

Item C

Proposal to create a College of Design at the University of Kentucky

Submitted by the School of Interior Design and
the College of Architecture
August 28, 2002

Summary:

The School of Interior Design and the College of Architecture propose the creation of a College of Design. This new college would consolidate a number of the professional design disciplines into one academic unit: Interior Design, Architecture, and Historic Preservation. The new college will support an increased design presence on campus and in Kentucky. It should also facilitate enhanced interaction with other disciplines connected with design: Engineering, Landscape Architecture, and Geography. This consolidation reflects an increasing interaction among the varied professional design disciplines in their practices; for at least a generation, architects, interior designers, and other design professionals have affiliated their activities to a much larger degree than was previously the norm.

Discussions regarding establishment of a College of Design have occurred on campus for over two years, encouraged by Chancellor Zinser and acting Provost Nietzel. The faculties from the affected programs have reviewed the issue thoroughly, both within their own units as well as together. Professional organizations and visiting committees for these programs have encouraged the movement towards a College of Design. The Futures Committee recommended establishment of a design college; furthermore, an external review committee composed of eminent design professionals and scholars convened by acting Provost Nietzel concurred on this course of action.

Programmatic Considerations:

The establishment of a College of Design furthers strategic goals across the university. It will enhance professional education for the programs within it, and provide a more realistic model for the students' professional careers. The proposal also complies with the Futures Committee, which recommended the creation of a College of Design. It will enhance potential for increasing public awareness of design issues in a manner consistent with the university's service mission. A College of Design will stimulate opportunities between faculty,

students for the enhancement of research and creative scholarship. Further, the college will provide additional opportunities for collaboration with other disciplines on campus.

Professional accreditation in architecture and interior design takes place for the particular degree program, not the encompassing academic unit; thus establishment of a College of Design will not change existing accreditation processes. However, there are intangible benefits: during Interior Design's most recent accreditation visit, there was a clear sense from the visiting team that establishment of a design college would benefit the program.

Many universities organize their professional design programs under a single academic unit; it is the predominant model across the country. It affords opportunities for collaboration among a larger number of faculty with similar interests, and opportunities for consolidation of resources particular to design (e.g. workshop, computer-aided-design workshop, and library). The one significant disadvantage concerns facilities: both the College of Architecture and the School of Interior Design have significant limitations in their present facilities, and consolidating the programs into a new college makes resolution of proper shared facilities for professional programs even more urgent. That, by far, is the largest financial issue facing the proposed college. And it may also be the only financial issue: it is not anticipated the new unit will entail other significant costs.

In terms of administrative structure, the College of Design will consist of two schools and one department. They are the School of Interior Design (presently in Human Environmental Sciences) and a new School of Architecture (as a new school to replace the College of Architecture, this will need to be approved as a part of this proposal). The professional programs in each of these schools will not be changed as a result of this proposal. The Master of Historic Preservation program, presently in the College of Architecture, will become a department in the College of Design.

There will be one dean, and directors for each of the two schools and a chair for the preservation program. An overall administrative structure has been defined over the past three months and reviewed by the provost. It was presented to faculty from Architecture, Interior Design, and Historic Preservation at a faculty meeting last month, and received wide support at that time. A copy of this proposed structure is attached.

Individual Considerations:

Students will benefit from greater interaction with and exposure to another allied

design discipline. Opportunities for increased intellectual discourse whether in formally arranged settings such as classes and seminars or the informal sharing of ideas that can arise naturally as a result of association will strengthen the creative environment and lead to an enhanced design culture for all. There will also be substantial intangible benefits from affecting this transition without any degradation to the professional programs. Accreditation requirements within each program ensure that each will maintain its own identity; thus it is not reasonable to think that the programs themselves will be consolidated in a manner that does not honor commitments to students presently enrolled in them. Class size will remain the same. Degrees and curricula for all programs in the new college will not be changing as a result of this proposal.

The proposed college should substantially enhance the interests of faculty in each of the affected programs. There will be a larger number of faculty with shared interests in design. Thus the overall intellectual climate will broaden, and opportunities for collaboration will increase. In many respects, faculty responsibilities should fit much better than in present circumstances, which will enhance professional opportunities for all faculty. Untenured faculty, in particular, should benefit from the proposed college structure. A larger and broader array of design faculty should provide additional guidance about expectations, which will be valuable for the promotion process.

The opportunities for more structured curricular interactions are just now beginning to be explored. There has been a meaningful degree of informal joint teaching between Interior Design and Architecture for the past four years, and this should increase. In particular, as Architecture moves to implement a new Master of Architecture degree curriculum (approved by the University Senate in the spring of 2002, and planned to be implemented in the 2003-2004 academic year), the potential for shared teaching should increase.

Research and service activities for faculty should be enhanced as well. Interior Design will have access to Architecture's two community design centers (in Lexington and Louisville); the COPC grant (Community Outreach Partnership Center), which was awarded last year, serves as a model for more research collaboration; and discussions among faculty regarding additional shared research initiatives have been underway for a year. It is not anticipated that the proposed college will entail teaching reassignments that would be detrimental to research and service activities on the part of the faculty.

Allocation of staff and financial resources has been studied extensively this summer by a committee chaired by Roger Huston, Chief Budget Officer. The committee has forwarded their recommendation for equitable assignment of staff

and finances to the acting Provost. It is anticipated that Interior Design will maintain its existing staff, and that they will join staff presently in the College of Architecture. There will be some redefinition of roles as this transition takes place, largely to remove redundancies in assignments, and to take advantage of new opportunities for disseminating information about the new college and its programs.

Conclusion:

Programs in Architecture and Interior Design have as their primary purpose the preparation of future professionals for these design disciplines. This proposal to establish a new College of Design reflects substantial changes towards collaboration in these design disciplines; indeed, it is not too much to say that the professions are well ahead of the university. It is time for the university to catch up, and the creation of a College of Design is a very large step in this regard. Documents attached corroborate that this transition has been studied and contemplated for a substantial period of time. Representatives of all programs as well as staff from each unit have had opportunities to make comments in a number of different forums; they will also be given the opportunity to comment in writing, and that correspondence, will also be enclosed with this proposal.

Attachments:

-Proposed organizational chart for the College of Design

The proposal was approved by the Senate Committee on Academic Organization and Structure and forwarded to the Senate Council. The Senate Council agreed to place the proposal on the Senate agenda if timely informed that a written, confidential vote was taken of the faculty of the Interior Design School and the faculty of the College of Architecture on the 28 August 2002 proposal.

Note: If approved the proposal will be forwarded to the Acting Provost for appropriate administrative action.