



CHRISTOPHER C. GIBBS  
COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE  
*The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA*

## **Environmental Design University Catalog Description**

### **Faculty Roster**

Shane Hampton, Director, OU Institute for Quality Communities  
Hope Mander, Associate Director, OU Institute for Quality Communities  
Ron Frantz, Coordinator, Environmental Design Program

### **Degrees Offered**

Bachelor of Science in Environmental Design

#### *What is the “feel” of the Environmental Design Program?*

The Environmental Design Program is all about getting your hands dirty, turning ideas into action, and turning dreams into doing. The students gain exposure and experience working in cities, small towns, and communities that are not defined by size or geographic location.

The program teaches students how to fix problems worth solving. The program gives students, who are looking to do something significant, the know-how and ability to contribute to places that matter. This kind of collaborative, community-minded design does not happen through lectures. The students learn through service in the field. They turn ideas into actions for real projects and for everyday people. The program gives students a glimpse into what it feels like to make the world better for others while creating a career with meaning. This education training allows students to step into a graduate program or step into a community. Students will be ready to engage, to get their hands dirty, and to make changes happen by design. This is what “placemaking” is about. It is where human interaction, ideas, and making a difference meet. It is how dreaming becomes doing.

#### *What are the academic studies of the Environmental Design Program?*

The Bachelor of Science in Environmental Design is in the College of Architecture at The University of Oklahoma. Undergraduate students in this program experience a unique academic experience.

The Environmental Design degree is a four-core course program with several elective options in addition to the general education requirements. While many Environmental Design students come to the program straight from high school, a number of our students transfer from other undergraduate degrees or enroll after junior college studies. These core courses remain flexible as students come to the program in various stages of study or from different backgrounds of study. Two courses are offered during the fall semester; the other two courses, in the spring semester.

## **Electives**

Environmental Design students have an incredible selection of electives to consider. The Environmental Design Program is part of the OU College of Architecture. Other academic programs within this college include the undergraduate divisions of Architecture, Construction Science, and Interior Design. Graduate programs include these three divisions as well as the divisions of Landscape Architecture and Regional and City Planning. Electives are available that allow the Environmental Design students to study with faculty from all of these academic programs as well as experience students from all of these majors.

For Environmental Design majors who are more focused on the “environmental” portion and not so much the “design” portion of the program, there are a number of ecology electives that complement the studies in the Bachelor of Science in Environmental Design.

## **Other Academic Opportunities**

Some of the classes of the core courses may be offered at the OU College of Architecture’s Design Center located in a great, old industrial building in the heart of Oklahoma City’s historic Film Row. This location offers students an urban experience in a thriving historic commercial district.

Environmental Design students are strongly encouraged to participate in one of the many Study Abroad Programs offered in the College of Architecture. Other academic programs—Architecture, Construction Science, Interior Design, and Landscape Architecture—offer a variety of travel experiences to China, Dubai, Germany, Scotland, Uganda, Italy, Zambia, and other places. Environmental Design students have contributed to these valuable educational and service learning activities.

## **Non-Academic Institutional Experiences**

Environmental Design students have a unique opportunity to engage with service learning opportunities through the OU Institute for Quality Communities (IQC) which is part of the College of Architecture. Founded in 2008 by President and Mrs. Boren as an outreach organization for assisting citizens in Oklahoma communities, this program brings together College of Architecture staff, faculty, and students. The design assistance happens in a variety of ways—out in Oklahoma communities. Students may have the opportunity to work on projects in a number of ways, depending on the scope of the project. As the Associate Director of the IQC is an alumna of the Environmental Design Program, students have exposure to others who know about the Environmental Design studies. Whether these community-based projects focus on historic preservation, tactical urbanism, public space design, walkability and bikeability issues or some other community design issue, the students begin to gain experience and add to their resumes in a way that complements their academic studies. For more information, please visit this website: <http://iqc.ou.edu/>

## **Non-Academic Community Exposures**

Due to the nature of the studies in the Environmental Design program, students are “out there” doing projects and getting their hands dirty. This work lets them get to know community leaders in all sectors of society: private, governmental, and non-profit organizations. Exposure to representatives in these organizations includes, but is not limited to, the following: American Planning Association; American Institute of Architects, Central Oklahoma Chapter; City of Oklahoma City Planning Department; Downtown Oklahoma City, Inc.; Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art/OU Norman Campus; Moore-Lindsay Historical House (Norman); National Park Service; Neighborhood Alliance of Central Oklahoma; Norman Arts Council; Norman Downtowners; Oklahoma Arts Council; Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office/Oklahoma Historical Society; Oklahoma Main Street Center/Oklahoma Department of Commerce; Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.; Western History Collection/OU Norman Campus; and Urban Land Institute.

Students are strongly encouraged to attend activities and conferences sponsored by the American Institute of Architects, the American Planning Association, and the Urban Land Institute.

## **Who is a good candidate for the Environmental Design Program?**

Environmental Design students come from many backgrounds at various stages of educational development. Overall, students can be described in these ways:

Environmental Design students “feel the weight of the world” on their shoulders. Sometimes, they feel like they don’t quite fit into a world of competitiveness and consumerism. They are into collaboration and stewardship.

Environmental Design students see that there are many things that need to be done, but don’t quite know what route to take. They are interested in social justice, civic activism, and community betterment.

They are not worried about working with the “right” people or climbing the corporate ladder or attaining social status. They are worried about the places where everyday people live and work and play and grow. They see themselves as just a part of a bigger world—not that the world revolves around them. They care not about how improve their social status but how to address the status quo.

Environmental Design students are warm, loving, caring, passionate, and compassionate. They come from many faiths. They are not afraid to share about mission trips and volunteer work. Yet, they are very accepting of those who do not have such opportunities or who have very different lifestyles and life perspectives.

Many Environmental Design students are great cooks. Many have organic gardens. Many of them sew. All of them find new uses for old things. Many students live in places like MidTown in Oklahoma City and walk or bike to events in the Plaza District, Paseo, or Automobile Alley. They know the histories of the buildings where they live.

Many students put their bikes on the Sooner Express and come to Norman by bus. In class, we talk about who of us has the oldest car with the most miles and the best memories.

Environmental Design students are both great citizens-in-training and next-generation-leaders.

*After a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Design, where do students go?*

Students have many options for employment, including the following:

- Grassroots advocacy programs and non-profit organizations focused on certain environmental or design issues.
- Downtown revitalization or community revitalization programs.
- Government positions of all levels: city, county, state, regional, or national.
- Educational institutions (research or teaching).
- Private sector—especially consulting.
- Entrepreneurship (and social entrepreneurship), advocating for small businesses and locally-based businesses.

- Some may continue their studies in the form of graduate programs, including city planning, community development, construction science, interior design, landscape architecture, and architecture.

Environmental Design students go forward to MAKE PLACES THAT MATTER. FOR PEOPLE.