



# PROFESSIONAL HORIZONS

**274 Mock Interviews**

**16 Study-Away Full Expenses  
Awards in 2022**

**27 Materials & Technology Awards**

**The DLF at MSU**

**195 Mock Interviews**

**20 Study-Away Full Expenses Awards in 2023**

**36 Materials & Technology Awards**

*This dossier outlines the latest efforts of Mississippi State University to bring awareness of professional design careers, tracks, focus areas, and opportunities to all students of Architecture, Interior Design, and Landscape Architecture.*

*Equity, Inclusion, Sharing, Promoting, and Encouraging are just a few terms associated with the multi-year efforts taking place in collaboration with the multi-disciplinary Design Leadership Foundation. The organization was conceptualized around commonly occurring issues outlined by rural higher education providers such as MSU, who find themselves teaching about an industry whose production is largely out of view for many of their students. Be it an issue of a familial background which lacks exposure to design professionals or lived experience in a rural or suburban built environment, students are often not as informed as we hope they might be. Couple such circumstances with very limited financial resources and the resulting situation is a class of students many of whom simply do not have a working knowledge of what their professional options and goal should be.*

*The DLF, working in collaboration with MSU, has taken up the challenge of bringing exposure and experience to students who may never otherwise have a chance to learn what they're working so hard toward.*

### 3 Urban Areas of MS



population 192,532  
Southaven and DeSoto County, MS

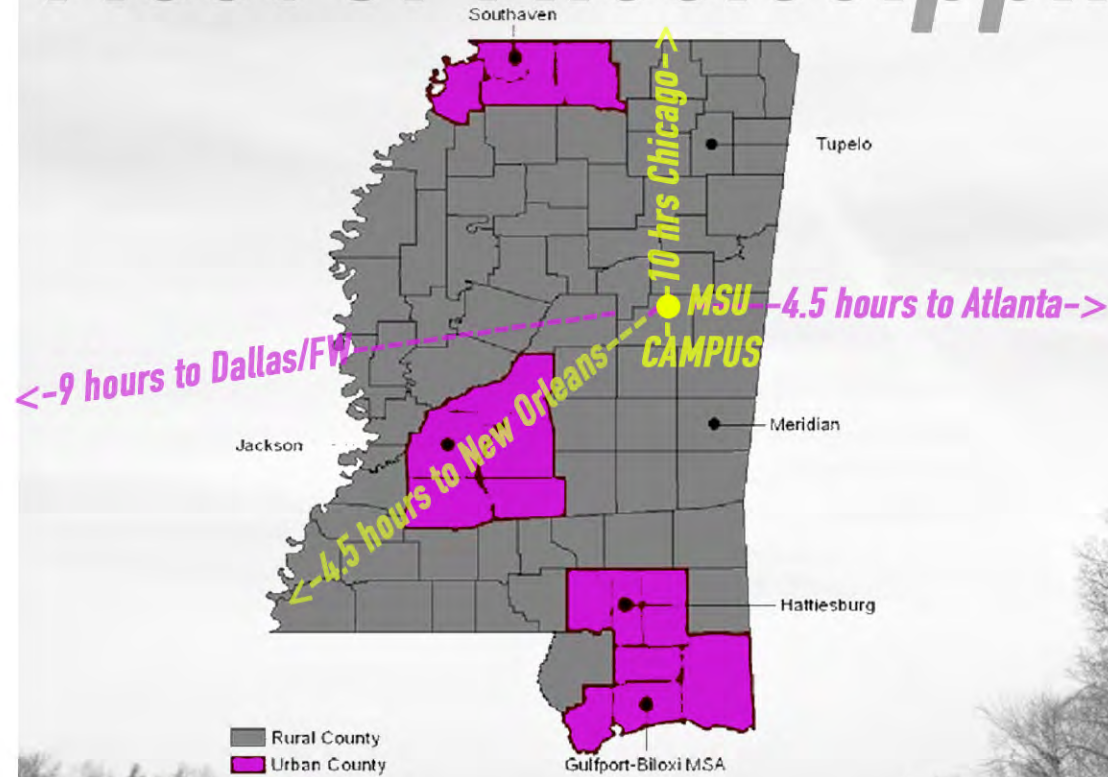


population 436,000  
Jackson, MS



population 383,000  
Coastal MS including Gulfport & Biloxi

# Most of Mississippi...



Total population 3,025,719



Vastly Rural  
examples  
design

with very few  
of exemplary  
and practice  
opportunities



The context for the project's development is one that is not unique to Mississippi but rather all schools of architecture, interior design, or landscape architecture which face the challenging instance of trying to discuss, teach and learn about design while residing in, and often having been raised within, an environment made up of an extremely limited design language. The value of experience and personal perspective about what is possible as a designer is something largely understood yet difficult to address. The physical, financial, and temporal limitations of the typical university curriculum and semester sequence are not well suited to address the students need for practical knowledge.

This pilot program, co-created and financially supported by a non-profit design organization, aims to explore the potential of direct exposure, experience, and mentorship to design professionals. The effects of this exposure on students studying in a "design desert" are emerging and the work will continue with results to me measured by internship rates and graduate tracking.

## Incubator Program

Did you know that in today's times, a design education has an additional \$12,000.00 to \$15,000.00 in supplemental expenses that are not part of scholarships or financial aid packages?

The Design Leadership Foundation is excited to announce more details about our incubator program at Mississippi State University!

With our big DLF goal of leveling the playing field in design education to create an inviting and supportive path for BIPOC students in extreme need — we developed 4 key programs to reduce the financial and emotional burdens on students and their families and will help universities produce well prepared graduates that will enter the workforce as equals.

As technology is a fundamental aspect of any design student's experience its become quite clear that the supplemental costs (\$12k to \$15k) is a key barrier to diversity in design and architecture programs. Students try their best to get thru the 4 or 5 year programs with inferior or borrowed computers/software, and little funds for materials that prevents them from equally competing. Our support will help students in need stay current with their technology and material needs.

**Supplemental Costs Support** will secure funds and resources to ensure the success of students with financial need by providing equal access to the full array of technology, materials, experiences, and opportunities.

**2021 late Spring Online College Cohort Creation** DLF/DLN members will work with a set of students across practices in an online group setting to build professional skills, portfolio review, resume and cover letter review, etc.

**2021 Fall 2-3 day Professional Skills Workshop** at MSU DLF/DLN member led guidance with students to develop organizational skills and cover letter, resumé and formal business writing skills, interviewing skills as well as portfolio/website design and development.

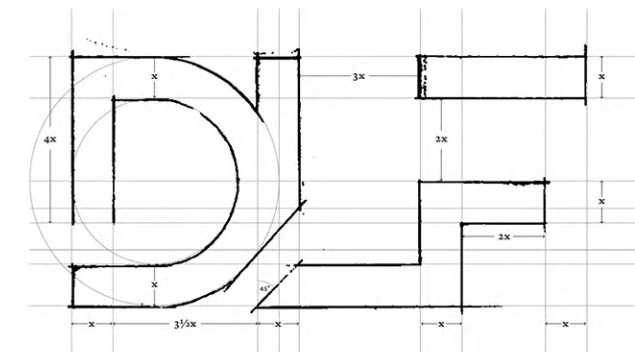
**2022 Summer Course MSU in NYC:** Faculty Led (US city travel-based) guidance for students to develop organizational skills, cover letter, resumé and formal business writing skills as well as portfolio/website design and development. This course would include DLN member office/project tours to make introductions, interviews and expose students to architecture and design at work.



How can professionals help to bridge the gap between academic

**Simulations**  
and professional

**REALITY**



**Our Vision:** The Design Leadership Foundation's vision is to mentor, support, welcome and uplift talent, youth and people within the global architecture and design fields.

**Our Mission:** The Design Leadership Foundation's mission is to ensure a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the fields of architecture and design. We believe everyone, at a young age, should be able to envision themselves in the professional fields of architecture and design no matter their race, gender, creed or background. The DLF seeks to create new opportunities and exposure for historically marginalized and vulnerable groups to better unify the world of design.

# Confidence & SURETY



ARC 4990/6990

## Professional Horizons

*Is the shared name of both a 3-credit hour study away course and an open access workshop initiative that the faculty of MSU and the DLF membership have worked to create as a means of promoting professional development and job-hunting skills.*

*Many students have limited access to design professionals on a day-to-day basis. Opportunities to engage are typically condensed to scenes like this, with many students speed-dating their way from table to table at career fairs. While these events are critical, they can be overwhelming for many students who lack the preparatory skills for such an event. The DLF has worked with members of the MSU teaching faculty to generate exercises and feedback loops which allow students to test their materials and soft skills in a safe, yet productive professional environment.*

*The workshops developed as part of the program feature working sessions and break-out groups to give students direct professional feedback on portfolios and resumes. Hearing directly from hiring managers and firm principals, the students are able to gauge the quality of their preparations and inter-personal delivery techniques.*

*As programming was being developed, the MSU teaching team and DLF taskforce members recognized that events at different scales would be needed to impact students across all three disciplines. While the study away course in New York City would be very impactful and direct, the team wanted to ensure those students who could not participate in a stand-alone course could still learn from the professional's advice and unique perspectives.*

*Breaking down barriers for those who felt they did not belong in this kind of a crowd, the goal became to empower students in order to get that all important first job.*



# The Work SHOPS

**Elizabeth C. Dillon, AIA, NCARB**  
*Historical Concepts, New York, NY*

**Caren Rideau**  
*Kitchen Design Group, Pacific Palisades, CA*

**Ross Padluck, RA**  
*Tom Kligerman Design, New York, NY*

**Nick McWhirter, AIA, NCARB**  
*SHM Architects, Dallas, TX*

**Mark Williams**  
*Mark Williams Design, Atlanta, GA*

**Thomas A. Kligerman, RA**  
*Tom Kligerman Design, New York, NY*

**Allyson Mendenhall, ASLA, LEED AP**  
*Design Workshop, Denver, CO*

# Perspectives on Preparation

**On an annual basis** the DLF has covered the expenses to send 8 to 14 industry professionals to the Mississippi State University campus. For 3 days the professionals deliver talks, breakout sessions and mock interviews designed to break down the barriers (explicit and concealed) that exist between novice students of design and leading industry professionals.

A combination of formal and informal events were designed to give students numerous venues by which to engage with a professional. From BBQ dinners with a live band to coffee breaks around the student's desk, the program is meant to bring confidence and self-assurance to students who might never otherwise have time with so many industry professionals.





## Day to Day Schedule of Activities & Events

### Friday 01.20.23

**8:00 am. COFFEE & BREAKFAST**  
Students at this time will need to identify themselves as Novice, Intermediate or Experienced w/ regard to interviews. Select the name tag color, associated w/ your cohort.

**8:30 am. BREAKOUT SESSION 1, Location Giles Hall Gallery:**  
Students to share their resumes and portfolios with DLF Professionals in a roundtable format for advice and feedback about quality, content inclusion, format, and legibility.

**10:00 am. DESIGN LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION INTRO LECTURE**  
TOPICS INCLUDE:  
Who is the Design Leadership Foundation?  
Journey to the top, how the DLF professional mentors found their success and how you can do the same.  
Question and Answer Forum

**11:00 am. DLF 2021 STUDENT AWARD RECIPIENTS Q&A SESSION**  
Previous student award recipients give an introduction of their experience, summer activities in NYC, internship overview and more. Students will also be available for casual Q&A interactions.

**12:00 LUNCH** provided for registered student participants in Giles Hall Gallery, site of the DLF WHY NOW Exhibition

**2:00 pm. BREAKOUT SESSION II**  
Location Giles Hall Gallery:  
Students to share their resumes and portfolios with DLF Professionals in a roundtable format for advice and feedback about quality, content inclusion, format, and legibility.

**NOVICE GROUP:**  
Locations: Giles Hall Jury Room Seating for 45

### Saturday 01.21.23

**8:00 am. COFFEE & BREAKFAST** with Student Registrants  
Location: Montgomery Hall Main Gallery, 2nd Floor

**8:30 am. DLF Mentors** to walk to MSU Career Services in Montgomery Hall

**8:30 am. Kenneth Roberts of Interior Talent** provides intro/overview session beginning at 8:30 ending at 9:00 w/ student cohort '1' moving to interview rooms (22 students arrive in the classroom and Ken discusses with them his experience as a design talent recruiter. He also outlines what students will be doing over the next hour)

**9:00 - 9:20 Interview Session 1a**  
9:30 - 9:40 Interview Session 1b  
9:40 - 10:00 Interview Session 1c

**10:00 - 10:20 Interview Session 2a**  
10:30 - 10:40 Interview Session 2b  
10:40 - 11:00 Interview Session 2c

**11:00 - 11:20 Interview Session 3a**  
11:30 - 11:40 Interview Session 3b  
11:40 - 12:00 Interview Session 3c

**12:00 - 1:00 LUNCH** (DLF Mentors only) Box Lunch at Montgomery Hall

**1:00 - 1:20 Interview Session 4a**  
1:30 - 1:40 Interview Session 4b  
1:40 - 2:00 Interview Session 4c

**2:00 - 2:20 Interview Session 5a**  
2:30 - 2:40 Interview Session 5b  
2:40 - 3:00 Interview Session 5c

**3:00 - 3:20 Interview Session 6a**  
3:30 - 3:40 Interview Session 6b  
3:40 - 4:00 Interview Session 6c

**2:00 - 4:00 NOVICE STUDENTS BREAKOUT SESSION**  
REBECCA BIRDWELL of the Design Leadership Foundation  
Session title: My Experience as an Intern

KENNETH ROBERTS of Interior Talent  
Session title: What Employers are looking for and how to prepare



**Ron Woodson & Jaime Rummerfield**  
Woodson & Rummerfield House of Design, Los Angeles, CA



**Wayne Adams, RA**  
Barnes Vanze, Washington D.C.



**Holly Johnson, AIA**  
Pak Heydt & Associates LLC Atlanta, GA



**Mark Williams**  
Mark Williams Design, Atlanta, GA

**Dustin Gautreaux, ASLA**  
Hoerr Schaudt, Chicago, IL

**David Stocker, RA**  
SHM Architects Dallas, TX

**Shea Soucie**  
Soucie Horner, LTD. Chicago, IL

**Over** the course of the three days students heard from an array of industry professionals from across the country in lectures, breakout sessions, working groups and one on one discussions. Students learned about the career paths of professionals who, in many cases, looked like them and came from similar backgrounds. The DLF membership shared information about the career options that exist in places that many students never considered.

The event was designed in part, to make it clear for all students of design, that amazing opportunities are found through asking and awareness. The students were encouraged to network and develop the skills needed to maintain a professional network.

## Day to Day Schedule of Activities & Events

### Friday 10.22.21

**9:30 am. COFFEE & BREAKFAST**  
Students at this time will need to identify themselves as Novice, Intermediate or Experienced w/ regard to interviews. Select the name tag color, associated w/ your cohort.

**10:00 am. PANEL 1, Location Giles Hall Harrison Auditorium:**  
TOPICS INCLUDE:  
Who is the Design Leadership Foundation?  
Journey to the top, how the DLF professional mentors found their success and how you can do the same.  
Question and Answer Forum

**11:30 am. LUNCH** provided for registered student participants in Giles Hall Gallery, site of the DLF WHY NOW Exhibition

**1:00 pm. BREAKOUT SESSION I**  
The Search: What type of firm/job should I be pursuing? Pros and Cons: What region should I pursue? How can I make it work?  
The Cover Letter: What makes a good cover letter? How should I design it?  
The Resume: What makes a good resume? Design Content: What if I don't have any work experience?  
References: Whom should I give as references? Should I have them write me a letter of reference?  
The Portfolio: What makes a good portfolio? Design Content: How long should it be? What projects should I include? What format is best?  
The Gatekeeper: What's a gatekeeper? What are some tips and tricks to get past the gatekeeper?  
The Interview: In person or online? What should I wear? I am nervous... How can I get more comfortable? What should I say? How long should I last? Who will be there? Should I have a head behind? What is the employer thinking? What is a personality assessment?  
The Follow Up: How should I follow up? What should I expect from the employer? What should I do if they say no?  
The Backup Plan: What should I do if I don't get the job right away? What things could I do for my next step?

**NOVICE GROUP:**  
Locations: Giles Hall Jury Room Seating for 45-55

**INTERMEDIATE:**  
Locations: Giles Hall Grad. Lab, Seating for 25-30

**EXPERIENCED:**  
Locations: Giles Hall Conference Room, Seating for 12  
Giles Hall Seminar Room 12A, Seating for 12  
Giles Hall CSC Conference Space, Seating for 12

**2:35 pm. BREAKOUT SESSION II**  
The Search: What type of firm/job should I be pursuing? Pros and Cons: What region should I pursue? How can I make it work?  
The Cover Letter: What makes a good cover letter? How should I design it?  
The Resume: What makes a good resume? Design Content: What if I don't have any work experience?  
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**NOVICE GROUP:**  
Locations: Giles Hall Jury Room Seating for 45-55  
3rd Year Studio Seminar Room 303B Seating for 12  
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**INTERMEDIATE:**  
Locations: Giles Hall Grad. Lab, Seating for 25-30  
Giles Hall Grad. Lab, Seating for 30  
Giles Hall Student Lounge, Seating for 12

**EXPERIENCED:**  
Locations: Giles Hall Conference Room, Seating for 12  
Giles Hall Seminar Room 12C, Seating for 12  
Giles Hall CSC Conference Space, Seating for 12

**3:50 pm. PANEL 2, Location Giles Hall Harrison Auditorium:**  
TOPICS INCLUDE:  
Who is the Design Leadership Foundation?  
Question and Answer Forum

**5:00 pm. MEET & MINGLE BBQ DINNER and LIVE ENTERTAINMENT**  
provided for all students behind Giles Hall in theater space. Students sign up for interview time slots at this event!

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ARC 4990/6990

## Professional Horizons *STUDY-AWAY*

*Of the awards offered through the MSU-DLF Incubator Program one of the most exciting and transformational experiences is a 4 week, all-expenses paid, summer study away in New York, NY. The 3-credit hour elective course covers a multitude of content areas with a special focus on resume and portfolio development. Aside from the classroom content, students also participate in 9 office tours. These range from small to large firms with different professional focus areas. In addition, students regularly tour amazing built projects throughout the city with the faculty leading extensive walking tours.*

*In the afternoon between 1:00pm. and 6:00pm students report to their part-time internship. Each student has a unique internship arranged in advance of their arrival and all students are paid \$20.00 per hours for their efforts. This work, while providing an amazing insight, also helps students build a professional network, afford additional self-directed outings, and make lasting connections for return experiences such as summer internships or year-long cooperative learning experiences.*

# First-hand *Perspective*

# GAINING

*Exposure to all the design world has to offer in a city that has something for everyone*

# NYC





**BIG** NYC  
Bjarke Ingles Group

Office tours are a critical component of the experience with students visiting 9 offices in 3 weeks

# GAINING Perspective

From 100's of employees to single digit practices, the tours provide a unique view into the kinds of experience each student may pursue.



**Yellow House** Architects  
Elizabeth Drazatsis, AIA



**Tom Kligerman** Design  
Thomas A. Kligerman, RA



**Scape** Studio  
Kate Orff, FASLA



# Building a Network for Knowledge

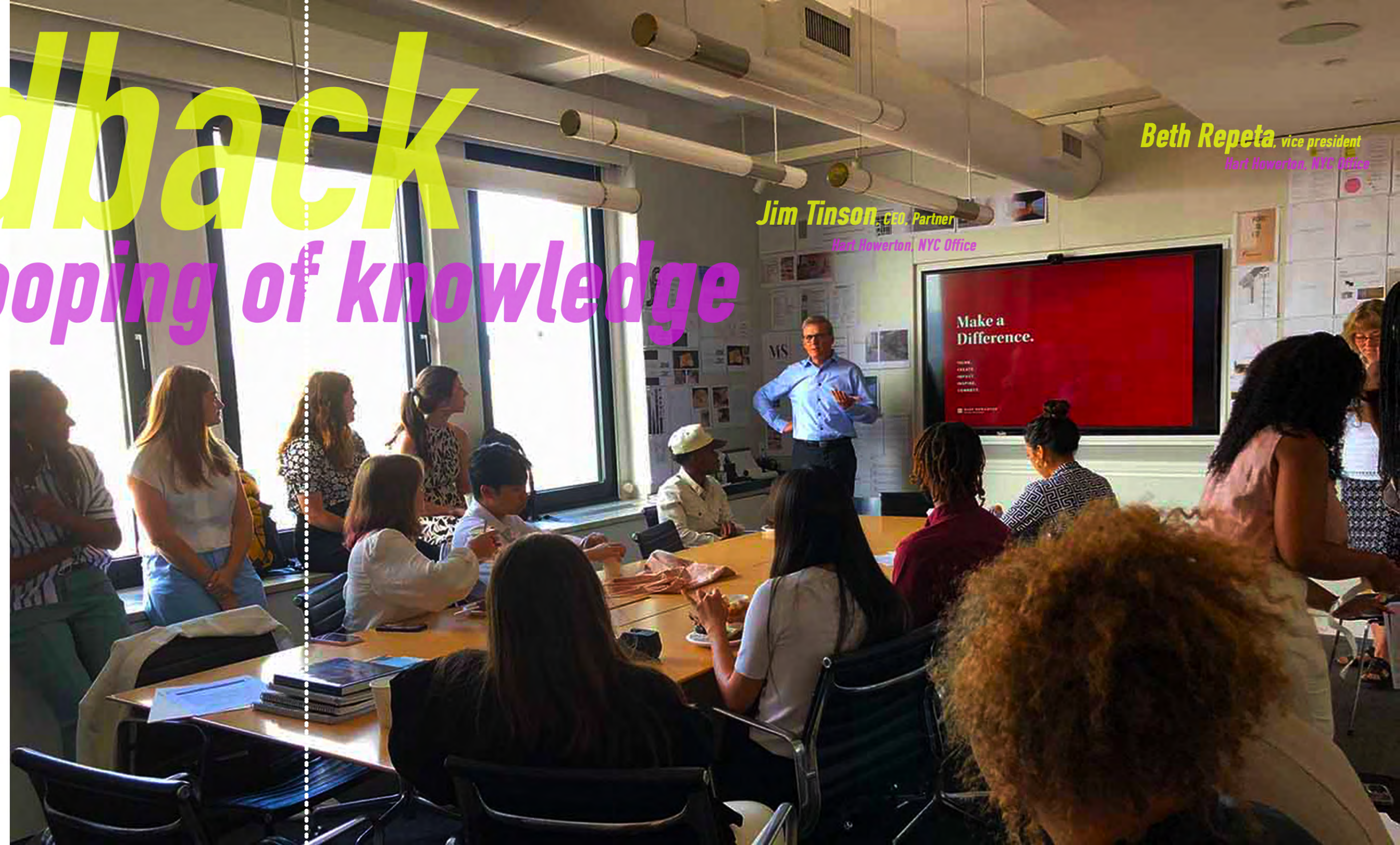
While the DLF was on campus for the workshops they provided 471 mock interviews. Students met with the professionals in our career center and moved from room to room in 15-minute increments learning what each professional had to suggest about their portfolio, resume, and interpersonal communication skills. The feedback was used in a later stage of the course when students presented updated and refined versions of their materials to the design staff of Hart Howerton, NYC as part of the midterm review.

Students from Mississippi State University not only learned a great deal from these experiences, but they turned around and shared that knowledge with classmates who were not able to visit New York. The students held follow-up sessions with underclassman and helped to organize the second DLF workshop event in MS.

# Feedback & the looping of knowledge



**Caren Rideau**  
Providing a mock interview fall 2021



**Jim Tinson**, CEO, Partner  
Hart Howerton, NYC Office

**Beth Repeta**, vice president  
Hart Howerton, NYC Office

# MESSAGES

# From THE

# STUDENTS



Hannah Zhou

"With this award, I will be able to use many resources to the fullest, and focus on the process of learning and exploration. I hope to one day be able to give back to the community and help others as you have done for many."



Elvis Scott

"This scholarship helped broaden my spectrum of what architecture and its profession has to offer. It helped me gain opportunities and go on adventure that I would have never dreamed of doing before."



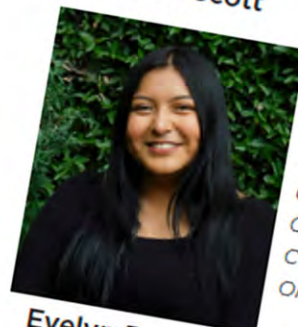
Mikinzie Sanders

"Receiving this DLF scholarship is an immense honor and a profound blessing for me. Your generous support reaffirms my belief in the importance of hard work and dedication, and it fuels my determination to excel academically."



Shawn Mackey

"This scholarship allows me the privilege of continuing my education without hindrance. I am able to get the materials and software I need to successfully get through the school year."



Evelyn Ramirez

"This scholarship helped me experience the architecture profession from a different view. It opened up opportunities and connections in a entirely new city that I could only dream of."



China Chandler

"This experience opened my mind to what's possible in the field. I've made connections with people that I would not otherwise meet, and the entire DLF experience has made me excited to do more throughout my education."



Iliana Ramos

"Receiving this scholarship helped to open my eyes to living and working in an urban environment and gave me experience working on different kinds of projects with my internship we don't always get to work on in school."



Abby Williams

"I have been able to make life-changing connections and experiences in a city that I have dreamed of working in since childhood. This experience has made me realize that having a career in a city like New York is possible."



Paulina Fernandez

"It is an honor to be recognized for my hard work, and receiving this award motivates me to continue to strive for excellence. I would like to express my sincerest thanks and appreciation."



Breunna Manuel

"This DLF award provided a way to purchase a computer monitor as I approached my third year of architecture. I feel that I made a great investment, and without DLF, it wouldn't have been possible at that given point in my life."



Evelin Aguilar

"Thank you so much for this amazing opportunity. These funds will definitely be used to buy myself a new computer!"

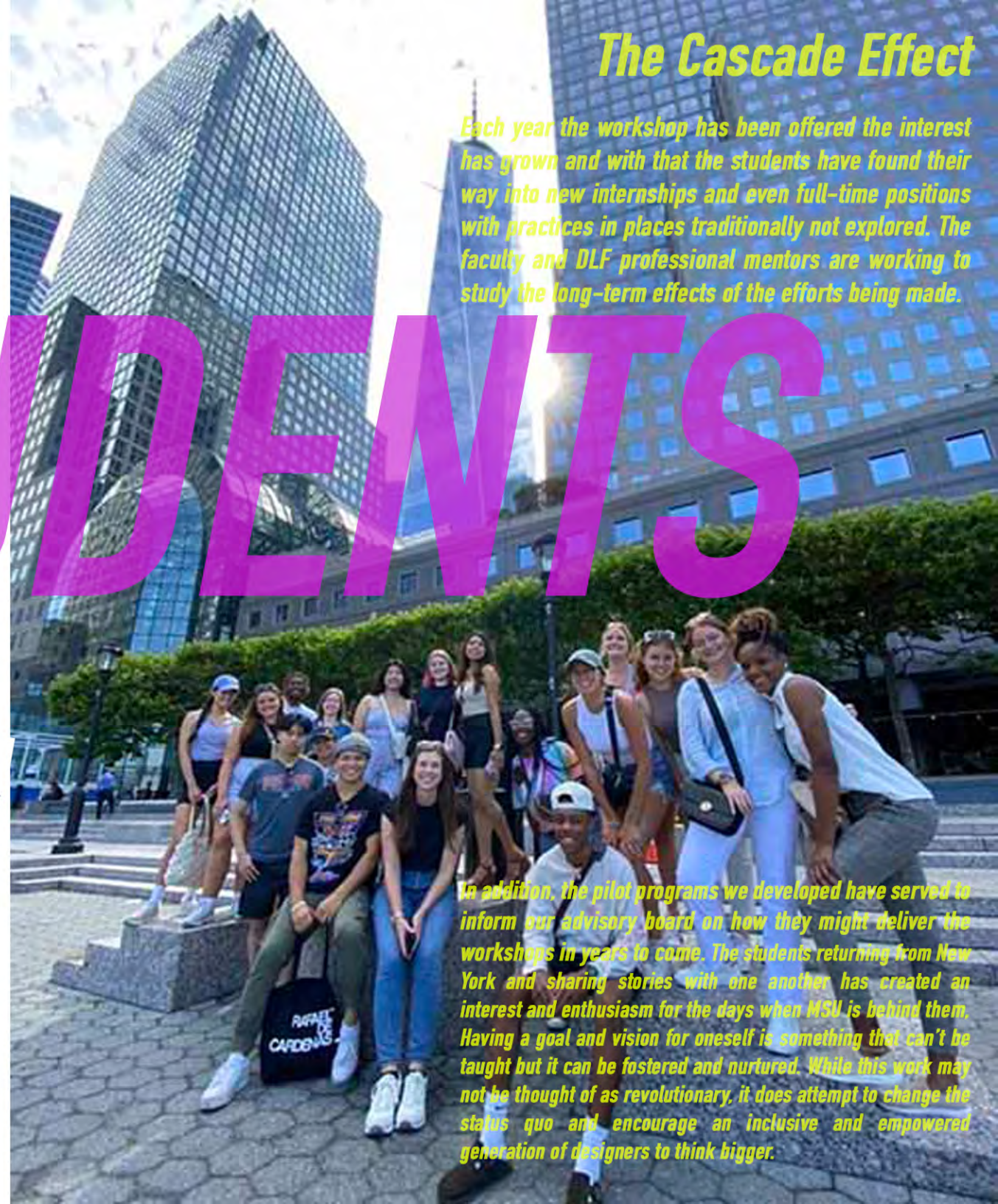


Cole Arrington

"This award has granted me the opportunity to live life in a way that I will never forget. Being able to view the world through a different lens was a unique experience, and I am grateful to have been able to do so."

## The Cascade Effect

Each year the workshop has been offered the interest has grown and with that the students have found their way into new internships and even full-time positions with practices in places traditionally not explored. The faculty and DLF professional mentors are working to study the long-term effects of the efforts being made.



In addition, the pilot programs we developed have served to inform our advisory board on how they might deliver the workshops in years to come. The students returning from New York and sharing stories with one another has created an interest and enthusiasm for the days when MSU is behind them. Having a goal and vision for oneself is something that can't be taught but it can be fostered and nurtured. While this work may not be thought of as revolutionary, it does attempt to change the status quo and encourage an inclusive and empowered generation of designers to think bigger.