



Participatory Design and Community Engagement

Chaired by Justin Ferguson, Assistant Dean at Ball State University's College of Architecture and Planning, and Shane Hampton, Director of the OU Institute for Quality Communities

Since Whitney M. Young Jr. admonished the AIA for its thunderous silence and complete irrelevance in 1968, a number of 'alternative' design approaches have been utilized in response: community design, participatory design and planning, democratic design, social architecture, co-design, public interest design, etc. All have slight nuances but strive for the same goal; those that are to be impacted by design should be involved in the process. In spite of so many approaches and precedent work, it isn't until recently that we have begun to hear more mainstream calls for participatory design and community engagement. In fact, a recent AIA Conference on Architecture session led by AIA national leadership suggested that designers should strive to be community facilitators and not just design buildings. Could we finally be at the tipping point where alternative design approaches are recognized and utilized in conventional practice?

In rethinking design pedagogy around engaging stakeholders and/or the public in the design of their environments, this session seeks to explore how to teach students not to forget how to see their neighborhoods and talk with their communities. How can we temper the enculturation process of the design professions so that students still retain a connection of lived experience to those outside of the design disciplines as well as recognize the expertise of the those that live, work, learn, and play in such places? How can we prepare our students to understand the context, not just the physical, but the social, cultural, racial, historical, political, etc? How do we instill in them this openness so that it carries through with them into their chosen professions?

This session seeks to continue moving the goals and methods of participatory design and community engagement into conventional practice, through future practitioners, so that buildings and landscapes are not just transactional products (physical) but built manifestations of outcomes (socio-cultural). To that end, we invite papers that share best practices of participatory design teaching strategies and methods of community engagement. Submissions could describe unique project types, overall processes, specific methods, or evaluations of processes (metrics) from student-engaged projects. Examples of students learning and working with underserved populations such as Native Americans, homeless, and/or urban youth as well as discussing unique partnerships would also be appropriate.

-

Visit <http://architecture.ou.edu/schools-of-thought> for more information and to submit a proposal for this session.