Changing the game?

The world around design has been, and will continue to be, complex. We designers respond to environmental design problems and to critical issues. Usually we are good at it. What other opportunities do we have, as interior designers, to “plug in” to create a broader visibility? And what challenges will we find to be part of, not being traditional interior design challenges?

The most recent keynote speaker at the 2018 conference in Boston, Jack Travis, touched on inclusiveness, the culture we build for diversity in our design programs, and consequently in the workplace and in our communities through our graduating students. Where else can we change the game?

We as interior designers are so impacted by the public perception of our industry. But does the public know we are interior designers when we impact communities through your work on committees and community projects? Let the communities we work with know we are interior design citizens. We can empower those with no or little voice, those less fortunate, and those with disabilities. Or simply those in need. Can you lead interior design into a community outreach project?

I invite you to explore and create game changers, the issues we have not brought to our classroom yet, not sufficiently or not at all. Think about your 2018/2019 academic year, your impact through community outreach, and your possibilities to craft a path where interior design is a vital part because of our ability of design thinking, our capability to connect all humans, and our aptitude to collaborate.

Bring all of that to our Annual Conference in Charlotte.

Hepi Wachter
IDEC President 2018-19
My eyes are wide open to the inequities in our profession and I have Jack Travis, among others, to thank. Throughout his keynote at the 2018 IDEC annual conference, Jack shared sobering insights on the lack of diversity and inclusivity within the interior design and architectural professions. While we might realize both racial and ethnic diversity in student enrollment at our institutions, we lack representational diversity among college professors teaching interior design. And when we look to leadership roles in our profession, they are mostly held by white males who represent a significant minority in both our student and educator populations.

As you prepare your projects, lectures, and assignments, seek out the minority voices that are absent or muted in our textbooks and teaching resources. In his keynote, Jack Travis highlighted multiple accomplished black architects and designers that our written history has largely ignored. Include these voices in your lectures, classroom conversations, and invited guest speakers so that your students will better understand the accomplishments of those who history has overlooked. Demand more from textbook publishers and authors that illustrate a monochromatic view of our profession. Inspire all of your students to achieve, especially when you cannot identify a role model who looks like they do.

Continue to advocate for diversity and inclusivity among faculty teaching in your programs. You give authority to the race, culture, and identity of each full-time and part-time faculty member placed at the front of your classrooms. These intellectual leaders represent your future vision of interior design higher education and the profession. A homogenous faculty fails to provide adequate role models to inspire students of other racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. We can and must do better to encourage all young bright minds to pursue advanced degrees in interior design so they will return to the classroom as future educators.

In the coming months, you will hear of opportunities to serve IDEC in different positions across our organization. I invite you to help us build a diverse group of volunteer leaders across our broad spectrum of members and stakeholders. If you represent a minority voice within IDEC and would like to get involved, I invite you to email me so we can work together to center underrepresented voices in our field. This work requires the action and effort of many in pursuit of supporting all.

There is work to be done. Join me in disrupting these systemic oppressions of inclusivity in interior design. Only then will our made environments be inclusive, responsive, and just.

Doug Seidler
IDEC Past-President 2018-19
In Boston we heard powerful statements that interior design (and interior design education) has not sufficiently addressed diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Designing for anyone is not diversity. Designers must engage with; designers must begin within; designers must recognize their vantage point contains biases, privileges, and lived experiences that differ from others. Design diversity requires expanding who grows up to be a designer, how designers come to understand other people, and the ways designers interact with clients, users, and the public. This issue of the Exchange begins from the benefits of diversity in expanding what any designer understands and does. I challenge you to consider how diversity (broadly defined) in your interior design programs will increasingly strengthen and expand what your students learn.

Jack Travis provided a compelling keynote address to the Boston conference. Afterwards, I overheard people describe themselves as humbled and ashamed, but also connected by new vigor to expand the cultural canon of design work that everyone should know. A short excerpt from his address is published in this issue. Travis provided one starting point for expanding the canon with his history of black design. There are many other perspectives and design cultures that we should embrace. He highlights how we have failed to develop an inclusive approach to design—regardless of how much good we think we have done.

The Fellows’ Forum continued the discussion from the keynote address with powerful statements from Tasoulla Hadjiyanni, Susan Chung, and Genia Wright about the ways diversity, equity, and inclusion affect the lives of designers and users across all spectrums. Travis and Wright both challenged interior design education to diversify who we engage with as future students and potential clients. They asked us why young children of color are not encouraged to consider—or are not dreaming about—design as a career. Implicit in their question is a challenge to design educators to think about how we shape our outreach and curriculums. If we only seem to design for one part of society, why would all parts of society want to join. Both Travis and Wright were clear we have no choice but to change. The imperative cannot be dismissed or argued away.

The submissions to this issue of the Exchange take these challenges further. The excerpt from Travis’ keynote provides the starting point. He lays out a four-step plan for change. Barbara Anderson highlights some of the institutional and structural forces that have obscured designers’ responsibilities. She asserts, again, that we have no choice. Jill Pable provides a student-centered way to look at the issues based in scarcity of money, time, and bandwidth. Her argument is another challenge to design educators to think about how we teach disadvantages some individuals. Jon Otis picks up from Travis and Wright’s challenge for how to reach out to a diverse population of future students. Dan Harper asks us to consider diversity of thinking. Sammera Fadul and Sarah Urquhart present one student’s first-person response to educators addressing diversity in design. DAK Kopec explains theory and a teaching exercise aimed to help students recognize how cultural positions contain power, assumptions, and
opportunities to recognize more than the immediate assignment. Zingoni, Asojo & Kartoshkina, and Awwad-Raffery individually offer perspectives and teaching approaches that expand student awareness of diversity locally and globally.

This issue of the Exchange also includes statements from ASID, IIDA, CIDA, and IDC about diversity. I encourage you to consider what these organizations say in the context of the conversation between the other authors.

Collectively, these essays emphasize the urgency for interior design education to act. The choice to not act is itself harmful. A year ago, I wrote about a blank page as a starting and clearing point. Today, I return to the analogy as an impetus to draw many perspectives together. Our collective page on diversity in design has too few and too timid marks. This is the third consecutive issue of the Exchange to address diversity in interior design education in some way. The conversation requires more depth and breadth than these pages allow. The work of marking the page—struggling with what to say, when to say it, how to say it—must occur in our classrooms, faculty meetings, interactions with professionals, and how we are each day. We must decide to look at the world through another’s eyes and act to address the inequality we see. We must pass our pens to others and encourage them to mark their story.

As the contributions in the following pages demand: Sharpen your actions and begin to mark.

Bryan D. Orthel, PhD
Editor-in-Chief, IDEC Exchange, 2017-2019
Kansas State University

Photo by Tim Wright on Unsplash
ASSOCIATE EDITORS:

Sarah Urquhart
Assistant professor of interior design, School of Family and Consumer Sciences, Texas State University

Dan Harper
Assistant professor of interior architecture, College of Fine Arts, Ohio University

VISIONARY PARTNER

PREMIER PARTNERS

Cover photo by Julian Böck on Unsplash
In an effort to put together the best team to work with IDEC, there have been some recent changes to staff assignments at Headquarters. Leslie Monahan stepped into the Executive Director role on November 1, 2017. Leslie has more than 15 years of experience working with professional associations in a variety of industries—most recently as Executive Director of a local bar association for six years. She has been employed with Kellen since May 2016.

Sarah Washburn will continue to work with IDEC in an oversight role. The Board is thankful for her years of support and leadership.

Leslie brings valuable experience in operations, organizational guidance, and strategic planning. She has already begun work with the Board and other volunteer leaders on updating IDEC’s strategic plan in an effort to move the organization forward and assist the Collaboratives to all work toward a common set of goals. After experiencing the 2018 Annual Conference, Leslie is looking forward to working with the full IDEC staff team to provide an improved experience for attendees, especially related to the conference app and scheduling of presentations. Attendance at the Annual Conference also provided Leslie with a better understanding of the culture of IDEC and its members. As designers, IDEC members are always looking for ways to improve a process or experience and have been wonderful to share their ideas with staff. She looks forward to utilizing the experience of the members to improve the organization as a whole.

Leslie is also thrilled with the level of expertise of the rest of the IDEC staff team. Just completing her first year with IDEC is Cynthia Garcia (Member Services Director). She is handling the day-to-day activities of IDEC including all competitions and working with the Regions. The rest of the IDEC team includes LeAnn Munoz (Communications Manager), Kriston Ewoldt (Events Manager), and Kelly Smykal (Sponsorship & Expo Manager). We appreciate all of their efforts and service to IDEC and look forward to seeing how they can partner with the IDEC Board and its membership to grow and develop our society.
CALL FOR JID SPECIAL TOPICS/GUEST EDITOR

Over the past ten years, the Journal of Interior Design has disseminated high quality articles on a wide variety of topics in its annual special issue. Topics have included: history of the profession, sustainability, collaboration, culture, healthcare, creative scholarship, and spirituality (forthcoming). A guest editor has expertly curated each issue. The Journal is extending this opportunity to its membership. If you are interested in guest editing a special topic in your area of specialization, then we invite you to submit a proposal. Please include a 250-word abstract that summarizes the topic and an updated/abbreviated CV. We encourage applicants to consider calls that are relatively broad in order to encourage the greatest range of submissions. The JID Board of Directors and Editors will evaluate the submissions with the following criteria: timeliness/relevance of topic, potential to create a robust response with high quality submissions, and evidence that the candidate has the experience to curate a scholarly journal. Please send proposals to John Turpin (JID.editor@icloud.com). Deadline is June 1, 2018.

JID SPECIAL ISSUES

The Journal of Interior Design Special Issues series continues to enhance the quality of content, expand our reach, and broaden the diversity of our authors and readership (since March 2017, the journal has received submissions from 19 different countries). Last year’s Special Issue on Healthcare (guest edited by Sheila Danko and Mardelle Shepley) resulted in a double issue, which in reality ended up filling enough pages for three standard issues. The response was robust to say the least, and the quality of submissions justified the amount of dedicated pages. In March 2018, we presented our Special Issue on Creative Scholarship with the introduction of a new submission format, the visual essay. As noted by guest editor Julieanna Preston, this issue emerges from an increasing advocacy for practice-based research. The content will look and feel quite foreign to our readership, but we hope that it is stimulating and interpreted as a part of the discipline’s expansion of who we are (or perhaps who we are becoming). Finally, our next special issue will focus on Spirituality (Jane Kucko, guest editor). The call was released last year and the submissions have started to arrive. We look forward to yet another high quality Special Issue in 2019.
JID UNVEILS NEW LOOK

The Journal of Interior Design will unveil its new graphic identity in the March issue. The new cover reflects the optimism of the future, the joy that design brings to people on a daily basis, and the dynamic and multidisciplinary nature of current interior design research. The interior layout is inviting and graphically simple yet allows greater versatility in creating visually pleasing layouts as we seek to support a more diverse range of scholarship types. While the visual appearance of the Journal is new, the commitment to high standards for published content remains unchanged.

THE PROCESS OF THE JID GRAPHIC REVISION

The need for a graphic refresh of the Journal was initially discussed at the JID Board of Directors’ strategic planning meeting in summer 2016. The IDEC Board agreed to fund and support this initiative and an external professional graphic designer was hired in the spring of 2017 to lead the process. At the following JID Board of Directors’ summer meeting in 2017, the board reviewed the first round of design options. Via an iterative process of critique and revision during 2017, the JID Board approved the interior graphic changes and narrowed the cover design choices to three options. At that point, the board conducted a survey of interior design educators, students, allied design professionals, and interior design practitioners to determine which cover resonated with the broadest range of potential stakeholders. The cover design receiving the highest number of votes, coupled with survey participant suggestions for some minor edits, was shared with the graphic designer, ultimately resulting in the final cover design. After approval by the JID board, the final cover design proposal was forwarded to the IDEC Board for their approval where it again, received positive and unanimous support in November 2017. We sincerely hope that our IDEC colleagues share our enthusiasm for the Journal’s new graphic identity and appreciate our intent to publish a high quality scholarly product that appeals to a broad and diverse range of stakeholders.
Hello. We are the IDEC Service Collaborative. In case you are not familiar with us, we are the group that brings you the IDEC Awards and the Network Happy Hour at Conference each year. We also host the Student Design Competition, the Annual Service Charrette, and the newly introduced .design Student Portfolio Website Competition. The Service Collaborative is composed of committees, work groups, task forces, and networks whose main focus is to support and enhance the service component of each IDEC member’s daily work life. Building on IDEC’s mission and strategic plan, the Service Collaborative promotes the sharing of service-related ideas among members. The Collaborative provides a means of communication between and among its component groups as well as the other collaboratives and external constituents as appropriate. The Service Collaborative therefore, has a great potential to connect IDEC members not only to one another but also to the community at large, thereby increasing the overall impact of our organization. Our Collaborative is focused on making connections and recognizing the important accomplishments of our members and their students. If you have an interest in contributing to these important goals either in service or with an idea to enhance our service impact, we encourage you to reach out. We welcome your interest, ideas, and service in support of the Collaborative with the greatest potential to increase the impact factor of our organization.

Photo by rawpixel.com on Unsplash
In 2017, the IDEC Foundation supported five Foundation Graduate Scholars to attend the annual IDEC meeting in Chicago. One of those scholars shares her experiences and career paths in the update below.

Suzanne Merlino
I am Suzanne Merlino. I received a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design from Auburn University in 2015 and went on to receive my Masters from Auburn in December 2017. For my master degree, I completed a non-thesis project called Sit-IT—a project aimed to design, prototype, and fabricate an urban furniture system that provides mobile device outlets, ergonomic considerations for small mobile device users, and plugs-in to an existing public space infrastructure.

It was such an honor to receive the 2017 IDEC Foundation Graduate Scholars Award. Had I not received it I would have missed out on one of my favorite conferences. My most memorable experience was sitting in on a panel where attendees were discussing paid vs. unpaid internships. It was great to see multiple professionals/educators advocating for students. When you are a student you don’t fully realize how much your professors are doing to help you out in the real world, so it was really refreshing and inspiring to experience such a heated conversation. I can now confidently tell students that their voices are being heard and professors are fighting for them.

It was also great experiencing the diversity at the conference (but there is still room to improve here). It is always a pleasure talking/exploring with people of all ages and those from different cultural backgrounds.
WHY HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN MUST EMBRACE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

MARGARET PORTILLO, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, & JOHN TURPIN, HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY

In a 2013 JID Perspective essay, Tasoulla Hadjiyanni, challenges us to reexamine the place of culture across the interior design curriculum with the intent of empowering students “to take responsibility and gain knowledge surrounding diverse people, customs, and social organizations” (vi). She argues it is essential to arm students with an understanding of “how ‘culture’ is constructed and the role that interior environments play in the process” (ix). Interest in this topic has since led to a JID/IDEC sponsored symposium (2015 IDEC Annual Conference, Fort Worth, TX), resulting in a special issue of the Journal of Interior Design: “Design + Culture: Charting New Directions for Interior Design Scholarship and Pedagogy” (September 2016). Over the past five years, we see the imperative for action on diversity only growing stronger. In a committed search for both root problems and strategies forward, the 2018 Fellows Forum provided yet another opportunity to explore the complexity and nuance of strengthening diversity in interior design education, the results of which are summarized below.

Each year at the annual IDEC conference, the Fellows host a session—The Fellows Forum—to explore pressing issues facing the field. This year the forum centered around a panel, moderated by Margaret Portillo (Professor and Associate Dean, University of Florida) who brought together Tasoulla Hadjiyanni (Professor, University of Minnesota), Susan Chung (Senior Research Associate, ASID: Washington, D.C.), Genia Wright (COO/CFO, Vera Institute of Justice: NYC), and Bryan Orthel (Associate Professor, Kansas State University).
Tasoulla Hadjiyanni began the session by reminding us of the effects of diversity on issues of equity, health, income, and education and how interior environments can inadvertently sustain such marginalization. Susan Chung spoke of ASID’s values, specifically noting diversity and inclusion, which has developed into a robust diversity leadership training program. The next panelist, Genia Wright, straddles two worlds at Vera and at Pratt in the interior design graduate program. As a student of color, Wright emphasized the importance of bringing stakeholders (from students to faculty to practitioners to manufacturers) to the table when discussing issues of equity and inclusion. Also, she spoke passionately about the dangers of not creating “open spaces” where individuals across ethnicities can be their authentic selves to others and move toward self-actualization. Bryan Orthel concluded the panel’s opening remarks by articulating the additive value of diversity within the educational context: a multilog that he is hoping to capture in the upcoming IDEC Exchange.

This year’s forum in Boston allowed us to delve deeper into issues that the conference keynote speaker, Jack Travis, impressed upon us: the damage of leaving silent and unrecognized contributions of black and Latino/Latina designers throughout the 20th century. The impact of discrimination on non-white American identities surfaced in several personal stories from the panelists. For example, Susan Chung shared how disconcerting it was to have her first name shift from its original Korean roots to a westernized adaptation after relocating to America. Indeed, one must consider the effect of ‘renaming’ on a person’s identity, especially given the integral connection that often conjoins a given name and family/cultural heritage. This was another example of what it felt like in Susan’s words to be an “international orphan”, in her case someone who is not viewed as truly Korean by Koreans, or as truly American by American natives.

In short, three themes permeated throughout the Fellows Forum.

The problem of disparities in equity and inclusion are systemic and must be addressed holistically. Diversity is not a singular or discrete problem. It is multifaceted and impacts every aspect of human life. A true solution cannot be confined to any one area. This realization can feel daunting but as Jack Travis remarked, “The challenge is to talk without despair or paralysis.”

Yet, we must be fearless. It is clear that solutions are neither fixed nor facile. We must learn to question our assumptions, be open to new ways of being, participate in difficult conversations, invest our time in finding solutions, and be relentless. The road ahead is long.

So, what are our next steps? First and foremost, we must mobilize. We cannot move forward if we continue to stand in the same place. The IDEC Fellows are committed to continuing to offer safe spaces for difficult conversations. The Journal of Interior Design will assist in exploring issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. While the leadership of our organizations continue to mobilize, on an individual level we can each start making strides toward a more inclusive and equitable environment. Some suggestions offered at the forum included:

- Start locally. Reach out to youth in your communities and educate them about interior design—its roots, its role in the world, as well as its professional trajectories and pathways to success.
- Challenge your program to creatively tackle (or surpass) CIDA 2017 standards relating to multicultural awareness and exposure to cultural norms to develop understanding and the creation of thoughtful and thought-provoking spaces.
- Introduce your students to a wide range of ethnically-diverse professionals within the discipline and in related industries, but be mindful of implicit bias that can reinforce stereotypes. Everyone is a unique expression of life experiences.

There is much more to do. The list above is far from inclusive. The point is not to wait, but to begin and act decisively.

Photo by Daniel Sandvik on Unsplash
INNOVATION OVER EXCELLENCE – 
MAKING A CASE FOR THE HERE AND NOW
JACK TRAVIS, ARCHITECT + EDUCATOR

“Dear Architecture, I’ve been wondering why you don’t speak to me. Is it because you don’t see me? Are you ignoring me? Maybe it’s because you really don’t care for me; but whatever it is, you sure don’t speak, that is, at least not to me.” - Craig L. Wilkins

As I look around the room, I ask myself, “should I be satisfied with the number of Black and Latino participation in this room today?” Are you? Why is this such an important question? Because of who you are, and who you represent in design education.

You represent the highest levels of academic achievement and power in this nation, the nation among nations! You represent the pinnacle, the elite, and the highest level of design education leadership one can aspire to in the field of interior design.

But, who are you? That is a very powerful and potent question. It’s important, is it not? What is a more powerful and potent question? Who do you think you are? Perhaps even more powerful and potent than that last question, who do you think you represent?

I’d like to begin by sharing with you a Design history.

Amaza Lee Meredith - May just be the very first Black Modernist designer who practiced architecture and interior design

Wallace A Rayfield - Perhaps the most talented Black architect to have ever practiced

Robert Robinson Taylor - First Black graduate of an accredited school of architecture (MIT in 1892 as valedictorian)

Paul Revere Williams - Most prolific Black architect, designing well over one hundred buildings. Our Frank Lloyd Wright.

Julian Abele - Obviously the most graceful and most poetic Black architect, designing the main Duke University campus and the Philadelphia Museum of Art while in the office of Horace Trumbauer

Hilyard Robinson - Perhaps the first Black architect to visit Germany to review the Bauhaus school and buildings

John A Lankford - Perhaps the most successful businessman of the first generation of Black architects in America

Vertner Tandy - First Black architect to work for a Black millionaire client

Beverly Lorraine Greene - First (if not the first) Black female architect registered who worked in the office of Marcel Breuer

Norma Merrick Sklarek - First Black female FAIA member of the American Institute of Architects, the first Black female architect to become a founding partner in the first all-female owned firm, and who worked earlier in the office of Gruen Associates with Caesar Pelli

J Max Bond - First Black American architect to work on the African continent, in Ghana, for President Kwame Inkrumah

Rosemary Mitchell - First Black interior design decorator in the United States, she established a home furnishings store on the South Side of Chicago in the 1960’s

Calvin Ashford - First Black “celebrity” interior design decorator who worked for Diana Ross and others

Sheila Bridges - First and only Black female interior designer to appear in the prestigious Architectural Digest magazine and the author of two publications on design

Roderick Shade - First and only Black male interior designer to appear in the prestigious Architectural Digest magazine

Cecil Hayes - Black interior designer and ‘Decorator to the Stars’ who has worked with more Black celebrities in her career perhaps than any other to date, as well as the author of two publications

The list of Black accomplishments in the environmental field can go on and on.

How can we begin to incorporate this information into our current pedagogy of theory and scholarship? How do we strategize within proven methodologies to get this information to the young people we hope to reach? How can we make way for new perspectives and create atmospheres for these young people to comfortably exist in our academies?

We cannot—not without extreme difficulty. We don’t have articulated and evidenced-based methods with real strategies developed that we can rely upon to do
Design education as it exists today, doesn’t create atmospheres that allow black students to ‘breathe’ within, such as does the disciplines of music, dance, athletics seem to do. Inclusion, especially of Black and Latino peoples in Western design pedagogy and praxis at optimum representation would shift and thus redefine the meaning of “excellence” so expertly presented as universal when so many never ever had a real voice in crafting its existence.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUSTAINED PROGRESS

1. Ensure future success by expanding the pool of Black and Latino leadership: professors, professionals and consultants so as to properly foster perspectives and atmospheres that are more inclusive and that exhibit significant representation.

2. Set GOALS, establish a TIMELINE + allocate the proper RESOURCES with periodic checks to reach desired goals.

3. Check progress on the TIMELINE and provide additional resources if necessary to insure goals will be met in timely manner.

4. Be willing to modify and expand resources as necessary.

5. I implore each of you to think in terms of “INNOVATION” over “EXCELLENCE” in finding real solutions towards inclusion. A collective understanding that our humanity is above all and that excellence will emerge more justly from an ‘honest’ inclusive approach of making will be innovation indeed! - And, MOST EXCELLENT!!!
Lack of diversity in the design professions results from many causes. A significant cause that is structural in the United States (and has evolved over generations) is limited access to higher education. This is important because the most common, contemporary first step to becoming a professional interior designer is earning a post-secondary academic degree.

Generally, the United States’ higher education system evolved from mostly private and religion-affiliated institutions in the 18th and 19th century to publicly supported colleges and universities in the 20th century. Public financial support of higher education was a demonstration of our collective value for education as a public good. We believed it was in the public’s interest to have educated citizens, who would help to make our country strong and economy vibrant. Higher education continues to be a means of personal upward mobility.

Until the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, however, our educational institutions were racially segregated. Segregation did not allow equal opportunity for access to higher education. By the 1970s, racial integration was beginning to change higher education institutions.

There was a change in public policy in the decades following racial integration that continues to this day. Students increasingly receive funding directly through federal (and sometimes state) student financial aid in the forms of grants and loans. Institutions of higher education started to receive fewer public funds. Students are increasingly reliant on loans, because of the erosion of need-based grants. Older and part-time students are increasingly self-supporting. The divestment of the public in supporting institutions of higher education has hit those who are economically disadvantaged the hardest. Economically disadvantaged students are disproportionately students of color.

Economically disadvantaged individuals have been marginalized from participation in higher education in the United States in the following principal ways:

- inadequate academic preparation for university coursework in K-12 education,
- use of standardized testing to determine admissions to higher education institutions, and
- rising costs to students as a result of shifting the support for universities from the public to students, thus pricing economically disadvantaged students out of access to higher education.
The fact that the barrier to higher education is systemic, and needs to be addressed as such, does not excuse design professionals and educators from the need to act within the profession and our academic programs. We need to break down the barriers that keep our profession from being diverse. We need to realize the ways in which we support the barriers that have been established and are being reinforced by the systems in place. We need to change our practices and behaviors that support these barriers.

When the barriers to higher education for economically disadvantaged individuals are stripped away, we will be left with the challenge we face as a profession to be of value to society so that the opportunity to make a difference through design attracts diverse people to the profession. This value to society must be a value to all humanity that exceeds the value we bring to the social elites who are typically our clients. These wealthy clients and societal institutions (many of which exist to maintain the social order of inequity) pay our invoices for services, but they are not the individuals, families, and communities for whom we design sustainable, responsible, supportive, and inclusive environments. When the profession of interior design recognizes and lives up to our obligation to be of value to all and earns a reputation for our values, we will be a profession that attracts diverse individuals who want to make a difference in the world through design.

Photo by Joe Wroten on Unsplash
A discussion of human diversity in design education rightfully embraces socio-economic status and specifically, how we as educators might view students who lack economic resources through a newly informed, psychological perspective. This topic arose to me from two sources. One, I have consistently seen design students quietly suffering from the lack of resources throughout my teaching career, whether it is sleeping in their car because they cannot pay rent or inconspicuously shoveling field trip lunch buffet food into their purses. And two, my research about the design of environments for unhoused persons has led me to consider the perspective and stressors that can influence the thinking and choices of people in a situation of scarcity. There are similarities between both groups.

We find ourselves at a time of increasing economic strain on students with limited resources. There is a growing gap between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’, as well as alarming levels of student debt (one of our graduate students shared she is $80,000 in the hole presently). There are also other indicators of student resource stress, such as the rise of university and college food pantries, which suggest that student want is not an isolated situation.

The book Scarcity: Why Having Too Little Means So Much by Mullainathan and Shafir has done much to shape my thinking about people who experience a lack of resources—be they the unhoused or my students—and has left me with a deeper understanding of what being in a state of scarcity can mean for human growth, thinking, and decision-making. In turn, this has influenced my interactions with both my research participants and students.

The authors of Scarcity describe that a person with insufficient resources (be it housing, food, or project supplies) may actually experience three kinds of poverty. The first is money poverty, which hampers one’s ability to buy, for example, foam core for a project. Time poverty, as the name suggests, afflicts a student working two jobs to stay in school. Bandwidth poverty refers to our naturally limited cognitive capacity to attend to multiple inputs and ideas at any one time. It is insidious because it affects a person’s ability to pay attention, reflect, and reap the benefits of doing so. Persons in a situation of want typically concentrate on the most necessary task RIGHT NOW—hence a students’ distraction in class due to concern about a utilities payment instead of experimenting with a project space planning alternative. Even worse, people tend to experience money, time and bandwidth scarcity simultaneously and it causes them to borrow from one to feed another. For example, working a longer shift to buy foam core for a project may make a student oversleep and miss class, thus depriving them of the learning growth they most need.

When a student is in a situation of scarcity, several things may happen that inhibit a student’s growth and understanding. First, she rarely considers a full range of choices because options cost her time, which increases the likelihood she will choose poorly. Second, she can never relax—and the distraction as she attends to other ever-present scarcities likely makes her perform worse in her studies. The situation gets more dire if the scarcity-affected student misses a deadline or two. Suddenly the lack of resources has a nonlinear, compounding effect and the student experiences a feedback loop different from fellow students without scarcity concerns. Instead of saying “I’ll submit that next project on time”, the scarcity student is under a deadline that never lifts from immediately life responsibilities, with pressures that cannot be relieved (such as paying rent, repairing A situation of scarcity brings many issues with it.
the car and scraping together dinner). She chases every immediate, pressing need because she must. She ‘churns’, concentrating on meeting that next deadline instead of reflecting on her work, or finding successful strategies that can help her do better next time. Over time, the scarcity student may even resign herself to sub-par progress and performance—reducing her expectations for herself or dropping out entirely.

How might we help as educators? First, consider structuring projects so that they are paced well with milestones of success along the way. The complexity of designing an environment is not going away, but there are ways to keep learning achievable. Second, establish a ‘lending library’ of project supplies for students to give to and take from as their needs dictate. Thirdly, consider adopting a textbook for multiple classes, which reduces costs and might also lend a sense of continuity in learning.

Above all, it would serve us well to remember that each student carries his or her own story, and some of these involve living in a homeless shelter or visiting the campus food pantry to have dinner that night. Compassion is baked in to what we do as designers, so where feasible and fair, give students a second chance when calamity hits. Every person is in a daily encounter with becoming.

References
DIVERSITY 2.0
DANIEL J. HARPER, OHIO UNIVERSITY

Even as we strive to increase diversity and inclusion in higher education, our vision, desires, and aspirations continue to evolve. Where once we were focused on diverse demographic representation and quantitative significance, we now see a shift to qualitative consideration of diversity and specifically the desire for diversity of thought and perspective recognized as a contemporary model of cognitive diversity.

Previous attempts to use cognitive diversity as tools of colonialism, racism, and imperialism and as a mechanism to create cultural divides and separation resulted in the negative view many hold for the term today (Sinclair, 2009). Our world view is changing though. A report from Deloitte and the Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative suggests that thinking about how we define diversity across generations has evolved significantly and found that Millennials, generally, are embracing the value of diverse thinking, what it proposes to offer to our understanding of collaboration, and what is required for success in a contemporary business model (Smith & Turner, 2015). This novel thinking about the value of cognitive diversity by Millennials intends not to divide but rather invites collaboration and honors the tenets of diversity.

While we strive to evolve diversity in interior design education, the importance of this redefinition and paradigm shift is heightened by the very fact that we, as designers, create environments and experiences intended to support diversity. The goals of our organizations are inherently expressed through the environments we create and, in turn, shape our interactions and who we are as organizations and individuals. Our continued evolution of diversity and our desires for it should be modeled in built environments that result in experiences supporting diverse people in conversation. We must work to ensure these spaces are open to diversity and not excluding people based on ideas, experiences, and identities.

The very idea of enhancing diversity and the inclusive practices of design are the foundation of our existence as a profession. Had it not been for visionaries who saw the world different from how it had traditionally existed or recognized the potential for a different future, designers would still be practicing in the realm of a style-driven application of decoration. Interior design education recognizes the value of drawing from a multitude of disciplines, experiences, and ways of thinking and creating. Today, we see the incoming student of interior design not as clay to be molded but rather as an integral component in the shaping of the future of the built environment and thus the shaping of society.

References


Photo by Erik Eastman on Unsplash
Critical to ongoing success in the field of interior design must be an initiative to make the design field more inclusive by actively valuing diversity as an asset in academic and professional spaces. The central focus must be to enhance the experience for people of all identities and viewpoints, to diversify talent pipelines by promoting awareness and engagement of design through early education initiatives, and to engage in outreach and collaboration with businesses, schools, and professional organizations.

The core belief is that empowering people from a diversity of backgrounds to participate and contribute will be an illuminating and beneficial movement within design, supporting greater productivity and innovation in the profession.

EARLY DESIGN EDUCATION

Expanding the design field to be more inclusive of diverse talent is an inside job, requiring effort to recruit and maintain varying faculty and staff. But in order for the talent pool to reflect the wealth of potential and perspective among diverse candidates, there must first be greater awareness of the opportunities and career paths students can pursue in design and related disciplines.

People are often shut out of academic disciplines from lack of encouragement and mentorship in early education. Seemingly minor educational failures, such as subconsciously giving some groups of students more or less attention in an artistically-focused class, have extensive down-the-line effects on limiting their interests and opportunities. Stereotypes of certain groups of people having more or less “raw talent” or interest influence this behavior and drive it as a self-fulfilling prophecy: those deemed to be “less gifted” early-on then receive less attention and have more skill gaps to overcome without educators’ support.

On an institutional level, educators and administrators should take an active and dedicated interest in raising awareness of design and facilitating the creation of learning environments that allow all interested students to become involved early-on,
rather than only those who have historically enjoyed unfettered access to the field.

We can use early design education as a playing field for increasing awareness, enhancing content knowledge, driving cognitive sophistication, and presenting an understanding that there are options within the varied disciplines of design for students to learn, grow, and find a path for their professional lives.

CONCLUSION

Cultivating a field that welcomes a diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, nationality, disability, socioeconomic standing, and intellectual viewpoint would encourage creativity and improve the quality of contributions made.

When a more diverse variety of people harness their lived experiences to solve design problems, new opportunities for innovation become apparent. Empowering people from a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives to envision spaces, furniture, and art will translate into actualized projects ultimately serving a greater swath of the general population.

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DIVERSITY AND CIDA

HOLLY MATTSON, COUNCIL FOR INTERIOR DESIGN ACCREDITATION

First and foremost, the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA) seeks to advance the profession through its quality assurance standards for interior design education. CIDA continually scans and forecasts priorities for advancing the profession in order to evolve accreditation criteria. The annual 2017 CIDA Summit report is one example of this activity and calls attention to myriad, profession-wide initiatives underway to increase and celebrate diversity. The summit findings forecast that inclusivity will continue to gain traction as a priority and strongly influence the profession in the future.

CIDA accreditation standards are poised to ensure that diversity is a current and future priority in interior design programs as well, challenging educators to meet and exceed expectations. CIDA Professional Standards 2017 and 2018 emphasize achieving diversity through curricular strategies, teaching methods, and student mentorship. Standard 4: Global Context sets specific program expectations that include exposure to current and relevant events shaping contemporary society, exposure to a variety of cultural norms, and opportunities for developing multi-cultural awareness. Examples include opportunities to study abroad, cultural exchanges, or community-based projects that expose students to cultural and/or economic diversity. In addition, student work must demonstrate an understanding of social, economic, cultural, and physical contexts that inform interior design. Specific examples include human responses to hardship and distress, social impacts of mass migration, competition for resources, climate change and natural disasters. Interior design programs incorporate and respond to these accreditation criteria in a wide variety of ways, which in itself strengthens the breadth of educational content related to diversity.

CIDA elevates the visibility of teaching methods that successfully incorporate social, economic, and cultural impacts of interior design through the annual CIDA Award for Excellence. Many winning entries exemplify how faculty can successfully address contemporary issues related to diversity and the social impact of interior design in their curricula. Winning entries can be viewed on CIDA’s website at: CIDA Award for Excellence.
One of my professors said that most supermodels come from Russia. He explained that this is because Russia has long been a genetic crossroads for Africa, Indian, Asian, and European people. His conclusion that Russians have the most attractive physical features was based on the logic that each ethnicity can see something of themselves in the faces of Russian people. The valuable point from this conclusion is that when multiple cultures and ethnic traditions are integrated and synthesized, a design outcome may be more positively appreciated.

Albert Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory states that there is a reciprocal deterministic relationship between a person’s sense of self (culture, values, and traditions), their environmental factors, and behavioral responses. Designers are often called upon to develop environmental factors with the unspoken outcome to promote desired behaviors and an optimal sense of self. Roger Barker found that some of the designs used to promote certain sets of behaviors lead to the formation of behavior settings. Some behavior settings serve a common good, such as lowering one’s voice in a place of worship. However, some behavior settings have a negative outcome. In the 1950’s, Talcott Parsons found that individuals admitted into healthcare institutions began to adopt passive behaviors and freely surrendered control to medical personnel. He called this the Sick Role Theory, and it was based in part on environmental clues that inform behavior.

Much of the environment within the U.S. has been developed by Caucasian designers, and thus reflects sets of values and traditions from this ethnic point of view. Much like Russians are theoretically thought to be the most beautiful people, one can argue the crossroads of genetic traits can be found equally in Africa, Asia, Middle East, and India; thus, we can all see a bit of ourselves in each of these populations. The point is that design professions must move beyond western-centric design, and encourage students from other cultures and ethnicities to examine their own cultures and traditions to identify diverse design ideas, innovations, and approaches.

In recent years, Interior Design students at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas have been asked to develop a Senior Living Community in New Orleans. New Orleans and Las Vegas differ in terms of climate, culture, values, and traditions. In this studio, students are paired with local seniors who serve as a client relocating to the proposed senior living community in New Orleans. As part of the assignments, students analyze a Las Vegas-based senior living community to gain a better understanding of programming needs. This information is then interwoven into the unique values, traditions, and customs of New Orleans. The site’s historic exterior remains the same, but the interior public spaces must reflect the local climate, and promote positive experiential memories formed from one or more of the associationist theories. Each of the living units then conforms to the client’s specific needs.

Students struggle with divergent and convergent ideas and their personal biases. For example, many propose the use of heavy lighting common within Las Vegas design. They also struggle with the homogeneous design styles they see in popular media outlets. With continued nudges, the students are able to break away from preconceived ideas and dig into their own histories and engage in greater design thinking. This shift in perspective helps to bring forth more diverse design solutions.

The current political environment has created a climate that suggests that physical and cultural differences are an indication that we are against each other. Design is no longer only about aesthetics but it has the power to become a social agency. As design educators, we must provide to our students the right tools so they can become the most powerful agents of change by addressing issues of equity, culture, and belonging through their design process.

As the profession advanced towards a human-based center the need to speak on behalf of others that cannot speak by themselves becomes relevant. The Herberger Institute for the Design and the Arts at Arizona State University launched in 2017 “Projecting all Voices,” an initiative that seeks to forward opportunities for all citizens, all artists, and designers to participate and have their voices heard in building communities, creating artistic products, and designing spaces and experiences that enhance their lives and quality of life.

In most of design education we continue to teach design, architecture, interiors and its allied disciplines as an autocratic approach to control the final outcome. Instead of proposing a democratic design that is inclusive, equitable, and serves its audience, interiors continue to be designed for and be recognized by other designers.

Interior Design studios must explore, concurrently, centrifugal and centripetal activities. “Centrifugal activities are directed towards absorbing new information that exist at the periphery of the discipline. Centripetal activities are those that reinforce the core values of the discipline” (Coy, 2003, p.37). Traditionally, Interior Design was about decoration—a service that only one percent of the population could afford. As the discipline evolves into a more human centered approach at its core, as educators we must explore the discipline’s value expanded field and its capability to transform community, a genuine design effort to reconcile people instead of a finished object.

The call is to explore interiority as a tool to understand the world and project all voices.
At the 2018 IDEC National Conference, Jack Travis exhorted interior design faculty to consider who they are, and who they represent. However, if the disenfranchised voice is excluded, how can design educators learn to foster it? The goal of this essay is to provide the lived experience of a black interior design student toward the effort of building an inclusive design education environment.

My first year in college was a rude awakening. Not only was I a first-year design student, I faced culture shock. Despite a diversity integration mission, only 8% of students were black students and black faculty were even fewer (4%) (Office of Institutional Research, 2016). Every interaction was fraught with awkward interactions, difficulty, and sometimes outright aggression. Supposedly easy tasks like driving to an art store to get architectural model supplies were steep mountains to climb as I wondered where I was going to find the $200 and get a ride to the store 30 miles away. As a young black student, I rarely identified with my surroundings.

Many of these rarities took place in design studio, but the experiences were tempered by the lack of diverse leadership. In an early studio, I addressed the death of Michael Brown and the criminalization of black Men by designing a memorial for the Brown family. While the professor worked tirelessly to guide me through a project that targeted core diversity issues, both the faculty and the jury panel were white. Today I still wonder, what if there had been a faculty member that could directly identify with the intricacies of African Americans, the embedded criminalization, and the ideals of interior design? How much more impactful could a Michael Brown memorial project have been?
Found in 1972, Interior Designers of Canada (IDC) is the national advocacy association for the interior design profession, representing more than 5,000 members including fully qualified interior designers, intern members, students, educators, retired members, as well as suppliers and manufacturers, who provide products and services for interior design projects and firms.

As the national association advocating for members across the country, IDC aims to represent the diversity of interior design professionals, projects and ideas, with a simple message that ‘design impacts lives.’

Last year, in partnership with the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID), IDC hosted the first Canadian Impact Summit – Migration, Culture and Diversity in the Built Environment, which focused on Toronto’s Regent Park rejuvenation project—a ground-breaking example of how Toronto Community Housing’s approach to city building can transform a community into a successful, mixed-income, and mixed-use neighbourhood.

The 2017 Summit brought together senior practitioners, thought leaders, and emerging influencers drawn from the fields of design and architecture, building and facilities management, city planning, all levels of government, as well as business and the non-profit sector, to tackle issues of design and our built environment, with a focus on addressing the key concerns of migration, culture and diversity.

IDC is currently focused on a membership drive geared to students across Canada with an outreach campaign specifically seeking research and innovative projects and ideas from students and interns to broaden the scope of IDC’s cultural representation.

In an effort to diversify perspectives and bring fresh ideas to the current landscape of Canadian design, IDC will be partnering with the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD) University, in support of OCAD’s proposed Indigenous and Black Youth program and help to create mentorship opportunities for design students and IDC’s senior practitioner members through events and workshops.

In addition, IDC is in the process of redesigning its current website according to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and will offer future professional development programs and seminars to address building for aging in place and people with disabilities.
INTEGRATING MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES IN DESIGN USING COLLABORATIVE ONLINE INTERNATIONAL LEARNING (COIL) FRAMEWORK
ABIMBOLA ASOJO & YULIYA KARTOSHKINA, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), which is an innovative way to engage in global grand challenges, was used as a framework for this interior design project. The project occurred in a junior-level interior design class at University of Minnesota in collaboration with students and faculty from Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria. “COILing” a class involves partnerships between faculty and institutions with the goal of internationalized and intercultural learning outcomes. This framework specifically supported a major objective of this class to help students develop a global perspective and approach to design thinking and problem-solving. According to the SUNY Center for Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), one of the leading international organizations focused on the emerging field of Globally Networked Learning, COIL is designed to develop “cross-cultural student competence through development of multicultural learning environments that link university or college classes in different countries.” This objective also aligns with the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA) Standard 4 which requires that interior designer graduates are “prepared to work in a variety of contexts as well as across geographic, political, social, environmental, cultural, and economic conditions.”

The Store Retail Project in Nigeria
The store retail project in Nigeria occurred in fall 2016 and 2017 in the lighting design course offered at the junior level for interior design students at the University of Minnesota. The requirement was for students to design the lighting and display space for a contemporary brand-name store in an international airport in Lagos City or Abuja Federal Capital Territory or Port Harcourt City in Nigeria. Students were required to reflect Nigerian culture in their design proposals in addition to emphasizing different layers of lighting in the space.

The project occurred over a six-week period with class meeting two days a week in fall semester 2016 and 2017. On day one, students were introduced to the project requirements, a lecture of Nigerian architecture, and a cultural framework focused on the following five themes:

- juxtaposition of traditional and contemporary culture;
- social dynamics;
- elements and principles of design;
- visual and performance arts; and
- sustainability.
The lecture on Nigerian architecture was jointly presented by author 1 and faculty from Obafemi Awolowo. On day two and three, students read three articles and worked on their research, concept, parti diagrams, and lighting design ideas. On day 4 and 5, students developed their concept and schematic design and presented them via web-conferencing to Nigerian faculty and students for feedback. From day 6 to day 10, students refined their work based on feedback and additional desk critiques. On day 11 and 12, students presented their final presentation via web-conferencing to Nigerian faculty and students. At the end of the experience both students from Minnesota and Nigeria filled out reflections about their experience.

Findings
This COIL experience provided several insights. The experience provided students opportunities to develop cross-cultural sensitivity and empathy. Students became more conscious of cultural perspectives when thinking about their design projects. The three main frameworks of COIL—which are pedagogy, technology and cross-cultural learning—strengthened the integration of multicultural perspectives in this course.

References


I am intrigued and moved by the language and politics of the cultural landscape: how places are defined, created, used, cared for, and remembered; the details of behavior/action and non-verbal cues in the environment; the symbols and tangible ethics imparted from one generation to the next, and the long and short stories we use when we describe who we are and where we come from physically and metaphorically. As a woman immigrant scholar, and interior design educator, my language is one of context, design, and translation of those multiple realities into design education and community building. The challenge is how to move from my own seeing and interpretation into creating enduring and actionable experiences that impact students’ lifelong journeys as engaged designers, empathetic global citizens and community stewards, and, continue the advancement of design education and practice. This is an evolutionary process of discovery, connection, reflection, contribution, and impact.

Responsible design pays attention to intersections of local and global scales and tapestries, multiple ways of knowing, divergent narratives; pressing needs and visions, interdisciplinary creative problem solving, richness of difference, connectedness, beauty, and inclusive participation of all. I actively pursue socially responsible empowered design lessons and community engaged opportunities that are vested in constructs of equity, justice, community/context, and the power of imagination and design as central pathway of social change. They are key foci that brings into full circle my teaching, scholarship, outreach, service, and leadership.

Facilitating safe and courageous spaces in the classroom becomes necessary if constructs of privilege, social justice and emancipatory design are to be authentically addressed. This safe and courageous space is initiated by using tools such as storytelling, the Vernon Wall Social Justice Checklist, or Peggy McIntosh’s “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” and
engaging in personal and group reflection. Utilizing art and design as a vehicle to bridge schisms in opinion and overcome hidden biases, the first short project of the semester asks students to participate in the University-wide MLK art and essay contest. They broaden their own knowledge and experience, internalize, and make personal connections that are translated into creative works of art. Students have won awards, and inclusive and engaged studio culture emerged.

Envisioning just, resilient, and sustainable places and communities’ demands engaged learning and capacity building to see, relate, understand, and act. Hands-on experiences provide professors and students the tools to ask broader questions and seek critical answers. A “walkshop” designed to foster campus-community dialogue about accessibility revealed spatial injustices not addressed by either—and prompted stakeholders’ cooperation to produce meaningful results. Moving from feeling “sorry” for the other’s “misfortune,” to being an ally and an active agent of change requires time and emotional engagement. Projects in junior and senior studios are community-motivated requests that highlights multiple diversities; working with rural and tribal communities, where we learn from, and develop solutions with community stakeholders.

Our places are microcosms and vessels of larger interdependent systems that we must steward and respect. By reclaiming the centrality of our roles as design educators to the tripartite mission of the university, stretching beyond the boundaries of definitions and structures, and the discontents of ambiguity, we engage diversity in profound ways, and open the door wider for many to enter and thrive.

DESIGN MANIFESTO
CHERYL S. DURST, INTERNATIONAL INTERIOR DESIGN ASSOCIATION


We are Design.