



CANDIDATE FOR NORTHEAST REGIONAL DIRECTOR

John Cays, New Jersey Institute of Technology

Candidate Statement

I believe that education is the most transformative force on the planet. I also believe that design education is uniquely suited to effectively address the challenges facing human kind today. As our civilization works to understand and responsibly manage the continuous flow of matter and energy between the natural world and the built environment, architects can make a disproportionately large difference relative to the size of the profession.

New tools and methodologies continue to compliment, augment and magnify traditional design techniques. Technological advancement and the concomitant new societal expectations are exerting the same pressure on our profession as on the rest of the world. The member schools of the ACSA, in partnership with their collateral associations, have an opportunity to demonstrate to the public how we are responding to the challenge and leading the conversation in several key and related areas. These areas include:

- Environmental stewardship
- Problem based learning models
- Education and career pathways for diverse populations

Enrollments in most architecture schools in the North East are down from pre-recession highs. Popular press about architecture over the past three years has focused largely on the elevated unemployment rate of mid-career and young professionals. This group of unemployed design professionals are largely made up of people whose set of marketable abilities has not kept pace with the demands of the building industry. A growing proportion of this industry requires more people with advanced technological and analytical skills in order to meet the increasing demand for sustainable, high performance design solutions. As undergraduate and graduate architecture programs continuously conceptualize outdated curricula to meet this demand, new generations of students who are looking to help save their world will be attracted to design and the career paths they offer.

Many students today are coming from schools that are using alternative Problem/Project Based Learning models. PBL models are proving to be effective in synthesizing lessons from many academic subjects. Even in public secondary schools, more students are exposed to hands on heuristic approaches to learning. Design education has been developing this approach for centuries. As a greater percentage of students experience design education under different guises, design schools are in a position to forge new partnerships with institutions and directly with teachers who «get» the value of design education.

As Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in NJIT's College of Architecture and Design for the past 9 years, I have had the good fortune to work collaboratively with progressive faculty and administrators in the College, across campus and across the state of New Jersey to build pathways for groups of diverse and highly qualified students to study architecture and design at the university level. One of the most gratifying experiences of my professional life has been working with high schools, community colleges and the State Board of Education to develop digitally based sustainable architecture/design curricula for secondary schools and building non-traditional pathways to tertiary design education. I would like to think it has contributed to the wide diversity in NJIT's College of Architecture and Design.

The ACSA is confronting numerous challenges today. As a candidate for the North East Regional Director, I hope to be able to contribute to this mission by facilitating conversations to help schools throughout the region and across the country shape their own effective strategies to build even wider networks to promote architecture to a greater number of highly qualified, well informed and passionate design students.



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Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

Princeton University, Masters of Architecture 1994
University of the Arts, Bachelor of Science in Architecture 1990

TEACHING

New Jersey Institute of Technology, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs 2005 – present
New Jersey Institute of Technology, Adjunct Instructor 2002 - 2005
Parsons New School, Adjunct Instructor Interior Design AAS Program 2001 – 2005

PRACTICE

Grade Architects LLC. Co-founding principal, NYC 2001 – 2008
Robert A.M. Stern Architects – Project Manager NYC 1997 – 2002

PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS

Evolving Libraries, (Paper presentation with Maya Gervits) AASL Annual Conference, Berkley, CA, 2013
Successfully Transitioning Design Students from Two-Year Programs to the Professions in the Digital Age,
Tri-State Best Practices Conference: The Community College as a Place of Transition, Secaucus, NJ, 2013
Evolving Libraries: People and Technology Building Design Communities, Art Documentation Vol. 31, No. 2, 2012
The Kepler System: Outcome Assessment in Architecture, Art and Design Schools, M.U.S.E. Conference,
Savannah, GA 2009
Kepler – A Transparent Coursework Review System Roger Williams University, Bristol RI, 2009
Gordon/DeVries Studio interiors project featured in Architektur&Wohnen; Fall 1995

AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS, GRANTS

Lead Administrator for SSP Architects grant to fund Kepler – *A Transparent Coursework Review System*
for development and use leading to the first fully digital NAAB accreditation in the country, 2008
Gotham Magazine – recognition in *The List Issue* - Home, 2007
Campus Technology Magazine Innovator – recognized as collaborating with Glenn Goldman, one of the
top 13 innovators in the use of information technology in higher education and the only
designer/design instructor selected (2005)
New York Times - recognition in article “Weekend Utopia”, (July 22, 1999)
Academic merit Full Fellowship Princeton University (1990-1994)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND SERVICE

American Institute of Architects (AIA New York) since 2004
Licensed Architect in New York 2003 and New Jersey 2005
National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) since 2003
Bergen County (NJ) Technical Schools – Member of Professional Advisory Board 2010-present
Morris County (NJ) Technical Schools – Member of Professional Advisory Board 2007-present
Essex County (NJ) College – Member of Professional Advisory Board 2006-present
Building Technology Educators Society – peer reviewer for 2013 conference papers
New Jersey Council of Vocational-Technical Schools – Collaborator on Sustainable Design Pathway
curriculum development 2011-present