Transforming the University

Preliminary Recommendations of the Task Force on Collegiate Design: CALA/CHE

Submitted on behalf of the Task Force by:

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I. Executive Summary.

Mission
To create a plan for a new, nationally distinctive, multidisciplinary college of design incorporating the Departments of Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Design, Housing, and Apparel, and associated centers. The new college would aspire to be an international and national leader in multidisciplinary research, creative production, teaching, and public engagement in a wide variety of design-related fields.

Deliverables
A. Recommendations regarding the name and mission of the new college.
B. Recommendations regarding areas of strengths and comparative advantage, including areas that should be targeted for additional investment consistent with the University’s goal to become one of the top three public research universities in the world.
C. Recommendations regarding existing strengths and opportunities and the potential for optimizing new collaborations and partnerships with other academic units outside the newly formed college.
D. Recommendations on how the new college can be a model for the promotion of active public engagement.
E. Recommendations regarding a strategy for enhancing the new college’s prospects of becoming a widely recognized leader in design, contributing to the University’s potential to take its place as one of the top three public research universities in the world. The strategy should bring the intellectual and disciplinary diversity of the University, currently dispersed across multiple colleges, to bear on all aspects of design.
F. Recommendations regarding the optimal design, structure, and organization of the new college.

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Identify broader themes outside scope of task force inquiry, and recommend future areas of effort.

The CALA/CHE task force has focused on the new design college’s broad academic agenda. The areas listed below will need to be addressed in the future but are beyond the scope of this task force’s work. Other areas for future development appear throughout the report and in Section IV, Recommendations for Prioritizing Deliverables.

- Transition plan for establishing the new college, including plan for the continuation of the strategic planning process initiated in Fall Semester, 2005.
- Administrative structure, lines of reporting, and staffing.
- Budget and allocation of resources.
- Space and facilities: plan for unifying the college spatially; plan for facilities and academic resources.
- Governance for the college and departments.
- Student services.
- Admission and recruiting plan for undergraduate and graduate students.
- Plan for the evaluation and (re)development of programs and curricula to facilitate interdisciplinary research, teaching, and collaboration.
- Timetable for addressing the items listed above, and for consideration, development, and implementation of the recommendations below.
II. Introduction.

Designed objects and environments have an impact on virtually every dimension of human experience. Nearly every thing we use and wear and nearly every place we traverse and inhabit in the course of our lives is designed. Global changes, from diminished resources to advances in digital technology, have generated a host of unprecedented and increasingly complex challenges and opportunities that are expanding the role of design in the process of innovation. Some of the most crucial and innovative work in design today is occurring at the intersection of disparate disciplines. This is producing an increasing demand for both specialized knowledge and interdisciplinary collaboration, altering the ways designers work, the scope and types of projects they undertake, and the education they require.

The University of Minnesota will become one of a small number of research universities that have responded to these emerging issues and trends by forming multi-disciplinary design colleges housing disciplines that have until recently remained institutionally and conceptually separate. Seven design-related fields currently divided between the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture and the College of Human Ecology will come together to form the new design college: Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Clothing Design, Graphic Design, Housing Studies, Interior Design, and Retail Merchandising. As disparate as these fields may appear, there are myriad connections among them, from a common focus on everyday artifacts and environments to the processes through which we design, analyze, and generate new knowledge about them. With the addition of a new program in product design, the college will conjoin disciplines that engage varied methods, media, and scales to approach design problems that range from ergonomic shoe design to sustainable land-use planning.

The new college will create a concentration of design-related work in one institution, providing a platform for raising the profile of design at the University of Minnesota. Through a dynamic environment that fosters both discipline-based inquiry and cross- and interdisciplinary exploration, the University’s new college of design will be well positioned to become a leader – regionally, nationally, and internationally – in innovative, sustainable, and publicly engaged design. The purpose of this document is to present a framework for developing the structures, strategies, and processes that will support and advance the college in achieving these goals.

III. Response to Deliverables

A. Recommendations regarding the name and mission of the new college.

Name. We recommend *The University of Minnesota Institute of Design*. Indicating focused inquiry, connectivity, and constructive action, Institute of Design links well with our mission. *Institute of Design* refers to “institute” as a verb that means to establish or advance, and (reaching back to its Latin roots) to build, resolve, and educate. “Institute” as a noun denotes an organization formed for a specific purpose, to promote inquiry in a particular area. *Institute of Design* conveys, in the broadest terms, the design-focused research, teaching, and creative work
that unites the diverse fields that will form the new college without singling out any of them by name.

If there is a desire to make the name of the college more distinctive in the future, two possibilities could be considered: (1) naming the institute for a distinguished designer or donor; or (2) working with a consultant to develop an individualized name for common use. (An example of this is “PennDesign,” which is officially the University of Pennsylvania College of Design.) The departments that offer professional programs may wish to increase their visibility by becoming schools within the college.

Mission. In over forty meetings with stakeholders, the task force found that there was wide agreement about the ethics and values that inform all of the fields the new college will bring together. These common values infuse the college’s mission, which is to advance the following through research, education, and public engagement:

- **Innovation in sustainable, socially responsible design**, through a commitment to equity, diversity, and to ecologies both human and natural.
- **Engagement** with the ongoing and emerging issues, opportunities, and problems that face our world today.
- **Creative synergies**, through interdisciplinary exploration.
- **Speculative, theoretical, and historical inquiry**, to expand the critical understanding of design’s past, current, and potential significance within diverse contexts.
- **Collaboration and partnerships**, within the University, and with communities, institutions, business, and government – locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.

B. Recommendations regarding areas of strength and comparative advantage, including areas that should be targeted for additional investment consistent with the University’s goal to become one of the top three public research universities in the world.

By combining the seven fields now housed in Design, Housing, and Apparel (DHA) and the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (CALA), the University of Minnesota’s new design college will feature a disciplinary breadth few other educational institutions can equal. Current projects, programs, partnerships, research centers, and academic resources offer rich opportunities for connections among these fields. Once adequate funding, structure and organization are in place, the new college will provide unparalleled opportunities for design exploration across disciplines, positioning it strongly to support the University’s goal to become one of the top three public research universities in the world.

Disciplinary distinction ➔ current strengths. Education in a specific discipline provides students with the skills, modes of inquiry, and bodies of knowledge they need to launch successful careers and to work effectively in interdisciplinary teams. The undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs in the new college have all achieved distinction. Many are highly rated nationally, and most are the only programs of their kind in this region. Faculty members operate in national and international arenas through publications, conferences, and invited lectures.
All seven disciplines enjoy unusually strong connections with practicing professionals, and each draws effectively upon the varied resources of our dynamic metropolitan area (see Deliverables C and D). However, while our programs are well known and in high demand, the number of full-time faculty is currently insufficient to sustain the excellence we have attained while launching an ambitious new interdisciplinary design agenda that promises to advance opportunities within and throughout the University.

Interdisciplinary connections ➔ new synergies. Design at the University of Minnesota is highly integrative, frequently crossing disciplinary boundaries through the methods that are employed and the bodies of knowledge that are tapped. Among the new college’s greatest assets will be its research centers and museum, all of which facilitate interdisciplinary exploration in ways that can be expanded in the context of the new college.

• **Center for Sustainable Building Research** (CSBR). Research and education in sustainable design will become one of the college’s greatest areas of strength. One of the leading academic research centers in the field, CSBR has a major impact on policy, design, and construction through its work on environmental impact and energy efficiency. It also contributes to Architecture’s M.S. track in Sustainable Design, the only graduate program of its kind in the U.S. By broadening its mission to connect with the full range of disciplines in the college, CSBR will promote productive new collaborations in sustainable design.

• **Metropolitan Design Center** (MDC). As an internationally recognized leader in both urban and suburban design, the MDC has changed how communities realize their potential as livable and sustainable environments. The center, which will catalyze research in the new college, is another strong model for actively integrating education, research and public engagement. It sponsors a certificate in Metropolitan Design that attracts students from a variety of fields, and it would play a significant role if the new college were to develop a new program in physical planning and metropolitan design (see Deliverable C).

• **Design Institute** (DI). Through a dynamic and internationally recognized program of public events and publications, the Design Institute is unique in its advancement of innovative design for the public realm. The DI contributes to public engagement and interdisciplinary inquiry through the full range of its programs, and to education through the Design Camp and the Design Minor. It will have the opportunity to extend its involvement with the new college through knowledge mapping, the product design program, and new connections with faculty and students in all fields.

• **The Goldstein Museum of Design** (GM). The GM is one of the few museums in the U.S. devoted exclusively to design. Its active exhibition program and extensive permanent collection contribute to research and education in DHA. Through an expanded exhibition and educational program the Museum will be uniquely positioned to engage with all of the disciplines in the new college and to raise the profile of design within the University and to the broader public. To realize this, it will require new resources and new status as a collegiate rather than a departmental unit.
New synergies ➔ new strengths. The disciplines and resources that will come together in the new college will facilitate interdisciplinary exploration that produces new synergies and strengths. The combination of product design, clothing design, retail merchandising, and architecture, to give just one example, has the potential to foster innovative work distinguished by its sustainable approach to the full life cycle of products, from materials sourcing and design process to merchandising, consumer experience, reuse, and disposal. Expanded interdisciplinary program offerings together with cutting edge research and design will produce great potential for new design partnerships within the college and University, as well as with business, government, and cultural institutions. However, realization of this potential will require reevaluation of existing programs to decrease the barriers to interdisciplinary work (e.g., accreditation requirements and tightly structured curricula), as well as new faculty positions, new resources, and the development of a structure at the college level to facilitate an ambitious interdisciplinary agenda.

Recommendations for investment. The task force’s recommendations for investment relate not only to strengths within the college, but also to collaborations within the University as well as to public engagement (discussed in Deliverables D and E). All are interrelated. Because of this, recommendations for investment appear at the end of the strategies outlined in Deliverable E.

C. Recommendations regarding existing strengths and opportunities and the potential for optimizing new collaborations and partnerships with other academic units outside the newly formed college.

As one of only a small number of broadly multidisciplinary design colleges located within a major research university, the University of Minnesota’s new college of design will be unusually well positioned to develop cross-disciplinary collaborations that make the most of the University’s diverse programs and extensive academic resources.

Current connections. CALA and DHA have already established numerous connections throughout the University. To name only a few, these include: the Digital Design Consortium (Architecture and Computer Science); the Master of Urban and Regional Planning (Humphrey Institute, Landscape Architecture, MDC); the Human Dimensioning Laboratory (Clothing Design, Mechanical Engineering, Kinesiology); the Center for Rural Design (CALA, College of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences); Cold Climate Housing Center (Bio-based Products, CSBR, Housing Studies), and the Center for Changing Landscapes (CALA, Natural Resources). Drawing together established networks, the new college will provide a nexus for new connections, synergies, and strengths.

New connections ➔ new synergies ➔ new strengths. By serving as a facilitator, connector, and meeting ground for design-related education and research, the new design college will raise the profile of design at the University of Minnesota significantly, both within the University and beyond it. The broad range of design-related work conducted throughout the University offers myriad possibilities for collaborations (see Appendix 6), including connections with disciplines
that are not traditionally associated with design, e.g., biology, rhetoric, and anthropology. As new synergies develop and the University’s reputation for innovative work in design grows, a new design culture will be created. The college will provide University-wide education about the designed environment, introduce students and faculty to design thinking and process, catalyze new cross-disciplinary research, and develop new interdisciplinary programs in partnership with other units. Three possibilities for new programs appear below:

1. **Product Design.** Currently in the planning stages, this program will connect the college’s current strengths in Clothing Design, Graphic Design and Retail Merchandising with product design groups throughout the University, including the Institute of Technology (especially Mechanical Engineering). The program’s particular strength will be its emphasis on complex systems level problems, and it will create strong partnerships with the design professions and with local and global industry.

2. **Design History and Theory.** A new program in design history and theory will draw faculty and students from all of the units in the new college as well as from departments throughout the University. As the only program in the U.S. to take an interdisciplinary approach to design across a broad range of media and scales, it will offer unparalleled opportunities for innovative teaching and research.

3. **Other new programs.** The task force recommends that the new college consider developing a new program in Metropolitan Design and Physical Planning, building upon strong resources within the college and connections with the Humphrey Institute’s MURP program. There are numerous other possibilities for program development, including interaction design, a major in design, and a university-wide program or minor in sustainable design.

**D. Recommendations on how the new college can be a model for the promotion of active public engagement.**

As leaders in sustainable, socially responsible design, CALA and DHA have developed significant records of public engagement. The new college will benefit from well-established initiatives as well as strong connections with the professions, communities, public institutions, businesses, and industries, locally, regionally, and globally. As it expands upon its existing strengths, the new college will provide a model for the integration of public engagement with research and teaching.

**Connecting with the professions.** The Twin Cities is a vibrant center of design activity, and our community of practitioners is a critical asset in advancing our teaching and research. Practitioners and professionals contribute to our educational mission and we provide continuing education and advanced study opportunities essential for life-long learning. CALA’s continuing education program could be expanded to address the range of disciplines in the new college, and degrees oriented toward working professionals could be developed.
Engaging communities. There is a long-standing commitment to forming partnerships with communities to address critical societal issues and influence public policy through research and teaching. Courses and studios make the most of our vibrant metropolitan and regional context, using it as a laboratory for service learning, working with clients, and the application of research.

Exchanging knowledge. The new college will have a number of mechanisms for making research widely available. The Metropolitan Design Center, the Center for Sustainable Building Research, the Design Institute, and the Midwest Universities Radon Consortium disseminate research through public programs, partnerships, publications, and on-line resources. InformeDesign®, for example, is a free, web-based database of design and human behavior research. With 60,000 research summaries downloaded each month, it has excellent potential for expansion.

Expanding partnerships: public institutions and private industry. This region is home to numerous companies and agencies that are internationally known for their innovation in design and community problem solving. Current collaborations with agencies and companies could be extended and new opportunities could be developed for mutually supportive research and education with the assistance of the new college.

Expanding global networks. CALA and DHA have developed an extensive web of global connections that can be enlarged in the new college. Students engage with diverse cultural perspectives through successful study-abroad programs. Visiting faculty from many countries enrich our programs. Using the Internet, students here and abroad participate in collaborative design projects that explore cultural differences. CALA’s new partnership with UNESCO for the study of World Heritage Sites will greatly increase these connections by facilitating the exploration of the economic, political, and cultural implications of globalization. The development of a new Heritage Studies Center and graduate program will draw international students to the only historic preservation program in the U.S. with a strong global orientation.

E. Recommendations regarding a strategy for enhancing the new college’s prospects of becoming a widely recognized leader in design, contributing to the University’s potential to take its place as one of the top three public research universities in the world. The strategy should bring the intellectual and disciplinary diversity of the University, currently dispersed across multiple colleges, to bear on all aspects of design.

Advance interdisciplinary education, research, and public engagement. The following strategies will strengthen existing resources, catalyze interdisciplinary exploration, produce new synergies, and advance the design college’s position as a leader in the field.

1. Build the faculty, within the college’s first two years, by establishing at least 10 new positions. This will make it possible to hire faculty who have a strong record of innovative, interdisciplinary work to advance the development of interdisciplinary programs and research.
2. Support and expand the potential of the centers and museum and strengthen connections with faculty research and academic programs. As powerful catalysts for interdisciplinary research and education, the centers require resources to expand their missions in the context of the new college.

3. Promote interdisciplinary research. Because much of the most innovative new work occurs at the intersection of disciplines and/or within multi-disciplinary teams, the college can advance interdisciplinary research through seed money for faculty taking innovative new directions, through incentives and rewards for excellence, and through effective administrative support.

4. Advance interdisciplinary education. Innovative, interdisciplinary programs will attract the brightest students and prepare them to address complex problems through effective inquiry and collaboration. Recommendations for achieving this include:
   a. Adjusting current curricula to provide flexibility for interdisciplinary exploration.
   b. Establishing an interdisciplinary “first year school” for undergraduates with common foundation courses for all incoming students.
   c. Instituting interdisciplinary programs that foster new synergies, e.g., product design, design history and theory, heritage studies, and metropolitan design and physical planning.
   d. Reassessing existing graduate programs in light of new opportunities in the college.
   e. (Re)developing Ph.D. programs to facilitate discipline-based inquiry and interdisciplinary exploration.

5. Build connections within the college: spaces and facilities. Combining disciplines of design currently housed on two different campuses requires the unification of facilities on one campus as soon as possible. Stakeholders emphasized this repeatedly. Spatial proximity is a decisive factor in fostering collaboration and exchange in any field, and it is crucial for design education and research. Students and faculty need ready access to the continuously changing public presentations of drawings, models, and prototypes that are central to design education, as well as to the academic resources that are being consolidated through the creation of this college.

6. Build connections within the University by cultivating design-related exploration throughout the University. This will be accomplished by establishing communications strategies that inform and connect; (re)developing programs, courses and projects that connect with fields outside the college; identifying and supporting new interdisciplinary areas of research; and sharing resources.

7. Build connections beyond the University by expanding partnerships with communities, industry, institutions, agencies, and organizations – locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.

Establish events and strategies that promote exchange and raise the college’s profile as a center for discourse on design. To enhance the design college’s standing, we recommend that the college establish recurring, well-publicized events structured around timely issues related to its mission. The list of events below emerged through the task force’s many discussions with
stakeholders and leaders at other universities. These events will energize the new college by drawing people together around a common focus. They will create a rich and unique educational experience, spark the interest of faculty and students throughout the University, elicit the involvement of practitioners, and draw the attention of the general public. They will stimulate new directions in faculty research and suggest new collaborations, and they will lend themselves well to partnerships with industry, institutions, and communities, which could serve as sponsors. In short, the events suggested below will provide a platform for discussion that reverberates widely, establishing for the college a leading role in discourse on design. To jump-start the new college and raise its profile rapidly, we recommend that one or more of these events be set up during the college’s first year.

1. Establish an annual symposium, design award, publication, and exhibition. The symposium will connect faculty, students, and practitioners in this region with internationally recognized participants to focus on an issue connected with the college’s mission. An award should be conferred for distinguished work associated with this issue, setting standards for sustainable, socially responsible design. The symposium’s presentations and findings will be disseminated through an exhibition and publication.

2. Establish a fellows program. The college will establish a “think tank” with fellows that include faculty in a variety of fields, practitioners, and leaders in industry and the community. There could be a yearly theme or issue, weekly lunch meetings where the fellows discuss their work, and public presentations or workshops. The program could be an expansion of the Design Institute’s fellows program or it could become an independent entity.

3. Institute an annual interdisciplinary design project that initiates each school year. This could be structured around a current issue or problem that brings together faculty and students in a broad range of design disciplines to form University-wide design teams. The event could conclude with a public presentation of the teams’ work and an award to the most innovative project. This event would lend itself well to industry or institutional sponsorship.

4. Support continuing events, lectures and invited guests. The design college has the opportunity to become a vital center for the convergence and reorientation of ideas by bringing people here from all over the world. The CALA Lecture Series and Cass Gilbert and Horace W. Cleveland funds provide a strong foundation for future activity.

5. Develop effective marketing and communication of the college’s academic programs, research, and other design-related work. This is crucial to establishing and maintaining a position as a leading design college. The new design college will require resources for a professional staff to lead marketing, communications and recruitment efforts. A design college in particular is held to a high standard for the graphic identity that structures its mailings, publications, and website. Because the Internet is becoming the first source for information about colleges, a well-designed new website will be essential in increasing the college’s visibility and enhancing its reputation.
Recommendations for Investment. This college is positioned to be a significant contributor to the University’s goal of becoming one of the top three public research institutions in the world. For the new college to succeed, however, there must be appropriate investments in human and financial resources. These include:

1. At least ten additional faculty positions within the next two years, to hire faculty with a demonstrated record of interdisciplinary achievement.
2. Resources for the centers and museum as they expand to contribute to the new college’s mission, including the UNESCO partnership, the development of a new Heritage Studies Center, and a new program of fellows.
3. Support for the development of interdisciplinary courses, programs, and initiatives that expand the scope of public engagement.
4. Support for research, including seed funding for faculty who elect to take innovative new directions through interdisciplinary work.
5. Funding to initiate annual symposia, interdisciplinary design projects, and publications.
6. Support for marketing and communications to increase the visibility of the college and its programs.
7. Space, facilities, and academic resources to ensure that we have the necessary environments and equipment for collaboration in teaching and research.

F. Recommendations regarding the optimal design, structure, and organization of the new college.

The organization of the new college requires well-defined programs and departments that foster disciplinary distinction, structures that facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and responsiveness to change, and effective administrative support to provide the facilities and operations that will advance the college as a leader internationally.

Disciplinary distinction. We recommend that each of the seven disciplines form a separate unit. This will enable them to define distinct identities, advance pedagogical and intellectual goals, streamline decision making, and facilitate recruitment of talented students and faculty. Departments that offer professional programs may choose to become schools within the college to raise their visibility. While distinct in identity, units will share administrative services at the local and/or collegiate level to achieve efficiencies.

Interdisciplinary connections. Because interdisciplinary education, research, partnerships, and public engagement are fundamental to the design college’s mission, we recommend that the college develop a clearly defined structure and staff positions that facilitate, advance, and coordinate the critical interdisciplinary activities that will make the college unique.

Collegiate administration and resources. The college’s administration should facilitate the goals of the college and its individual units in the following areas: operations, to provide oversight for finance, human resources, facilities, and coordination with the units to insure the highest quality of management; research and public engagement, to facilitate connections among
the resources and faculty of the college, the University, and the community; academic resources, to support the teaching and learning needs of the college’s faculty and students; technology, to serve the advancement of the college’s mission and to provide the infrastructure for working in an academic community; student services, to realize the highest quality student experience from prospective student through graduation; advancement, to promote development, communications and alumni relations in support of the college’s identity, future support, and programs.

IV. Recommendations for prioritizing deliverables.

Immediate
• Launch the college with a new graphic identity and website by Fall 2006, both to announce its existence and to avoid confusion.
• Form a planning committee to develop a plan for a closer proximity. This should include both transitional space in the near term, if necessary, and permanent space that addresses the needs of all collegiate units.
• Develop and implement a plan for administration and resources.
• Continue the strategic planning process launched in Fall Semester, 2005 and hold a faculty retreat.
• Begin planning a public event and/or interdisciplinary design project for 2006-07.

Intermediate (Year 1)
• Evaluate curricula to open up new opportunities for interdisciplinary work.
• Develop new interdisciplinary programs; complete Product Design planning.
• Assess, (re)develop, and/or develop new MS, MA, MFA, and Ph.D. programs.

Future (Year 2)
• Pilot new strategies and programs.
• Begin implementation of new interdisciplinary programs: Graduate School approval, recruiting and funding plans, course development.
List of Appendices

Appendix 1. Methods Followed

Appendix 2. Consultations and Communications

Appendix 3. Copy of Charge Letter

Appendix 4. Comparative Data on 10 U.S. Design Colleges

Appendix 5. Data

Appendix 6. Design Related Activities at UMTC

Appendix 7. Reference Material

Appendix 8. Strategic Alignment