

Interdisciplinary Design

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INTRODUCTION

Design as a Creative Model for Technical Inquiry is a 2-year project funded by the National Science Foundation to better prepare future teachers for the complex, multidisciplinary challenges of the twenty-first century. This is our second year of the project and we are looking into new opportunities, partners and funding sources. At this roundtable we will continue to identify best practices of normative and cross-disciplinary design education; discuss the progress so far on the interuniversity workshops; and develop models for dissemination and distribution to colleague institutions. For more information, check the web site <http://www.arch.rpi.edu/research/idd/>

There is a demand for leaders trained to understand problems from multiple perspectives and to integrate these perspectives into creatively designed solutions. To achieve these goals, we believe, design education, and increasingly all disciplines, must provide concrete experience in integrating first-rate technical competence with a thorough understanding of the social and cultural context of technologies and the design processes that shape them. This multidisciplinary approach to design education demands that the relevant knowledge base be expanded to include faculty and expertise not currently being required of architecture, engineering and other design students. This same demand for a synthetic approach in disciplinary work has the potential to draw diverse and minority communities, previously not attracted to engineering, architecture and other design fields to enlist in a more interdisciplinary environment that may have more political authority while addressing the social, aesthetic as well as the technical. The end goal of this project is to integrate multidisciplinary design pedagogy into engineering and architectural education that will attract a more inclusive constituency and create design professionals with a broader foundation for addressing the complex problems of the 21st century.

We are seeking collaborating departments or schools interested in pursuing funding to conduct intensive interdisciplinary design workshops to learn studio models to teach engineering and architectural design in a way that effectively integrates technical, social/cultural, and aesthetic issues.

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