

Proposal to Host the 27th National Conference on the Beginning Design Student
University of Nebraska
College of Architecture
tbd March 2011

[BEGINNING OF/IN THE END] Sustainable [re]starting



conference chairs: **Lindsey Ellsworth Bahe** [Interior Design]
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To eliminate the concept of waste means to design things—[buildings/spaces] products, packaging, and systems--from the very beginning on the understanding that waste does not exist. (Cradle to Cradle p. 104)

Design schools have been dealing with issues of sustainability, design, and solutions to problems for a long time. It has been long known that meaningful design inherently calls for sustainable outcomes and leads to solutions in harmony with nature, not outside of it. While this may be true, the level of discourse about the impact *our* design could have in improving the climate, material reduction, energy reduction, and more, has increased to astonishing levels. William McDonough and Michael Braungart in their book *Cradle to Cradle* suggest a radical and deeper method of thinking and making. This call for change has been with us for some time but is our teaching paving the way for *their* type of new thinking. Are we really capable of this level of change? Can we affect change in what we do? If sustainable design thinking is the solution to environmental issues, do our early design studios prepare the way for the types of significant changes McDonough and Braungart require?

This proposal seeks to raise these and other questions about the shifts in practice and teaching. How are we responding or speculating about them? Our goal is to create a stage where educators can claim that what they are doing in foundation education is preparing students for the shifts and changes that have happened in the field of design. Conversely, the discussion may speculate that we are *not* doing enough. This proposal does not seek to prescribe outcomes, but rather we intend to provide a stage for open discourse and argument about where we have been and where we are going.

We propose that the next two conferences will be broken into two interrelated parts:

1. **Nebraska 2011 -- *Beginning of/in the End***: will focus on early foundation studios that are interested in collaborative working and partnerships that speak to the changing methods of making, design team roles, impacts of group work, collaborative fabrication/construction,

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integrated processes, digital fabrication, parametric modeling, and how we are preparing students to work in these *new* arenas. The first conference in 2011 seeks to expose how we have made changes in working together (or not) and how we are specifically preparing students to be a part of a larger design collaborative (or not). The conference does not propose that collaboration is the only way to design and strives to give voice to multiple views of the design world or how they are considering the “design of the world.”

2. **Penn State 2012 -- *End of/in the Beginning***: will continue the discussion and look at ways in which we impact, not only the early years, but will also speculate on the role of early design work and how it infiltrates upper level studios (or not). The goal of this second conference is to illustrate that our work in foundation design does in fact have an impact on upper level design studios and gives students ways to navigate new methods of design delivery and processes. We hope to illustrate that our commitment to early work does make a difference. Our intention is to uncover ways in which educators of design have impacted the built world in a connected and sustainable manner. Additionally, the second portion of the conference, *End of the Beginning*, will give individuals the opportunity to report on specific projects that were presented at *Beginning of the End*. The focused time period will call for projects that expose specific issues of design collaboration, integrated design strategies, sustainable thinking, and more. Alternatively, the compressed time period will allow people to illustrate other issues of collaborative design and the changes that can occur with a focused duration.

Institutional Support

Dean Wayne Drummond, Mark Hoistad, Director of the Architecture Program, and Betsy Gabb, Director of the Interior Design Program have all expressed enthusiastic support for hosting the conference at the University of Nebraska, College of Architecture. The offices are willing to commit all available resources at their disposal for the conference.

Additionally, the university wide conference support system will be utilized for conference organization and attendance support.

2011 Location

Lincoln NE: The University of Nebraska -- College of Architecture Building & The Sheldon Museum of Art (Phillip Johnson, 1963).

Lincoln is the state capital of Nebraska and has a population of 253,000 residents. Our urban university campus is immediately adjacent to downtown Lincoln, and lends itself to multiple lodging, eating, and entertainment options, all within walking distance of our College building. The Historic Haymarket is within three blocks of the school and boasts the majority of the cities’ art galleries, boutique shops and a wide range of dining options. Lincoln is serviced by its own airport (LNK) that is a 10 minute drive from downtown. (Note: It is highly likely that attendees can be dependent upon their hotel courtesy shuttle for their own transportation needs from and to the airport.) Once downtown, all conference, lodging, dining and entertainment can be reached with short, comfortable walks. Additional flight options are available from the Omaha airport (OMA), but would require a 60+ minute drive to downtown Lincoln.

Hotels of interest include (in order of distance from the UNL College of Architecture Bldg):

- Embassy Suites Lincoln, 1040 P St. (250 guest suites)
- Holiday Inn Lincoln – Downtown, 141 North 9th St. (233 guest rooms)
- The Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, 333 South 13th St. (297 guest rooms)

Additionally, the attendees of the conference will be offered various art gallery tours in the Historic Haymarket and tours of multiple LEED certified projects in the downtown core. One project will illustrate a Platinum LEED certified mixed use project newly completed in 2009.

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Keynote Lecturers

Keynote speakers for the first conference would be selected in conjunction with our own Hyde Lecture Series. This will enable an economic efficiency that will serve the interest of both the 2011 National Conference for the Beginning Design Student as well as our own College body. Consistent with the theme of the conference we will be looking to secure a distinguished practitioner(s)/educator(s) who are also regularly active in the teaching of design studios and practicing in collaborative and integrated ways.

Graphic Identity

If awarded the Conference, the conference co-chairs will immediately engage a nationally-recognized graphic design firm to generate a graphic identity for all printed Regional Conference materials.

Web sites

<http://archweb.unl.edu/>

<http://www.sheldonartmuseum.org/building/>

<http://lincolnhaymarket.org/>

<http://www.lcoc.com/>

<http://downtownlincoln.org/do/visitor-information/>