



ACSA NEWS

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ACSA Mission Statement

To advance architectural education through support of member schools, their faculty, and students. This support involves:

- Serving by encouraging dialogue among the diverse areas of discipline;
- Facilitating teaching, research, scholarly and creative works, through intra/interdisciplinary activity;
- Articulating the critical issues forming the context of architectural education
- Fostering public awareness of architectural education and issues of importance

This advancement shall be implemented through five primary means: advocacy, annual program activities, liaison with collateral organizations, dissemination of information and response to the needs of member schools in order to enhance the quality of life in a global society.

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from the president

DESIGN IS THE NEW BLACK.

BY KIM TANZER

In my first President's Column I made this assertion, then followed with this challenge: Design is the foundation of our method of inquiry—we must understand it better, improve it, and disseminate it effectively to our students, within the academy, and throughout society.

Since that time, both my enthusiasm and my anxiety about our discipline's privileged understanding of design have increased. I have seen many circumstances align to position our discipline well within our universities and to society. A few examples will illustrate my point:

When RK Stewart, president of the AIA, Mike Monti, ACSA's executive director, Andrea Rutledge, then an AIA staff member, and I met in July with Charles Vest, president of the National Academy of Engineering, we wanted to speak about architecture and sustainability. He, on the other hand, wanted to discuss design. He was aware, as are most academic engineers, that design is the creative mode through which engineers take basic research and turn it toward human purpose.

Recently, in part through the advocacy of movie star Brad Pitt and talk show host Larry King, the Lower Ninth Ward has become more than a site of well-intentioned rebuilding efforts. When Pitt organized the design of 13 houses by world-renown architects, the Lower Ninth Ward became the virtual site of a new kind of *biennale*, celebrating good design in conjunction with, to quote Bryan Bell, "good deeds." (It is important to note that many of our colleagues arrived first and prepared the ground for this degree of public exposure, and that they, too, are doing good deeds through good design.)

Next week, at my university, our college of fine arts will host Sir Ken Robinson, author of the widely read book *Out of Our Minds. Learning to Be Creative*. His visit will be hosted by our president and pro-

vost. The invitation quotes distinguished professors of business at the University of Southern California and Harvard who, with their business school colleagues, promote design enthusiastically.

Just now, I received an email inviting faculty to a presentation on "teaching problem-and case-based learning strategies for undergraduate science education." Isn't this a description of the design studio?

In short, science, engineering, business, fine arts, and the popular media have recently, and very publically, embraced design. How is the discipline of architecture participating in this cognitive realignment?

Most of us would agree that design is the center of our schools' cultures, and that we have been teaching and practicing design, as currently understood, for decades if not centuries. But, speaking for a moment of individual institutions, is yours promoting your expertise to colleagues across campus and within your community? Does this larger community know what you do? Do they solicit your help to design your campus, to learn how to teach studios, or to participate in grants?

The Boyer Report, written in 1996, stated that schools of architecture were too often misunderstood or simply invisible within their own institutions. Is your school different? Have you changed the discourse and made our design knowledge central to the increasingly interdisciplinary 21st century university? If so, I suspect your school is in the minority and others would like to learn your strategy.

The ACSA can provide a vehicle for such an exchange. As one example, the ACSA Fall Conference hosted by the University of Waterloo School of Architecture in Cambridge, Ontario, was devoted to various forms of community engage-