustees and President of Florida Southern College at the premiere and a ceremony celebrating the restoration of the historic Frank Lloyd Wright "Water Dome" on the Lakeland campus.

■ Kuenstle Elected to Serve a Third Term as AIA Florida State Director

ARC professor Michael W. Kuenstle, AIA, has been elected to serve a third term on the Board of Directors to the Florida Association of the American Institute of Architects. As a state director, Kuenstle's service, in combination with his teaching and research-based practice in Florida, provides for a strong link between the school and the profession within the state. Kuenstle also serves as a Chapter Director for AIA Gainesville.

Student Project Leads to “Nice Idea” Becoming a Reality

In Spring 2006, LAE student Ryan Renuart completed his senior independent project – redevelopment plans for Gainesville’s Veterans Administration Hospital, in which he designed new facilities, explored sustainability opportunities and incorporated therapeutic landscapes. One of the most problematic spaces was an interior courtyard that provides the only access psychiatric patients have to outdoor spaces. His overall project was well received, but the existing dreariness and dramatic potential of the small courtyard particularly caught people’s hearts. Soon plans were made to raise money to improve the courtyard.

By that time, Renuart was serving in Iraq. He and VA staff contacted the Department of Landscape Architecture for help in moving the project forward. Under the direction of LAE professor Kay Williams and LAE adjunct professor Gail Hansen, the Fall 2007 LAE Graduate Studio explored more detailed ideas than Renuart could pursue in the context of his much larger project.

Building upon Renuart’s basic concepts and goals of a mix of active and passive activities, security and safety, and soft fascination, the students began research into the needs and behaviors of psychiatric patients, staff concerns, microclimate modification, cost effectiveness within a projected budget and therapeutic environments. Pragmatic issues included how to build a garden on a roof that had drainage problems in the past.

Materials became important very quickly. Patients

would be supervised, but no materials that might be used as weapons or to self-inflict wounds could be used. The need for non-poisonous plants evolved into edible plant palettes. Some elements were best designed and built from scratch, but others were far more cost-effective and safe if specified from a manufacturer. Usually never fans of artificial turf, students researched the most comfortable and durable turf for this rooftop garden. Paint, stucco, plastic film used on buses and fabric sails helped mitigate the institutional feel and the four stories of windows looking into the space.

As these plans will be used for fund-raising, communication of ideas also was extremely important. The students prepared cost estimates of materials to be used by the VA engineering staff.

Initially, some members of the staff were skeptical as to the feasibility of the entire concept, primarily from a patient safety and security standpoint. Students met with representatives from a range of departments to gain insights and to test their ideas. After the final presentation in November, many of the skeptics became enthusiastic supporters of the project. What has seemed an impossible “nice idea” now will be refined and implemented.

Supporters have discussed the possibility of funding one therapeutic garden a year at VA hospitals across the country. Ryan will be in the U.S. over the holidays to speak to potential donors. Williams will continue to work with the VA Hospital.

▲ LAE Students Create Proposals for Stadium and Inner Roads

Fifth-year undergraduate LAE students proposed new landscape identities for designated priority areas in the UF campus master plan. LAE professor Mary Padua facilitated the students’ studio investigation with the engagement of Linda Dixon, assistant director in UF’s Facilities Planning and Construction Division. Dixon would like to utilize the students’ ideas to raise funds for the much needed campus facelift. Design juries through the students learning process included UF urban forester Tom Workman, URP professor Ruth Steiner, visiting ARC lecturer Pablo Herenu and LAE professor Tina Gurucharri.

The students formulated new landscape strategies and themes for six sites along two vital corridors. Along Stadium Road, they proposed a gateway treatment at the intersection at Gale Lemerand Drive, streetscape improvements with a swamp theme and Gator heads for road lighting and traffic lane edges, relocation and consolidation of the bus stops and the creation of an iconic landscape at the Hub. For sites along Inner Road, they took their design cues from existing hydrological patterns and created constructed wetlands and riparian forms for the Broward and Yulee Courtyard designs, and the interstitial space between the Music and Architecture Buildings.

▲ Tilson Appointed to Museum Board of Trustees

Assistant dean William Tilson recently was appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Amelia Island Museum of History in Fernandina, Fla. Tilson has collaborated with the museum on research and presentation materials documenting the original settlement of Fernandina, the last town platted by the Spanish in the Western Hemisphere.

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