



the
interior design student
make a
difference
project
October 26 - 27, 2007

Can interior design students use creativity to make daily existence better for human beings, other living things or the earth?

student projects from the
west virginia university

Instructor sponsor
Barbara McFall

The Interior Design Educator's Council Social Justice Network presents the 2007 results of the Interior Design Student Make a Difference Project.

This project involved design students in identifying a real-life problem that could be made better through a design of some kind. They then created and installed a small, meaningful design solution, either temporary or permanent, and finally observed what happened when people encountered and used their environmental idea.

In the spirit that all efforts have worth, all student projects are provided here without priority or editing.



The IDEC Social Justice Network
www.idec.org/

The Interior Design Educators Council, Inc. (IDEC)
is dedicated to:

- The advancement of Interior Design Education
- The advancement of Interior Design Research
- Fostering the exchange of information within the Interior Design Profession and related design disciplines.
- The improvement of educational standards, and
- The development of the Body of Knowledge relative to the quality of life and human performance in the interior environment.



Recycling Aluminum Benefits WVU

Designer: Christina Amato

Institution: West Virginia University

Sponsor: Barbara McFall



Aluminum cans being disposed of improperly



Implementing recycling aluminum cans around campus



Money gained from recycling is saved up and put back into the university

The Problem:

Students all around the campus of West Virginia University consume several canned beverages per day and they some how always end up being discarded onto our campus grounds or in the regular trash cans but rarely do you ever see a student placing an aluminum can into a recycling bin. Because students are improperly disposing of these aluminum cans, it is causing there to be a severe pollution problem around the campus of WVU, making it unsightly and un-resourceful. This may be a problem simply because of the lack of recycling bins located around our campus or it may be a deeper routed problem of students lacking the knowledge of just how important recycling is and how much it can benefit our very own university.

The Solution:

The first step in rectifying this problem is for the university to implement more recycling bins around campus. The second step would be to have a booth set up in the mountain lair at least once a month trying to help raise awareness on the importance of recycling on campus. The third and final step of this solution would be to have a twice annual aluminum can drive located outside of the mountain lair, where students can see that the university is serious about creating a healthy recycling habit and will perhaps persuade them to do the same. This can also be done in a creative way by handing out fun key chains or mini models of things that may be obtained through the benefits of the money students could raise by recycling their cans.

The Solutions Impact:

After observing the areas where recycling bins are made available to the student population, I have come to the conclusion that no matter how many recycling resources you have available around campus it still is not enough to convince people to do the right thing a recycle their aluminum cans. Many people that I had observed carrying sodas had taken their cans straight past the recycling bin and tossed them right in the trash, as if not phased by what they had just done. This problem can and will only be solved when a more severe awareness program is implicated to educate the students on how important recycling is, and the many benefits it may bring in which in turn can be placed back into this vary university.

The Flashing Sign System

Designer
Rebecca Bonaparte

Institution
West Virginia University
Division of Design and Merchandising

Sponsored by
Dr. Barbara McFall

The Problem

Since Valley View Street is narrow, pedestrians living in close proximity with no cars are faced with the inevitable danger of walking on the side of the street. This is a threat to pedestrians because it's difficult for drivers to see anyone who walks this narrow road especially at night

The Solution

To fix this problem temporarily (until construction workers are able to build a sidewalk), advance warnings to drivers were put in place using signs. These signs had flashing lights so that they would stand out and will be hard to miss even at night.

The sign read, "Drive with Caution; Watch for Pedestrians" The signs warned drivers of pedestrians that may be walking up and down the streets at night.

The Solution's Impact on its Users

The sign was set in place at 7:00pm on Monday night because this is the time when it's beginning to become dark outside. This is also the time when students are returning home from classes and employees are returning home from work.

After setting the sign in place, I sat nearby and observed to see whether drivers will acknowledge the sign by slowing down on this particular street. I noticed that drivers reacted to the sign due to the flashing lights on the top of the sign.

Some cars stopped as they went by the sign. This gave me the opportunity to ask what they thought of the temporary solution. Most said "I think this is a good idea the sign made me more cautious when driving down this street at night." I also decided to ask pedestrians (without cars) what they thought of the new, temporary solution. "I feel safer walking down this street because I know that most drivers will be more cautious."

I noticed that the flashing light was more successful than a sign with no lights because the sign with no lights did not stand out in the dark. This taught me that if you want people to pay attention to a design, it must be different than other designs and it must stand out and be unique.



This two way narrow street makes it dangerous for pedestrians to walk on the side of the street since there is no sidewalk.



This sign offers advanced warning of pedestrians who may walk up and down this road. The solution started with no flashing lights but I found that this was not usually observed by drivers.

Re-Thinking The Classroom



The traditional classroom design.

Designers
Jessica Center

Institution
West Virginia University; Interior Design

Sponsored by
Prof. Barbara McFall

The problem

Classrooms follow a standard design approach due to necessity, cost, and wear. This leaves little room to accommodate mentally or physically handicapped students. Furthermore, this often hinders individual expression and possible group work. This makes it hard for students to learn, teachers to teach and deadens the learning experience.

The solution

The solution I presented was to rearrange the furniture of the common classroom to an arrangement that I felt might be more exciting and accessible. The groupings I created were three columns of 10 to 14 students in each and oriented to face one another at a right angle to the main board. The idea being that group work is made easier and more activity is required of the student in following the lecture.

The solution's impact on its users

The new classroom arrangement was set up in a classroom before the class met and without their knowledge; only the professor knew that the room would be redone, although not how. As a member of this class I sat back and gauged the reaction of students as they came in. Most were disoriented by the sudden departure from traditional classroom set up.

Each student was given a survey about their reaction to the new design and general questions about what they want and expect from their classroom spaces. Many students indicated that they did not like having to turn in their seats to watch the professor in the arrangement I'd set up. Similarly, they indicated that physical comfort is important to them.

Though they preferred the comfort afforded by the original orientation, the students also indicated that they dislike the traditional layout because it is often difficult to observe the professor over the student in front of you; and, that it is hard to watch a fellow student when they are speaking. It seems that a malleable organization might be ideal so that the orientation and placement of students can be easily changed as needed.



The new arrangement.

Brew 'n Gold: Quick Lunch or Long Lines?



Logo for the café in which students can grab lunch on the go.

Designers

Samantha Ceravalo

Institution

West Virginia University

Sponsored by

Barbara McFall

The problem

The Brew 'n Gold is a place where students on campus stop for a quick bite to eat; whether that be on their way to class, or something they can take back to their rooms. However, at certain times of the day, lines can have students waiting in long lines for something that should have been quick. The way the line work is there is three registers so three people can be served at once. However, most times the cashier is the one filling the order. This makes it harder for the people waiting in line to place their order without the cashier.

The solution

By changing the layout of the café, waiting wouldn't be much of a problem. Also, adding in more would allow more students to pay. This simple layout change would aid in the waiting game for a meal.

The solution's impact on its users

I believe if each student was allowed to pick up the food they wanted and moved down a line, towards the cash registers, things would move along faster. Then add in more registers so time would be saved and more students would be able to eat. Also, if the student wanted coffee, someone on staff could wait by the trays to take that order. By the time the student reaches the register, the coffee would be made and the student, on their way. I believe this would be good for everyone on the WVU campus.



Sidewalk Congestion in Morgantown



This is a similar picture of a common sidewalk in Morgantown, WV. Here you can see the congestion and worn away grass area where other pedestrians may use to get to their destinations faster and move easier around the campus lawns.



Widening the sidewalks and creating 'short-cuts' between existing sidewalks would lessen the traffic and congestion and rid of dirt patches in school lawns

Designers
Alexandra Crampton

Institution
West Virginia University

Sponsored by
Barbara McFall

The problem

The numerous amount of students walking to and from classes, along with other pedestrians such as professors and local residents, use these sidewalks on a daily basis. This causes traffic among them due to the lack of area of the sidewalk itself. Most sidewalks in Morgantown are too narrow not allowing pedestrians to move around with ease or more along fast enough without bumping others or traveling across grass

The solution

To solve this problem, I believe the best method would be to widen sidewalks. Wider sidewalks would allow pedestrians to move around easier without running into others or being stuck behind them. It will also lessen the amount of people who walk across grass, flowerbeds, etc. potentially ruining them.

The solution's impact on its user's

If executed, this solution will make walking in Morgantown much easier on those who decide to walk and not drive. Not only is it easier to walk at the desired pace or maneuvering around others, but it will effect people's moods. Overall, it will make the problem of congestion lessen. People will not have to dodge people walking around them or move onto the lawns to cross over to another area when there is no other way to get around. People will be able to get to where they need to be with ease and not have to worry about being late or slowed down.

Mission: Relaxation



The unused area outside the Interior Design studio facility.



Folding chairs make an ideal temporary seating area for evaluation.

Designers
Sarah E. DeRoos

Institution
West Virginia University

Sponsored by
Dr. Barbara McFall

The problem

The Interior Design major can be fairly time-consuming and exhausting. Students often spend long hours in studio working on projects and need a space to escape to. There is no seating outside the classroom or building for students to sit and eat or drink.

The solution

My solution to this problem is to implement a small area of park-like seating in the lawn outside the building which houses the design studios. This will provide a space for students to relax, talk, and receive inspiration from nature. Food and drink are not currently allowed inside the building, so this outdoor seating can also be used as a lunch area throughout the day.

The solution's impact on its users

Interior Design students were very receptive to this idea. They all understand the exhausting work and hours invested in projects and agreed that a space away from the studio would be worthwhile and used. My classmates have enjoyed class held outdoors in the past, partially because of the constantly changing environment and the inspiration it provides. Student with whom I discussed this implementation said that they would use the outdoor seating and that it would improve study skills, morale, and creativity. One student remarked "It's about time we had some comfortable outdoor spaces! Who can study sitting on the ground or on a hard bench?"

View from the Studio



The current white plastic blinds in the sophomore studio.

Designer
Lindsay Floyd

Institution
West Virginia University

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Dr. Barbara McFall

The problem

For design students, the studio functions as a classroom, a workspace, and ideally, a source of inspiration. Unfortunately, the sophomore studio at West Virginia University does not provide any source of inspiration within its white cement block walls. There are four windows in the classroom, but because of the plastic white blinds, the windows are not a focal point for the room and are barely noticed. After drafting for hours at a time in the studio, it helps to look outside and let your eyes accommodate to something else. However, because of the old and broken blinds, this is not an option. The blinds are also suppose to serve another purpose, to protect projects from sun damage. This is not effective because the blinds are not room darkening, so even when they are closed the sun still gets in.

The solution

To improve the atmosphere in the sophomore studio, the white plastic blinds need to be replaced with colorful ones. The blinds will have to be either a blue or gold color, to agree with University policy. This will add color and personality to the studio and will make the windows the focal points of the space. The colorful window treatments will also serve to provide inspiration to the students working in the studio. Since the new blinds will be easy to open, the students can take a break from their work and look outside. The new blinds should also be room darkening.

The solution's impact on its users

For the sophomore interior design students, the new blinds proved to be an exciting flare to the studio. The blinds inspired other improvement projects to the studio such as space planning, storage for the desks, and drawers were added to hold student's drafting supplies. The student's work is also seeing an improvement in the quality of its color. The room darkening shades protect the student's projects from the sun when the studio is not in use.



A colorful blind option for the sophomore studio that is also room darkening.

Crossing Guards in Morgantown



The crosswalk is busy with crossing pedestrians and cars traveling through it.

Designer

Amy Jackson

Institute

West Virginia University

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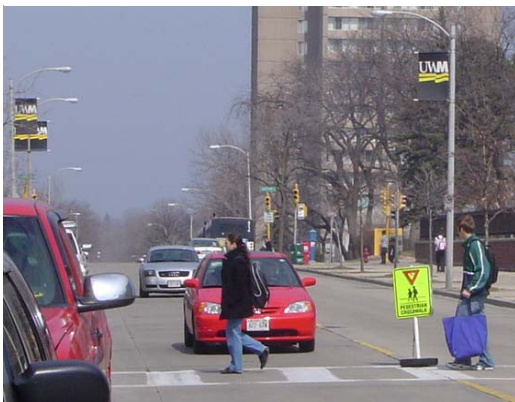
Barbara Mcfall

The problem

In front of the Mountainlair and the areas by Towers, which lead to the PRT, there are certain areas which students are freely able to walk across. This causes traffic to build up, which can further lead to student drivers being late to class, and it is also a hazard for potential accidents, either between two cars or a pedestrian and a car.

The solution

In order to solve this problem, it would be very appropriate to put crossing guards where these certain crosswalks are located. These crossing guards will help regulate the traffic flow and help the pedestrians cross without being in danger of getting struck by an oncoming car. There would be a system that the crossing guards would go by, for example, every "x" amount of cars that drive by, "x" amount of students would cross if it is a high traffic area, such as in front of the Mountainlair. You could also use a time method. Every few minutes a certain amount of cars would be able to drive through the area and then the built up amount of students would then be allowed to cross. In areas of less traffic flow, the crossing guards could just stop the cars and pedestrians when necessary.



If crossing guards are put either in the middle or on the sides of this crosswalk then there wouldn't be cars trying to drive through it while the pedestrians are walking across.

The solution's impact on its users

This solution should be very effective. It will cause less danger to the crossing/walking pedestrians. The traffic flow will also be affected. At times the traffic may be heavier if it is a busy time of day, however it will help regulate the speed of the cars and the chance of accidents. Overall it should make the students less aggravated also. With how the students are freely able to walk across at any moment, the drivers become angry because they need to stop suddenly and/or watch out for the potential crossing pedestrians. The crossing guard solution will notify them ahead of time that pedestrians will be crossing. Granted it still may anger them that they need to stop, but it will help them see when to stop and be cautious of the surrounding people.

The Morgantown Park



This is the current entrance to the park. As one can see, there isn't a sign to even identify the location as a park.



Hector Guimard designed this particular metro sign. Through design, Guimard was able to turn an uninviting place into a very appealing metro station. This type of sign would be appropriate for the park.



This is another design by Hector Guimard. His signs are not only appealing, but they appropriately fit into their natural surroundings.

Designers
Stephanie Johnson

Institution
West Virginia University

Sponsored by
Dr. McFall

The problem

In Morgantown, West Virginia, there is a park located just off of a busy main road; this park has potential, yet doesn't allow the visitor to feel as though he is escaping into a peaceful environment. Upon entering the park, visitors are abruptly thrust from a loud, busy environment into what would be the escape of a peaceful environment. In other words, there is not a gradual transition from one environment to the other, nor is there an entryway to advertise the existence of the park.

The solution

A simple solution to such a problem would be to erect a decorative entryway with a large, colorful sign above the entryway. This entry would be followed by rows of vivacious trees lining each side of the road, thereby creating an inviting and stimulating transition from one environment to the next. To effectively create an environment that brings about a feeling of relief from the fast-paced world we all deal with each and every day, one must take all aspects of creating such an environment into consideration. One such aspect is that of advertising the existence of such an area to promote its recognition as an established area.

The solution's impact on its users

The visitors of the park will feel like they are escaping into a more private area upon driving under the sign. The sign will act as a visual division between the two contrasting environments. This division between the two will allow visitors to engage in and admire the surrounding natural attractions.

Sharp Turn Alert Cones



The parking lot before cones.

Designers
Rachel Kyer

Institution
West Virginia University

Sponsored by
Dr. Barbara McFall

The problem

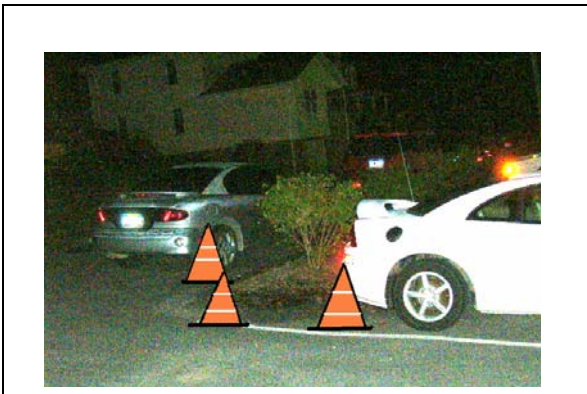
Pulling into the parking lot at my apartment complex off a steep hill, one must turn the wheel sharply to avoid hitting the car that's in the first space. During snow and icy weather, drivers cannot anticipate their speed and angles, as many cars parked in the first spot have been struck by incoming traffic.

The solution

By putting up reflective fencing or cones, the problem of not being able to see or judge is eliminated. In coming cars can both see the sharp turn in advance and be able to judge the angle to which they must turn the wheel so not to hit the parked car. This would also warn tenants who park their cars in the first spot that they are in danger of drivers coming in too quickly or drivers who may hit a spot of ice. By putting up reflective fencing or cones, the problem of not being able to see or judge is eliminated. In coming cars can both see the sharp turn in advance and be able to judge the angle to which they must turn the wheel so not to hit the parked car. This would also warn tenants who park their cars in the first spot that they are in danger of drivers coming in too quickly or drivers who may hit a spot of ice.

The solution's impact on its users

Coming down the hill to the parking lot, the reflective orange cones are very noticeable. This urges drivers to be aware of dangerous conditions when turning into the lot. Drivers will slow their speed in the anticipation of a sharp turn. Also, due to the warning signs, less tenants will park their cars in this spot, therefore lessening the chance for a possible hit-and-run. This space also leaves room for sliding and bigger turning radiuses.



The parking lot after implementing hazard cones which warn drivers of the sharp turn and possible icy conditions.

The Slip-Resistant Stairwell



This wooden deck is often slippery when wet from the rain.



This non-slip runner allows tenants to walk without worrying about slipping on the deck.

Designer
Kim McCoy

Institution
West Virginia University School of Interior Design

Sponsored by
Barbara McFall

The problem

Because this stairwell is open and allows rain water to come in, there is often the hazard of tenants of this apartment slipping on the deck.

The solution

Putting down a slip resistant rug is an easy way to fix this problem for everyone using these steps. The rubber padding on the underside of the runner allows the rug to grip the wood, while the upper material decreases the likelihood of slipping and also grabs excess dirt off of your shoes so you don't track it into your apartment.

The solution's impact on its users

Many of the apartment dwellers took advantage of this mat as they walked up and down the stairs, wiping their feet as they passed over it.

Many people may not have noticed the new addition the steps; but the rug seemed to add a certain comfort level to the stairwell and possibly saved some people from slipping on the slick wooden deck.

Convenient Store for Sterling Ridge Apartments



This is the Club House as it currently stands.

Designers

Amanda M. Miller

Institution

West Virginia University

Sponsored by

Barbara McFall

The problem

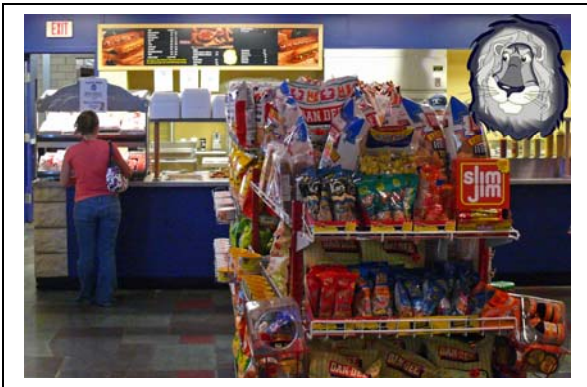
Students who live at Sterling Ridge Apartments that are partially school owned face the problem of having no source of food close by. Students that have a meal plan have to go to Evansdale campus and eat there or bring back the food which is time consuming and not very convenient. Others have to drive or take the shuttle to go get food. There are kitchens but students do not always have time to cook themselves dinner in the evenings.

The solution

To address this problem it would be simple to place a little convenient type store inside the club house. This convenient store would have prepackaged food, fresh made sandwiches and salads, and other small things such as paper towels that students living at The Ridge may need quickly. This convenient store would be open on weekdays until about nine or ten at night. It would also take what the school calls Mounty Bounty or Meals Plus so that the students would not be limited to paying with cash or credit card.

The solution's impact on its users

This convenient store that would be located inside the apartment complexes club house would be very accessible to students. It would help busy students so that they could get something good to eat using their meal plans without having to get in their cars or on the shuttle and go to the schools cafeteria. This will save the students lots of time and allow them to do what they need to do such as study and work on projects. Also, if they needed to get something quick they did not have to drive all the way to the grocery store. All in all the small convenient store would be very successful and help make many student lives easier. Every student asked about this idea thought it would be very helpful, convenient, and they would definitely use the store.



This is what part of the convenient store inside the Club House at the Ridge could look like and offer.

Redd' Up Pittsburgh



Litter filling the sewer grates in Pittsburgh.

Designer
Kara Rehak

Institution
West Virginia University

Sponsored by
Dr. Barbara McFall

The problem

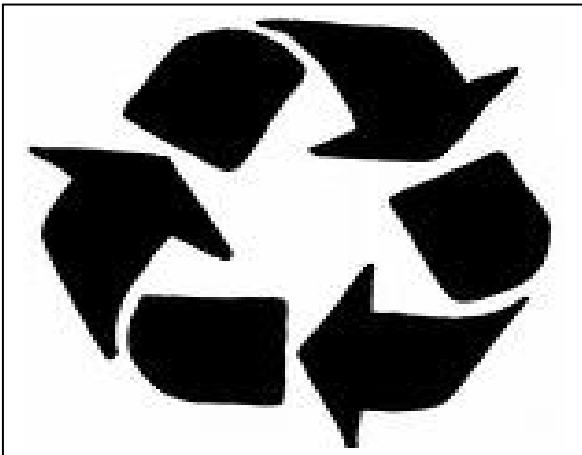
Littering has recently become a problem for the city of Pittsburgh. This can be easily observed if you walk the streets of Pittsburgh any day of the week. This is not only an eyesore, but it is also promoting an unsanitary environment.

The solution

In order to reduce the amount of trash littering the streets, I proposed to add more garbage cans on each block. There should be a garbage can at the beginning and end of each block, as well as an additional one located toward the middle of the larger blocks. In addition to garbage cans, I would also suggest adding recycling bins near every block to help preserve natural resources and help reduce pollution.

The solution's impact on its users

Where cans have been installed at high traffic areas littering has been reduced by at least 25% therefore proving adding more trash cans is an effective litter management technique. By having less litter, US tax payers will have to pay less for crews hired to pick up trash. Last year it was estimated at \$500 million dollars throughout the country. It would also reduce a wide range of impacts caused by littering. Littering can cause health issue, increase crime rate, decrease property value, and produce damaging affects to wildlife. Therefore, eliminating litter in Pittsburgh will assist in reducing these issues. This will allow the inhabitants to live a more healthy and safe life.



Bird's Eye View



Populated area with harsh winter conditions surrounding my apartment.



Bird food set outside in a box on my apartment balcony.



Blue jay using the new larger box in a recent photograph.

Designer
Aracely Rivero

Institution
West Virginia University

Sponsored by
Dr. Barbara McFall

The problem

Near my apartment there is a line of trees dividing the apartment from empty land. In these trees there are many birds using them for refuge and for nesting. The birds are always looking for food; but during winter there is not much food available. During these hard times, the birds struggle for food and often need to travel long distances to find food.

The solution

The solution to feeding the birds was to add a bird food supply to my apartment balcony. Having bird food on my balcony solved the problem of harsh winter conditions because the balcony has a roof and is at an elevation high enough for the bird to easily find. The bird food also created another problem of neighbors complaining of bird seed on their balconies. This new problem was solved by using a larger box and moving the box away from the balcony edge.

The solution's impact on its users

The birds reacted positively to this added bird feeder. Within a week of setting the new bird feeder out on the balcony, many birds began to take advantage of its supply. Lines of birds began to form on the power lines that run from the street to my apartment building. Even two squirrels discovered they could use the power lines to make a Cirque Du Soleil performance to reach my third floor balcony food.

The initial reaction of our downstairs neighbors was negative but quickly corrected by using a larger box pushed further from the balcony edge. The larger box allowed larger walls to prevent food from falling off the balcony. The box was moved incrementally further from the balcony edge so the birds were able to follow and not be surprised by too much change. Now the birds are comfortable to approach and land deep within our balcony and provide a delightful display right beside my living room window. Birds are also comfortable walking around the floor of the balcony and some even prefer to take naps on the balcony rail.

Since adding the bird feeder to my balcony, I have noticed many new birds in the area and have learned a great deal about the personalities and bird calls of each bird species. I plan to continue using my bird feeder solution for years to come.