

t r a c e

college of architecture and environmental design

From the Dean's Desk

dean jim dalton, faia

Welcome back for another year. I appreciate the opportunity the t r a c e team has extended to me in order to communicate both recent and anticipated improvements for the College of Architecture and Environmental Design. Each is with a commitment to improving the learning environment for our student body.

1) As we venture on moving the Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative (CUDC) to Playhouse Square, we expect to strengthen all aspects of the CUDC's missions: service, research, and education. The CUDC houses our graduate urban design program, half of our graduate architecture program, and our urban research and outreach activities. When complete, the facility will have one large seminar space seating up to 36 students, one classroom, a library, two exhibit spaces, open office space for up to 12 faculty and staff, student studios, and a workroom. We are currently negotiating for model shop space. These improvements greatly enhance our ability to focus on strengthening ties to city officials and are exciting endeavors to both our graduate programs and our commitment to the city of Cleveland.

2) The university has implemented a new budget model, Responsibility Centered Management. Each college is now responsible for generating and managing its own resources. I support this budget approach because it aligns responsibility with authority. Although we are only five months into this model, I believe students will experience the benefit of budget decisions made on their behalf.

3) Conducting a year-long study of student advising approaches, the university has concluded advising should be decentralized to each college. As a result, our advising staff has been reorganized and located in 202C Taylor Hall. Our advisors are Sandra Buckey, Benjamin Stenson, and Trinity Jeter. I trust each of you will be proactive in using this office for your benefit.

4) The Morbito Library expansion is complete and I have observed increased student use of this facility. The additional shelf space, seating, computer access, and staff work area are welcome additions.

5) Professors Adil Sharag-Eldin and Pamela Evans have implemented a research facility in the Gym Annex. As we increase our building research initiatives, I anticipate a growing need for faculty/student research labs.

6) This summer the studios and library in Taylor Hall were abated of asbestos. This is the first step in upgrading Taylor's studios. As funds become available, we intend to install new energy efficient lighting, remove and replace the flooring, and complete painting the studios.

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Computer Lab Conundrum

julie whyte, 4th year b.s. architecture

Disbelief. Anger. Determination. This can't be happening. How could they do this to us? What can we do? These were my initial reactions upon hearing the dreaded news that the May 4th Initiative would be taking over the first floor computer lab.

This reaction may seem extreme to some, but we as Architecture and Interior Design students know how imperative the computer lab is to our education. AutoCAD, Revit Architecture, Revit MEP, Autodesk Maya, Virtual Environment, Photoshop CS3, Ecotect- these are just a handful of computer programs that the computer lab provides for students that allow them to complete class work. Although some students may have some of this software on their own computers, many students cannot afford to equip their computers with all these expensive programs. Many students' computers have trouble running the new version of Revit (Revit Architecture 2010). To top it off, my computer can barely open Internet Explorer. As a result, running Revit and Photoshop is clearly out of the question. While the computer lab may be just a lab to some, we as students know that it is so much more. The Kent Stater recently ran an article conveying the facts about the whole ordeal. Laura Davis, ex-associate provost of Kent State, is spear-heading this project. After e-mailing her several times in the attempt to yield some answers (and most likely ensuring the placement of my name on a blacklist somewhere), I was assured that arrangements would be made well in advance to move our computer lab to a different location.

This was of some comfort, but this "solution" is still not addressing the fundamental problem. The College of Architecture is already distributed between three different buildings. Aren't we taught that communication and collaboration are essential to our careers as designers? Yet, the 4th years are isolated in Tri-Towers, 3rd years and I.D. students confined to the Gym Annex, and 1st and 2nd years sectioned off in Taylor Hall.

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The future of the college looks bright. Over the past 15 years our college undergraduate and graduate programs have grown in size and complexity. The college has more than 800 students located in Taylor Hall, The Gym Annex, Tri-Towers, Cleveland, and Florence, Italy. In a way, we are victims of our own success. It is my contention that one of the largest educational difficulties we face is the lack of contiguous student space. Significant learning often occurs through informal student encounters, discussions, and crits with one another. With each year separated from the rest, these impromptu encounters are greatly diminished. In other words, my biggest goal as Dean is to put together a strategy for a new college building.

For this to be successful, we will need the absolute commitment of students, alumni, faculty, staff, and administration to earn this very expensive honor through our actions. We must be viewed as deserving both within and outside the university. We need to take care of and improve the facilities we currently have. We need to win design competitions, increase our funded research output, and keep the extremely high record of success on the Architecture Registration Exams. We must also continue our history of recruiting the best academically prepared students in the university for each of our programs. If we are successful, we will all benefit.

My best to each of you for a very fruitful remainder of the semester.

Jim Dalton, FAIA

Dean, College of Architecture and Environmental Design



> photograph by Carolyn Isaacson

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The adjacency of the computer lab, digital commons, and the graduate studio creates one of the few scenarios where the space encourages social interactions. In addition to the social benefits, the digital commons contains the printers and scanners that are necessary to be in adjacency with the computer lab for the sake of efficiency. If the computer lab is eliminated from this conglomeration, the digital commons becomes utterly obsolete.

I realize there is no easy solution here. Mike Turk, 4th year Architecture major and the College of Architecture's Senator for the Undergraduate Student Senate, has worked towards finding an alternate solution. He came up with the idea of utilizing the office space in Taylor Hall facing the hill rather than digging the Visitor's Center deeper into the core of Taylor Hall and knocking out the computer lab. The May 4th Task Force was responsive to this design alternative, but the May 4th Initiative (the organization that has the power in this scenario) was not. But, since a lack of funds is stalling project's implementation, we are given a window of opportunity. One of my initial questions is still pertinent. What can we do? We are designers, after all. Isn't it our task to be problem-solvers? How can we stop one of the best amenities in our College from being inextricably torn away from us? And, if we can't stop this demolition of our space, what collaborative measures are going to be taken by the College of Architecture and the May 4th Initiative to ensure that we still have access to the facilities that we need?

Belief In the City

carolyn isaacson, 1st year b.s. architecture

In the morning the glass walls gleam and reflect the pink sunrise. Seamless steel beams reach up and up, looking like the arms of eager school children squealing to answer the question first. Each rooftop holds up the sky with broad shoulders or piercing spires. These are towers of inspiration and evidence of the sheer imagination that is born in nature but only successfully recreated on the streets of a versatile city. City streets hold an immensity that is as all-consuming as the relief of cold fresh air. The infinite amount of movement is invigorating. People begin to ready themselves for the day ahead; boarding trains and buses, mounting bikes and walking along sidewalks, getting to the places they need to be. The order of this transfer of people from vehicle to building is awe-inspiring, everything running so smoothly. All the while connections are made between every one of these moving persons. Between the businessman and the Starbucks barista. Between the concierge and the hotel guest. Even between the train motorman and the CTA rider. These are the links that make my belief in the city unbreakably strong. People are meant to be close to one another. The city is proof of that. Without these ties between every person in a city, no fresh ideas are created. Ideas are the product of deep thinking culminated by groups of people, the likes of which can be easily found in cities. An urban setting is a haven for innovation. Cities are saturated with new building, technologies, policies, and people. The constant need for these new things is a reflection of the survival tactics that are fundamental to urban dwellers. Open-mindedness is the key to the versatility unique to the city. When people live and breathe in such close proximity to one another, each person must adapt a sense of tolerance and receptiveness to the thoughts and beliefs of those with whom they make even the slightest connection. The city draws people to interact with one another as a means to build a solid and original future. Nothing can parallel the masses of glass, steel, and concrete that encompass the city and define humanity's most successful step in creating indivisible connections.

The Art Was Lovely, But The Windows Were Spectacular

taylor alston, 3rd year b.s. architecture

Every summer, my family takes a trip to New York City. The summer began like the rest; we were going to New York to visit my grandmother and had only one night to spend in the city. With little time before we returned to Cleveland, we ventured into Manhattan with one destination in mind, the Guggenheim. Although we did not have enough time to go inside, I felt just driving by was enough excitement itself. The museum erupted from bleak and regimented New York City residential blocks. I was almost startled by the Guggenheim's otherness. The museum looked so out of place yet so intentional and purposeful that I began to giggle. I found the Guggenheim's awkward form juxtaposed within aggregated rectangular prisms, hilarious. Never had I ever looked at a picture of a great building and saw humor. But, experiencing a building, even if for a second, provided me with more emotions than I could count.

The next week we returned to New York with more recreational plans in mind. All I wanted was to see the Jenny Holzer exhibit at the Whitney. This museum offered more than I expected. The Whitney Museum of American Art features some really interesting surface conditions but the mentioned conditions and moments were not my concerns. I found myself obsessed with the experiences created by architecture. Specifically, the experiences created in certain museums where "good" architecture is present, but not overwhelming. I found that I have had the most memorable experiences in museums where the architecture merely accentuated the detail of the artwork and did not try to compete. The Whitney offered sterile gallery spaces punctuated by a few windows. The sparse windows were positioned within the galleries in a way that made the dynamic scenes of New York City a part of the featured artwork. I do not know if this relationship between picture window and artwork was intentional, but it's nice to envision its existence.

When I arrived home from my second trip to New York City, I thought all possible art museum architecture-centric enjoyment I could have was over. I was wrong, I forgot all about the Summer Solstice festivities at the Cleveland Museum of Art. The big night came and yet again my experience was not what I expected, this time for different reasons. When I arrived the building had reached capacity and I had to walk past the raging Dan Deacon set to get back to my car. You are probably wondering what my experience has to do with the new architecture. The new wing of the Cleveland Art Museum was the setting for those less than spectacular events. No amount of "good" design or architecture could separate me from the feelings and experiences that I was left with.

Fortunately, I was able to visit the museum's new wing the next day, while inside, I felt a little claustrophobic and anxious. I guess those feelings were remnants of the night before. It is funny how spaces can affect your emotions. I never quite realized the power that designers possess to create, mutate and orchestrate a stranger's experience. Whether a building was designed knowingly or randomly, the relationship between structure and human experience needs to be understood.



> photograph by taylor alston

Guess Where Kent

Announcing a competition for the break! The first person to email us a description of the location pictured in the photograph below will be awarded a gracious gift from the trace team. Precision counts.

Send your entry to tracekent@gmail.com with your mailing address and phone number.



calendar

11.20// Beaux Arts Ball :: Fête Contemporaine
11.25// AIAS meeting :: 8:00pm
11.25 - 11.29// Thanksgiving Holiday [no classes]
12.7-12.11// End of year reviews
1.7 - 1.8// Third years depart for Florence
1.19// First day of classes, Spring 2010

Have an event you want included in the next issue of trace? Email us!

news & announcements

_Call for student participation in College Committees. The following CAED committees need student participants. Please contact Sarah Crombie (scrombie@kent.edu) in the Dean's office if you would like to participate.

Note: The College has several other committees with student participants, however, students for these committees are nominated by the faculty.

Graduate Committee (*two graduate students*)

College Curriculum Committee (*one Interior Design and one Architecture student*)

International Studies Committee (*two students who have participated in the program*)

Library Committee (*two CAED students*)

Lecture Committee (*two to four CAED students*)

Student Recruitment Committee (*up to six CAED students*)

_ AIAS Poster :: The AIAS is currently creating a new poster for the bulletin space opposite the elevator on the 2nd floor of Taylor Hall. The poster aims to mix current photographs with images from the past and should have representation from all the different years and majors (projects, studio, and other college related activities). Please send your pictures to Taylor Alston (talston@kent.edu).

_ARCS Design competition :: The results are in for the Representation of Design I T-shirt design competition, judged by CAED faculty and ARCS peers:

Tie for 4th place - Rachael Gruic & Libby Haas

Tie for 3rd place - Brittany Lowe & Matthew Hickin

2nd Place - Ronald Garsteck

1st Place - Roberto Quiroz

Roberto's design will be on T-shirts for students in the ARCS program and will be seen worn around campus soon.

comments?

visit/tracekent.blogspot.com

email/tracekent@gmail.com

Dreamscapes

micah mckelvey, editor, 3rd year b.s. architecture

I was running and out of breath.

Looking behind me, I expected to see something, but nothing was there except for a city street; bland in its globalised urbanity, busily occupied with the outcomes of capitalism, but completely devoid of people. It was as if I had been deposited into an already unfolding event or even one that had just concluded, woken up from a coma that my body did not share. The how, the why, and the where, I did not know. Suddenly I felt the need to stop. I looked down at gum smashed on the pavement by a million hurried shoes, evidence of a city bustle that currently did not exist.

That's when I noticed it. Powerful, cold, and imposing; a presence of terrible subtlety, like the sting after a backhand slap to the face. I slowly raised my head to peer at the mass before me. There were no shadows, the sky was overcast, but had there been, its shadow would have cast me in a dark blanket long ago. The facade was unapologetically brutal in its windowless concrete surface, tiered upward like a Japanese pagoda that extended infinitely toward the horizon in both directions. It was clear it didn't belong, strong but concurrently vague; and while pondering who could have built this imposing complex I thought I saw it flicker. Then the realization struck me. Was I running away from some unknown thing, or being drawn to this strange interruption in the city fabric?

Noticing two strangely typical doors just to my left, I proceeded to enter this fortress not knowing what to expect inside but having an alien desire to find out what existed beyond. I approached without inhibitions. Passing through the exterior barrier revealed a vast room obstructed by a labyrinth of planes; surfaces that made up walls and floors as if here gravity wasn't a force worth acknowledging. It was dark, but a mysterious glow from an unseen source provided sufficient light for seeing. As I passed further into the structure's depths I could not help but think the walls were rearranging themselves based on my position, somehow guiding me through the labyrinth. But it couldn't have been so, there was nothing mechanical about it. Instead the space seemed much more organic, as if the planes were grown there, stretching out like ivy, adopting and adapting to their surroundings. Here I suddenly looked behind me without provocation and found a wall blocking where I had just come from, cutting me off from the city outside. What is this place? Someone, or something was watching my every move. I felt it. The eyes of unknown origin evaluating and picking apart my actions caused me to proceed slowly, cautiously.

I then found myself in what seemed as the heart of the building. It was darker still, but I found myself in a room whose ceiling was beyond sight, concrete walls straining upward until they vanished in a dark abyss. It seemed the building was alive and I was exploring its arteries, infiltrating it not like a virus, but like a medicinal treatment. Somehow it needed me. As I thought this I felt something in turn infiltrate me, overtaking me, putting visions and strange knowledge in my head. The building was coming alive and presenting itself as a being, a creature both living and breathing. I began to panic and attempted to fight it off. As I snapped around in a rage, in the distance I saw a silhouette in the likeness of a man. Too far to properly perceive, but too close for comfort.

I ran.

Any direction that I could get out of this place. To be back in the city and away from this thing that was drawing me in. I was a lab rat in a large experiment and I needed to get out. Before the walls seemed in a perpetual state of flux, almost transparent. Now they were cold and fixed and as solid as the concrete facade outside. Dashing through the labyrinth, I noticed an increasing amount of light. The way out must be close. I felt the building coming off me, with each passing plane I gained more and more control and was closer and closer to freedom. Finally, beautiful daylight. I kept running across the empty street, on to the littered sidewalk beyond. Returned to the vacant city I took a deep breath and felt a sense of relief.

I turned around to look again at the terrifying fortress, but nothing was there except the city, as one would expect.