Dear Colleagues,

The Design Futures Public Interest Design (PID) Student Leadership Forum is a five-day, interdisciplinary forum bringing together student leaders from across the country with practitioner- and university-faculty who represent some of the most important thought leadership in this emerging sub-discipline. We frame the conversation broadly, but try to engender leadership and skill-building for future leaders hoping to use design as a tool for social equity and positive change in underserved communities. Our guiding principles include striving to build the next generation of leadership in the field; continuing to diversify the ecosystem of PID in terms of discipline, background, race, gender, and scale; elevating the rigor and critical capacity of PID curricula; and curating a national network of thought leadership drawn from contributing universities and practitioner-faculty committed to the advancement of the field. We do this through the five-day forum, as well as through the nurturing of our student and faculty (both practitioner and academic) networks, and our consortium of committed member schools. Our goal is to foster peer-based professional development through enrichment and critique and to counter the dispersed nature of this emergent movement by creating opportunities for collaboration and collective innovation.

Whether you call it public interest design, community engaged design, or design for impact, it is clear there is a large and growing interest among young students of design, planning and related fields to become effective participants in shaping a more equitable and just world. As more and more universities develop classes and studios to expose students to this realm of practice, these students become even more aware of what else they need to know to be effective in these uniquely challenging environments. Many of these students who have already shown a commitment to developing these skills invested their time and energy once again to learn from some of the leading practitioners of our time.

Because of this, the second Design Futures Public Interest Design (PID) Student Leadership Forum, hosted by the Tulane School of Architecture in New Orleans from June 3-7, 2014, was a great success! This yearbook captures the essence of their experiences and documents a group of future and current leaders in this emerging and critical field of work.

This year’s Forum brought together a fantastic group of multi-disciplinary students and recognized leaders in the PID field to build new leadership through the collective exploration of the social justice historical and philosophical roots of PID, as well as necessary leadership skills needed to face the contemporary
challenges around practicing PID. Through interactive workshops in a collaborative learning environment, student and faculty participants gain specific training in some of the core skill sets required for effective PID practice.

Some highlights from 2014 included:

- The participation of 65 students, from a variety of discipline and 18 different universities across the globe;
- Hosting of 26 speakers from backgrounds in academia, the non-profit sector, and for-profit sector, and;
- The collaborative creation of 10 workshops meant to expose students to the PID leadership skills and interdisciplinary network they might not be fully engaged with in their home degree programs.

The 10 member schools committed to our Design Futures Consortium each sent at least five students on scholarship, and many of them also sent faculty representatives that enriched the entire affair with their participation. Further, because of the generous sponsorship of the Autodesk Foundation we were able to fund full scholarships for four incredible students from across the globe to participate from schools not represented in the consortium. Students and faculty spent copious portions of the five-day event working together as peers, and the network built through the experience is very strong. Post-forum surveys indicate that the experience was very positive for all participants— with over 30% of both student and faculty respondents even categorizing the experience as “transformative.”

Not surprisingly, the experience has been best captured by a few of our outstanding students in blog testimonials including Autodesk Scholar Mauricio Uruená and Art Center College of Design student Stefanie Dhillon (links found at http://dfstudentforum.org). These narratives complement the summaries you will find here in the 2014 yearbook. Just like we did after last years forum, we are collecting participant feedback and ideas, and are working with university consortium membership and practitioner-faculty to identify strengths to build upon and new opportunities for collaboration and increased rigor in the curriculum; all of which is being incorporated into the 2015 program to be hosted by the University of Kansas.

We hope to see you there!
With thanks,

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Cofounder, Design Futures

Barbara Brown Wilson  
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CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

TUESDAY JUNE 3

MORNING:  CHECK IN TO DORMS
2:30 PM:  INTRODUCTIONS, with Maurice Cox and Tulane School of Architecture Dean Kenneth Schwartz
3:00 PM:  Small group get to know
4:00 PM:  David Perkes: Design and Civil Rights: What is PID?
5:30 PM:  Opening Reception: Johanna Gilligan at Grow Dat Youth Farm
9:00 PM:  Bus returns to Tulane

WEDNESDAY JUNE 4

9:00 AM:  BREAKFAST
9 AM-12 PM:  Models of PID practice: case studies from design centers and PID providers around the country
12-1:30 PM:  LUNCH
1:30-4:30 PM:  Workshops:
Lakshmi Ramjaran: Business models of PID practice
Barbara Brown Wilson & Nicole Joslin: Building platforms for leadership diversity

THURSDAY JUNE 5

8:00 AM:  BREAKFAST
9 AM-12 PM:  Workshops:
Marc Norman: Financing Affordable Housing
Erinn McGurn: International PID
12-1:30 PM:  LUNCH
1:30-4:30 PM:  Workshops:
Jess Zimbabwe and Maurice Cox: Making Design Civic
Katie Swenson & Jessica Garz: Financing PID

SATURDAY JUNE 7

Stick around! Explore the sights and sounds of New Orleans.

SUNDAY JUNE 8

WWW.DFSTUDENTFORUM.ORG
FRIDAY JUNE 6
8:00 AM: BREAKFAST
9 AM-12 PM: Workshops:
Bryan Bell & Theresa Hwang: Evaluating Practice
Anne Frederick, Alexa Kasdan, & Christine Gaspar: Resource Allies and partnerships
12-1:30 PM: LUNCH
1:30-4:30 PM: Workshops:
John Peterson: Career pathways in PID
(including panel with early career practitioners)
Liz Ogbu: Human Centered Design
5:30 PM: Keynote: John Cary [at AIA New Orleans]
6:30 PM: Autodesk Foundation reception [At AIA New Orleans]

SATURDAY JUNE 7
9:00 AM: BREAKFAST and student Pecha Kucha sessions
10:30 AM: Reflection hosted by Jim Stockard and Katie Swenson
1:00 PM: LUNCH and closing

SUNDAY JUNE 8
Stick around! Explore the sights and sounds of New Orleans.
LAKSHMI RAMJARAN: BUSINESS MODELS OF PID PRACTICE

How do you lead and design organizations that achieve multiple goals – social, aesthetic/design, and commercial? This interactive session will start with a case discussion of Public Architecture – an organization attempting to create public interest design, remain financially viable, and change the practice of design in the profession. Through the discussion we will arrive at key decisions that can make in designing successful organizations, principles involved in leading institutional change, and learning how to in managing oneself and one’s career when engaged in public interest design. We will then engage in a small group exercise to apply some of the underlying principles to your own organizations, the social issues you are working on and your careers.

Pre-reading is required for this workshop. The case will be provided upon sign up. Please read the case and think about the following questions to prepare for the discussion.
1. What are the strengths of Public Architecture’s current organizational model? What are the weaknesses of this model?
2. What should Public Architecture’s focus be going forward? What challenges is the organization likely to face with the action plan you propose?

BARBARA BROWN WILSON + NICOLE JOSLIN
BUILDING PLATFORMS FOR LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY

Community-minded designers often quote Herbert Simon’s definition of design as “changing existing situations into preferred ones.” Public Interest Design is meant to challenge what those preferred situations should be and who should have access to them — significantly expanding the scope of ‘design’ and the role of ‘designers.’ A major question that must be addressed as more inclusive design models emerge is who has the agency to affect that change? And how do we create new pathways for leadership development in the professional and community spheres? This workshop will draw from current research, first-hand accounts from practitioners, and participant’s personal experiences to collaboratively identify more intentional leadership development platforms for community-engaged design practices. Conclusions drawn in this workshop will contribute to ongoing research and inform future development of leadership empowerment platforms — by contributing to this workshop you will join a small army of PID advocates working together to expand leadership opportunities in our ecosystem!

MARC NORMAN: FINANCING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Why do key parcels in our cities remain vacant or underutilized? What incentives or disincentives do real estate markets, regulatory agencies, lenders and others deploy that hinder development? In places with intractable social problems how can we work within the constraints of market conditions, lending practices and regulatory hurdles, yet still achieve neighborhood revitalization, catalytic developments, better social outcomes and inclusive projects?

We will go out into the neighborhood and look at parcels, discuss these issues, meet with individuals engaged in this world and discuss possibilities for a range of projects we’ll explore through a group discussion. You will learn the latest tools and technologies that will help you navigate the fields of real estate, finance, regulation and governmental priorities necessary to get projects done from parks, community facilities, affordable housing to neighborhood serving retail, pop up shops and all sorts of other possibilities. We will work to understand the motivations of lenders, owners, community members and city officials to get your projects off the ground and into the world.
ERIN MCGURIN: INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC INTEREST DESIGN

This workshop will highlight the challenges and opportunities inherent in international public interest design work and explore systems for successful partnerships and project implementation. Through discussion and collective idea-generation, we will examine the central issues at play in resource-challenged environments - access, equity, value creation and social justice. Building on this discussion, students will then work in small groups to identify a pressing community need, prioritize its potential impact at all scales, and develop a workable solution (be it a product, system or built object) to address the identified issue.

JESSICA ZIMBABWE + MAURICE COX
MAKING DESIGN CIVIC

Have you ever been disappointed in the inability of public officials to articulate a clear vision for your county, city or town? Have you ever wondered what you would do if you were mayor of a city? In this workshop, participants will discuss the relationship between design, community engagement and political power. We will explore how progressive design and planning ideas are shaped, harnessed, and executed by elected officials and their appointed delegates. The workshop will explore ways that design practitioners can more effectively engage political and civic systems in their communities—and why not, even run for mayor. Learn from the real world experiences of Maurice Cox, who ran for City Council as an architect, won by a landslide and went on to be mayor of Charlottesville, VA. Learn from the real world experiences of Jess Zimbabwe, who as Director of the Mayors’ Institute on City Design acted as an expert advisor to hundreds of mayors on matters of the built and natural environments. Participants will help in crafting a sample political platform (with individual planks) for a candidate running for City Council on a Public Interest Design theme.

KATIE SWENSON + JESSICA GARZ: FINANCING PID

The question that’s often asked at the 25th hour in the creative process -- “So now that we have this great idea, how do we fund it?”

Instead of waiting until the bitter end, we’re going to talk about money first!

Katie Swenson, Vice President of Design at Enterprise Community Partners, and Jessica Garz, Program Officer at the Surdna Foundation will lead the workshop drawing material from their current roles, and prior experiences as public interest design practitioners in the public, private and non-profit sectors. The afternoon session will take on a hybrid form; part lecture, part seminar and part hands-on workshop. Participants will learn about different organizational typologies, sources and uses of money, and we’ll do our best to demystify the world of mission-based fundraising.
WORKSHOPS

JOHN PETERSON: CAREER PATHWAYS IN PID
(INCLUDING PANEL WITH EARLY CAREER PRACTITIONERS)

While there is nothing new about designers wanting careers focused on social impact, there have been a limited number of jobs available for those interested in this area of the profession. This is about to change as the landscape of opportunity in the field opens up.

The good news is that it is just the beginning. The bad news is there is no career counselor with a ready how-to guide. Many jobs are being created where you would expect them, but more will be available where you do not. This workshop will help you craft your own career goals and chart a path to accomplish them. You will learn about where the current jobs are, but more importantly, you will learn about where the future careers will be and what you’ll need to know to get them. You will leave this workshop with a new job description for yourself, a list of skills and experience you will need and the next place you are going to be working.

LIZ OGBU: HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN

How might we have meaningful conversations with community members? How might we engage people in the process of design? How might we develop empathic designs that can tackle wicked social problems? The path to social impact design requires being able to address these questions. Human Centered Design (HCD) is process through which people’s needs and desires can be discovered and articulated in meaningful ways that can foster creative community engagement and innovative (and contextual) solutions. Through her work with Public Architecture, IDEO.org, and her own consulting practice, Liz Ogbu has extensive experience using human-centered design to collaborate on social impact projects in diverse communities globally, from San Francisco to London to Nairobi. In this workshop, she will show the basic tools of HCD methodology and give participants an opportunity to put some of those learnings into practice through an active design exercise.

KEYNOTE BY JOHN CARY
followed by reception

AIA New Orleans
1000 St. Charles Avenue
BRYAN BELL + THERESA HWANG: EVALUATING PRACTICE

The decisions we make as public interest designers have positive or negative impact on others. How do we understand this impact when we are designing buildings, neighborhoods, and ultimately communities? Do we have professional standards of care that ensure we are truly protecting the health, welfare, and safety of the public? Without it, how can the public grow to trust our services? Current professional standards tend to be primarily driven by liability and legal aspects of the practice. As designers of the public realm, we need to understand that our design impact extends boundaries of our projects, but influence the everyday experience of the surrounding community. We need to develop clear collective standards so that we can be more intentional with our outcomes and processes so that we are held accountable to a larger community who is affected by our profession. Our session will review SEED (Social Economic Environmental Design) as a process of accountability and transparency, and then take a micro-level look at personal ethics and existing professional standards. As a collective activity, we will envision a more effective, compassionate and impactful Professional Code of Conduct while discussing dilemmas and other challenges that test our standards and ethics.

ANNE FREDERICK + ALEXA KASDAN + CHRISTINE GASPAR: RESOURCE ALLIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

How do you create projects that have real social impact? The Center for Urban Pedagogy, the Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center, and Hester Street Collaborative have been collaborating with community groups for years to do just that. As the three organizations have shared their skills in research, planning, and design to help community partners meet their social justice goals, we have learned a lot about what works and what doesn’t work when it comes to partnerships. This workshop will build on our experience as resource allies for community organizations, and explore best (and not-so-good) practices for developing and maintaining effective collaborations, and the benefits and challenges of different types of social justice partnerships.
The least beneficial aspects of this forum to my professional development/education were:

student responses:

• More diversity of participants’ practice areas within design.

• Talking about feelings.

• At times I felt that the tone of conference was overly idealistic in the sense that we did not discuss many projects that were not successful or that experienced major issues. I believe that students can learn a great deal from both successful and unsuccessful attempts at PID.

faculty responses:

• Some of the workshops were very much for the students (as was appropriate), and I was happy to have some time to explore New Orleans, but we might consider some parallel sessions for faculty only.

• I often felt that, as a faculty member, I could have served as a stronger mentor to the participating students, but hesitated doing so as faculty voices can so easily intimidate student ones. Maybe we develop a more structured role for participating faculty who happen not to be chairing a given session.

The most beneficial aspects of this forum to my professional development/education were:

student responses:

• Having fun, creative workshops that actually make us think through and work out the aspects of PID that we discuss and are presented.

• Not only the networking of professionals but to peers that are going through the same /similar things as myself. That network will last a long time.

• The exposure to other possible career paths, one on one access to people who are doing the things that I want to do, and the HOW TO perspective of accomplishing these types of projects and becoming this sort of professional.

faculty responses:

• Re-connecting with the needs and views of the next generation of designers, and also hearing what peer leaders are up to.

• Discussing with colleagues the challenges that we face day to day, while taking a step back to discuss the macro-view of our profession.

An online post-Forum survey indicated that while all participants had a positive experience, 32% of students and 29% of faculty found Design Futures to be transformational. Below we included a few of the responses that reflected the larger sentiments expressed in the surveys.

FEEDBACK
What did we not talk about in enough length, and what topic did we give too much time?

student responses:
- We should have talked more about diversifying the professional field.
- I don’t think we talked critically enough about the dangers of PID and the fetishisms of this kind of work as the new “green - washing.”
- I think it would be interesting to have longer student led workshops, because 30 minutes felt too abbreviated.
- I wish there was more time spent on 1) impact measurement and 2) organizational management. Furthermore, more discussion on political science, ecological studies, or social research methods would be useful.

faculty responses:
- Not enough time for students beginning their careers and where to start developing projects within their own communities (great start, but so much to cover). Too much time on introducing every presenter.
- Not enough time on how to work within existing frameworks of pedagogy, curriculum, student groups, formats, etc. Too much time on stand-alone initiatives that might be hard for students to establish and institutionalize within the duration of their architectural education, especially for grad students who may only be on a campus three or four terms.

The most enjoyable aspects of this experience were:

student responses:
- I really appreciated the workshop-format of the sessions. That format really seemed to tap the collective wisdom in the room and create an adaptive learning environment.
- The size of the conference allowed great exposure to professionals and other attendees. The small scale made the conference more personable and therefore more productive than other conferences I have attended in the past.
- Being able to discuss the talks and how they may or may not relate to our work. Sharing critical opinions. Dancing to jazz.
- Meeting like-minded people from different universities throughout the country.

faculty responses:
- The commitment and energy of the students and their interest in social justice. The amazing conversations with colleagues that made me feel inspired, reinvigorated, and part of a really amazing movement.
- Individual discussions where attendees could dive into deeper conversations with other attendees.
Were the off campus outings beneficial contributions to your experience? Why/why not?

student responses:

• Yes they were. They help as an example of outgoing project that is still redefining itself and continuing growing. Also, it shows the challenges that they face.

• YES! Starting the experience at Grow Dat Youth Farm was a great way to get excited about the forum and to start by seeing practical application of PID was very rewarding

• Yes, maybe would have been nice to have the chance to mingle with a few people from outside the group, i.e. Grow Dat interns at the farm, or local architects at the AIA.

• Yes, absolutely. The jazz clubs, French Quarter and dinners at various eateries were some of the most memorable parts of my overall experience.

How has this experience impacted your potential leadership capacities in PID?

student responses:

• It definitely solidified my desires for going into the field and using my knowledge of design for the greater good.

• I sense that leadership in PID is a collective thing. It’s knowing I’m not alone, that there is a generous and expanding network of people who get that their own self-expression and fulfillment is connected to others, and the kind of transformation they want to bring to the world extends beyond what any one person could do (even with a small team).

• I have been transformed in ways I couldn’t have possibly imagined. I really want to specialize in a career which focuses on everyday people and their needs.

• I am now aware of the importance of public speaking, and its something I will definitely try to work more on.

faculty responses:

• Yes! More time to connect with colleagues and catch up with folks. Also time to build trust and rapport with folks we didn’t know as well.

• Absolutely essential, as they were among the best opportunities for faculty interaction. I wish the students, though, had been given a tour of some of the amazing work that has been done in New Orleans, particularly in the Seventh Ward and Lower Nine.

• Positively. I felt really energized. I sometimes stray away from the field and don’t feel a part of it, and this really reminded me that I care about it and it made me feel like I had something to contribute and that as we come together we can move the field forward.

• I feel like I have a much better grasp on movements in the field, and will be better able to converse and respond when discussing the field.
If you could attend a shorter alumni event next year, would you? (91% say yes) If so, what should it include? (students only)

- I think it could be really valuable to loop back, highlight work accomplished over the past year, reflect on pitfalls, and support each other in brainstorming future possibilities and directions... I love the idea of a network of loving relations supporting each other in being accountable to our individual and collective greatness.

- A “day of failure” (Finnish concept).

- It would be cool to do this as an extension to the ACD conference, a workshop just for Design Futures Alumni, perhaps with an ACD discount or something like that so that the students would also get the benefit of attending the conference and would already be there.

- Seminars on what students are currently working on, future plans to implement elsewhere, or even sessions on intergenerational leadership or interdisciplinary connection or networking.

What resources do you wish you had to support your growth in the field going forward?

Student responses:

- A list of Foundations and Grants that have been used by Tulane and some of our lecturers. Possibly a FAQ for those that are looking to start a non-profit so they can see what all it entails.

- I wish that my studios in school would provide more thinking along the lines of public interest designers. I wish we, as a school, had support or connections with our communities (even stronger ones) where we could generate ideas/projects during our coursework for actual communities/neighborhoods in need.

- A database of orgs and people who are doing this work. And a library of successful techniques of community engagement and public interest design.

- A central bank of information that had a multitude of opportunities to get involved with (jobs, conferences, schools, etc)

Faculty responses:

- more opportunities like this

- Stipend, travel expenses, per diem, etc. We are really bad at treating pro bono, community engagement, design+build etc. with the same support we give to market-driven initiatives. Of course there are obvious reasons why this is so, but that doesn’t mean we should accept as a given.
If you could participate again in future DF Student Forums, what role would you like to have as alumni? (students only)

- Help to organize it.
- A panel with practicing alumni would be a nice addition.
- I would love to be a more active participant in the workshops and be able to serve as an assistant in the planning of the forum.
- Any and every! This experience was extremely beneficial and I would be happy to stay involved in any capacity.

How has this experience altered the way you will engage with your future work? (students only)

- I had some really heart and mind opening conversations with students outside of the workshops about higher education, learning communities, and race. I am really grateful that there was so much diversity in so many dimensions at this workshop, and for the conversations that made available.
- It has encouraged me to speak up more and demand a certain things out of my education instead of feeling stuck by what seems to be a concrete curriculum.
- It wasn’t been so much altered as pushed forward. I will used the knowledge/experience to work to create tangible manifestations o my ideas.
- I will approach design with a more humanistic perspective and be more thoughtful of the people and history of each place.

Who was missing from our faculty spectrum (names of specific people, disciplines engaged, etc)? (faculty only)

- Might be interesting to push the inter-disciplinary angle a bit further next year. Possible additions, more community development partners (only if there is a benefit for them to attend as well).
- I noticed there were very little representation (students and faculty) from Latino communities and rural communities.
- It could be interesting to have someone doing similar work from another profession be part of a session (in the Austin year I remember the Tom’s Shoes woman being great) - Law, Medicine, Environmental Law, Engineering. There may be some transferable lessons.

What other offerings/programs should we develop for practical and university DF faculty? (faculty only)

- Scheduling monthly digital face to face (Skype/GoogleHangout/etc.) forums to share what each of us is working towards. Have a portal to host and signup for the next session, with a loose agenda. Could potentially invite students and community partners to join in.
- I would love a clearinghouse or blog or something where we could uphold images and videos and texts describing the various things we are all up to across the country.
- faculty retreat, DF faculty linked in group, resource platform (dropbox is fine for now but would be great to scale this up to a website that can be more broadly shared)
If you, as faculty, were going to pass along three links, tools, or takeaways to the students new that it has ended, what would they be?

take aways:

• Maintain an entrepreneurial approach to your career and don’t be afraid to fail!

• Participation is not the same as equity

• Look to identify the systemic causes of injustice and be intentional about where your design fits in that

• Building with people is the hardest thing to “design”, so practice practice practice.

• Co-opt existing frameworks and networks. Don’t wait for faculty or administrative leadership. Start somewhere, start anywhere, but get started.

readings:

• HCD Toolkit Article: Questions All Creative Placemakers Should Ask? (http://nextcity.org/daily/entry/the-question-all-creative-placemakers-should-ask)

links:

• links to two student blogs from 2014 forum at http://dfstudentforum.org

• http://www.ideo.org

• http://www.hcdconnect.org

• http://plusacumen.org/courses/hcd-for-social-innovation/

• http://www.currystonedesignprize.com

• http://www.everyonedeservesgreatdesign.com

• http://peoplemakeparks.org/ (Hester Street toolkit)

• http://welcometocup.org/Resources (CUP resource page)