

# Research + Partnerships + Academics = Design Innovation

*The Illinois School of Architecture exerts a global impact in aesthetics, and social, political, and environmental problems.*

Temple Hoyne Buell Hall, home to Environmental Arts in the University of Illinois School of Architecture.

By Cathy Lockman  
Photograph courtesy of University of Illinois School of Architecture



The Illinois School of Architecture has a history of breaking new ground—literally and figuratively.

As one of the oldest and largest schools of architecture in the country, the faculty, alumni, and students on the Urbana-Champaign campus not only have a proud tradition of excellence in design aesthetics and technical virtuosity, they also have long been committed to designing compelling solutions to address social, political, and environmental problems.

It's how this School of Architecture makes a global impact.

Lynne Dearborn, associate professor of architecture, is one of those problem solvers. The chair of the program in health and well-being for the School of Architecture, Dearborn is the principal investigator for the University of Illinois' American Institute of Architects (AIA) Design + Health Consortium team. She is currently working with a team of researchers from across campus to study how aspects of building design exerts an impact health.

"The Midwest has one of the highest reported rates of stress-related chronic illnesses, such as diabetes and arthritis," Dearborn said. "It makes sense that we examine the intersection of environment and health and how the design

of the environment can play a role in alleviating stress. While the physical environment has long been considered a neutral backdrop, research indicates this is not actually the case. In fact, the physical environment can hurt us or help us, can increase stress or alleviate it. Design decisions, like building layout, construction materials, amount of natural light, number of windows, workstation design, and stairway design, are important aspects of improving health."

It's groundbreaking research, and the School of Architecture is making sure that students know about it. This fall, Dearborn will teach a pilot course on the subject.

"The AIA tells us that clients are coming to practitioners and asking what it means to have a 'healthy building,'" she said. "Contributing to the AIA's Design + Health Consortium research is important for the profession, the clients, the students, and the public."

Dearborn's work goes well beyond the state of Illinois, as well. She studies the relationship between residential environments and cultural change, working with the Hmong of Southeast Asia and Hmong immigrants in the United States, African Americans in inner-city neighborhoods, and Native Americans. Dearborn also leads a service learning design studio for students in Haiti with the goal of helping communities in need plan and rebuild infrastructure necessary

to improve health outcomes in rural parts of the country.

## The Creative Process

Health and well-being is just one of four program areas in the School of Architecture. The other three are design and fabrication, performance (which addresses all aspects of overall building performance), and urbanism.

For all programs, the emphasis is on the creative process. With design and fabrication, the focus is on experimenting with contemporary materials and methods to enhance the built environment. The performance program explores ways to achieve comprehensive design while balancing the need for sustainability, environmentally responsible use of energy, human comfort, and constructability. In the urbanism program, students examine how social, cultural, political, economic, technological, and physical transformations in cities affect urban habitation.

"The work of our faculty and graduates in the design and technology of architecture has earned the school a sterling reputation for creativity, innovation, and professional practice," said Professor Jeffery Poss, who chairs the design and fabrication program. "By focusing on the integration of design and technology at all scales, we prepare students to make a positive and lasting contribution to the built environment."

**Innovative and Collaborative Programs**

The Illinois School of Architecture also leads the way in innovative programming and partnerships.

One partnership, which focuses on smart energy initiatives, was recently recognized for improving energy efficiencies. The Illinois Public Housing Authority's Efficient Living Program at the School of Architecture, led by Kate Brown, received the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance's 2015 Inspiring Efficiency Impact Award for work in reducing energy costs and increasing comfort in public housing properties.

Brown, a housing research specialist who heads the Illinois Public Housing Authority's Efficient Living Program, explains that it "is one of the few public sector programs in the nation to leverage utility funds for energy-efficiency upgrades in public housing properties." Some of the services provided include assessments, workshops, and technical assistance to public housing authorities.

Another partnership, this one with the Architecture, Construction, and Engineering (ACE) Mentor Program Chicago, provides opportuni-

ties for high school students to learn about careers in architecture and the other disciplines.

The school recently earned the 2015 Education Award from ACE for its fifteen-year commitment to educating the next generation of leaders in architecture through the Discover Architecture program. This unique opportunity exposes pre-college students to the profession through instruction, lectures, and exercises in architectural graphics, design, and modeling. They

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**Prof. Jeffery Poss**

Chair of the design and fabrication program.

explore the creative design process and learn that architects have to consider many factors in their work, including environmental responsibility. The rigorous two-week program culminates in student presentations of a comprehensive architectural design project. Because the program is on campus, it also provides students with a college experience.

Lee Waldrep, administrator for undergraduate services, said the Discover Architecture program and the School of Architecture's participation in the ACE Mentor Program Chicago is a great way

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*In Sickness & Health...*

Sixty-four years ago I promised I would always take care of him. Two years ago he could no longer remember who I was.

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**ACADEMICS** *continued from p7*

to encourage young people to explore what a future in the profession can hold.

"Every spring we arrange a tour of the School of Architecture for students from the ACE Mentor Program Chicago who are coming to campus for the Engineering Open House," Waldrep said. "We engage them in a simple project, show them our studios, and encourage them to think about architecture as a career. In addition, for the past four years we have offered a scholarship for one student to attend our Discover Architecture summer program. For the coming year, we will be offering two scholarships."

**Beyond Champaign-Urbana**

Undergraduate and graduate students in architecture are also beneficiaries of additional learning opportunities outside the classrooms in Champaign-Urbana.

Last fall, the school launched The Chicago Studio in collaboration with the city of Chicago Mayor's office and Chicago's Department of Planning and Development. Graduate students who are enrolled in The

*Christopher Halliwell, a Discover program student, focuses on his project.*

Chicago Studio live in the city and study in the studio space developed within the Michigan Avenue offices of VOA Associates, a global architectural design firm. Mike Toolis, an alumnus of the School of Architecture, is the firm's chairman and CEO.

Professor Kevin Hinders, chair of the urbanism program, taught the inaugural semester of The Chicago Studio last fall. Associate Professor Joy Malnar taught the spring 2015 semester. Hinders says the support of Toolis and VOA allows the school to provide students with a distinctly urban professional experience.

"It provides them with a chance to solve problems and propose ideas for projects that the city identifies," said Hinders, the coordinator of The Chicago Studio. "Plus, they have the added benefit of conceptualizing those solutions while they're living and working right in the city. It provides a valuable perspective for them."

Hinders added that being in Chicago provides additional professional development for the students.

"Last fall, the school contacted thirteen firms in the city, and the class visited one each week of the semester," he said. "The professionals at those firms shared their ideals and methods for delivering those ideals to clients and the general public. It was a great opportunity for students to learn directly from practitioners."

The School of Architecture offers students international opportunities as well. Seniors can spend a year studying at the School of Architecture at Valles in Barcelona, Spain. This immersion experience in the classroom and the design studios, as well as other study-abroad experiences offered by the School of Architecture to undergraduates and graduate students, helps them develop a global perspective on architecture.

**A Proud Legacy**

The innovative programming initiatives of the Illinois School of Architecture are part of a unique diversity of disciplines in the College of Fine and Applied Arts. In addition to the School of Architecture, the college includes other environmental arts and design programs—Landscape Architecture and Urban and Regional Planning—as well as programs in the visual and performing arts.

"We have been breaking new ground in the education of architects since 1867 when we initiated the architecture curriculum," said Edward Feser, dean of the College of Fine and Applied Arts. "We're proud that the efforts of our faculty and alumni have been instrumental in shaping the profession for nearly 150 years and that the influence continues with each talented group of students that graduates with a degree from the Illinois School of Architecture." ■

**DINING**

**Attie's Bar & Grill** | Southeast Urbana's newest neighborhood destination! Cheer on your favorite team on one of the 11 big screen TVs, and enjoy great food and drinks with family and friends. Also available for private parties. **p12**

**Big Grove Tavern** | Located in the heart of downtown Champaign, our mission is to source local and farm fresh ingredients whenever possible—not only to create delicious Midwestern inspired dishes, but to also support our community. **p13**

**Escobar's** | Educating CU on the variety and passion of the best of Latin cuisine from Central and South America and the Caribbean. Inspired Latin cuisine for the other than Mexican palate. Separate lounge available for private parties. **p11**

**Houlihan's** | Part eclectic eatery, part energetic bar scene, Houlihan's Restaurant and Bar redefines "casual dining." Houlihan's features global and American cuisine that will awaken your tastebuds with a sizzling infusion of fresh ingredients and bold flavors. **p13**

**Milo's** | Inspired American cuisine from American ingredients. Steaks, seafood, pasta, pork chops, duck, chicken...with a passion for flavor, presentation, and service. And for something different try our famous upside-down pizza! **p12**

**Radio Maria Restaurant and Tapas Bar** | A fixture in Downtown Champaign, Radio Maria is the place to dine for sophisticated foods and exciting flavors that blend traditional with creative. Serving dinner and tapas every day, as well as Saturday and Sunday Brunch, the restaurant also offers an extensive drink menu that includes microbrews. Enjoy the ambiance of the fine dining setting where art is all around. **p11**

**NOTABLE GRADS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has many distinguished graduates and many firsts in the profession, including:

- Nathan Ricker, class of 1890, the first architectural graduate in the United States.
- Mary Louisa Page, class of 1879, the first woman in North America to earn a degree in architecture.
- The first licensed African-American architect, Walter T. Bailey, class of 1904.
- Beverly Greene, a 1936 graduate, the first African-American woman to receive a license to practice architecture in the United States.
- César Pelli, a design legend whose works include the Petronas Twin Towers, among the world's tallest buildings, and the World Financial Center complex in downtown Manhattan.
- Jeanne Gang, the architect behind Chicago's Aqua Tower.
- James J. Pawlikowski, the structural engineer for Dubai's Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world, and for NATO Headquarters in Brussels.
- Walter Burley and Mary Mahoney Griffin, the architects of the first plan for Canberra, Australia.
- Temple Hoyne Buell, the father of the modern shopping mall.
- Charles Luckman and William Pereira, who helped Walt Disney shape his vision for Disneyland.
- Max Abramovitz, who designed the United Nations Building, the Lincoln Center, the University of Illinois' Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, and the Assembly Hall, now known as the State Farm Center.