Challenges and Opportunities for Inclusive Design in Graduate Architecture

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When you include the extremes of everybody, that’s to say differently abled people of all sorts, then you produce things that are better for all of us.

- Michael Wolff, Wolff Olins

Design for the young and you exclude the old; design for the old and you include the young.

– Bernard Isaacs, Birmingham Centre for Applied Gerontology

Recall the face of the poorest and weakest man you have seen, and ask yourself if this step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him.

- Mahatma Gandhi
Inclusive Design Graduate Research Group

- Challenges to starting UD educational programs
- Description of the program
- Lessons learned for starting programs
Challenges for Universal Design Education
The tradition of architectural education is style and form based.
U.S. accrediting bodies for architecture programs have not included universal design in their primary evaluation criteria.
Inclusive design educators often focus on research topics that lack appeal for creative-minded students.
Popular media focuses on content with high entertainment value.
Inclusion through design is essential to global practice.
Inclusive Design Graduate Research Group at Buffalo (IDGRG)

Megan Basnak
Topics that appeal to students include:

Human Diversity

Colourful Army, Maistora
Topics that appeal to students include:

Sensory Perception

Senses, Shaula Haitner
Topics that appeal to students include:

Health + Safety

G.A. Volb
Topics that appeal to students include:

Social Justice

*Playin’ the Blues, Dustin Gilbert*
Master of Architecture: Inclusive Design Curriculum

2-year or 3.5-year accredited program designed for those interested in engaging research and potentially following the path to licensure

Semester 1:
- Research Studio
- The Social Nature of Architecture
- Design for Inclusive Environments
- Environmental Controls 2

Semester 2:
- Research Studio
- Ergonomics in Building Design
- Human Responses to Intentional Environments
- Professional Practice

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Master of Architecture: Inclusive Design Curriculum

2-year or 3.5-year accredited program designed for those interested in engaging research and potentially following the path to licensure

**Semester 3:**
- Research Studio/Directed Research
- Elective*/Thesis Methods
- Elective
- Structures 3

**Semester 4:**
- Research Studio/Thesis
- Elective
- Elective
- Elective

*Electives allow students to enhance skills or focus on a specific issues. Can be taken from any department in the university.
Master of Science in Architecture: Inclusive Design Curriculum

1.5-year program designed for those interested in engaging research and specialized scholarship in architecture

Semester 1:
- Design for Inclusive Environments
- The Social Nature of Architecture
- Research Methods
- Elective
- Elective

Semester 2:
- Ergonomics in Building Design
- Human Responses to Intentional Environments
- Directed Research
- Elective
- Elective

Semester 3:
- Thesis
- Community Design Service
- Elective
- Elective
Studio projects include:

Children’s Museum
Buffalo, NY, U.S.A.

Nicholas Karl
Studio projects include:

Public Toilets
Silo City, Buffalo, NY, U.S.A.

Patrick Connolly & Todd Graci
Studio projects include:

Global Informal Settlements

Karen Kim
Studio projects include:

Office Building
Dublin, Ireland

Maryam Sadeghi
Studio projects include:

Affordable Housing Prototype Design
Buffalo, NY, U.S.A.

Hashim Ajlouni
Individualized Programs of Study
Thesis research includes:

Stairway Safety
Karen Kim
Thesis research includes:

Senior Housing Standards
Mary Jane Carroll
Thesis research includes:

Architectural Practice in Small Towns
Megan Basnak
Thesis research includes:

Lighting in Primary Schools
Jonathan White
Thesis research includes:

Wellness Centers for Women
Ghada Mohamad
Thesis research includes:

Classroom Design for the Autism Spectrum
Alexey Mokhov
Thesis research includes:

Temporary Housing
Kristen Gabriele
Why does the IDGRG have the highest enrollment of all graduate research groups?
Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access

Multi-disciplinary research center that includes architects, planners, behavioral scientists, occupational therapists, and industrial engineers

Mission:
To produce knowledge and tools that will increase social participation of groups such as people with disabilities and the older generation, who have been marginalized by traditional design practice

Work:
Practice of inclusive design through research, development, service, dissemination, and educational activities
As a whole, the faculty have:

- 10+ teaching awards
- 16 books published
- $20+ million in research grants
- 1,000+ public lectures and publications in more than 15 countries
Making UD Education Meaningful
World demographics are changing.
World economies are leveling.
More societies are valuing human diversity.

Gavin Kemp
Attitudes about consumption are changing.

Rodman Schley
Mass customization makes UD solutions easier.
Digital technologies are increasing complexity.
Governments are seeking new ways to improve life for all.
Gen Y is more interested in social issues.
Attitude shifts open opportunities for inclusive design education.
Architecture is responding with organizations such as Architecture for Humanity and Design Corps.
Educators are responsible for ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills they need.
Starting a program requires:

A comprehensive plan and set of goals
Starting a program requires:

Administrative buy-in
Starting a program requires:

Committed faculty core (and a plan for supporting new faculty)
Starting a program requires:

Student interest
Starting a program requires:

A rigorous, interesting and realistic curriculum
Starting a program requires:

Interesting research opportunities

Grain Elevators, Buffalo, NY U.S.A.
Starting a program requires:

Real world design opportunities

Children’s Museum, Buffalo, Maryam Sadeghi
Starting a program requires:

Internal and external support systems
Starting a program requires:

A focus on the common goal of improving the world through universal design
The cultural climate for universal design education is right.
We want to help…
Thank you.