
Miami Design Collaborative Fall 2008

Steering Committee

Peg Faimon, Director, MDC and Professor, Graphic Design

Michael Bailey Van Kuren, Associate Professor, Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering

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Glenn Platt, Professor, Marketing and Director, IMS

John Weigand, Professor and Chair, Architecture and Interior Design

Summary Description

The Miami Design Collaborative, led by the School of Fine Arts, is a multi-disciplinary design initiative at Miami University that brings together students and faculty from throughout campus to develop expertise in design thinking and to implement that knowledge through complex, team-based, problem-solving experiences. Existing design-based experiences and new initiatives have the opportunity to cluster together under one umbrella to position, promote and clarify relationships and opportunities.

From Silos to Integration

The depth and rigor of disciplinary learnings are of critical importance, but many of the creative solutions to our most pressing problems often involve interdisciplinary efforts that require both a knowledge of and ability to communicate with people trained in other disciplines. The evolution of many innovative, leading-edge programs require this type of integration. The Miami Design Collaborative, focused on design thinking, will integrate faculty and students in every academic division into a “networked” curriculum. This initiative transforms the practice of teaching and learning by providing the foundation and context to:

- *Experience* design process and development through complex, team-based, project-solving learning.
- *Engage* with industry and organizations outside of Miami University’s physical boundaries.
- *Extend* traditional disciplines by building theory and practice on disciplinary/multi-disciplinary frontiers.

Promotion and Extension

The Miami Design Collaborative provides an increased opportunity for the “packaging” of existing design projects/courses that are multi-disciplinary, team-based experiences stressing iterative problem-solving. It has been difficult to achieve national and international recognition for this innovative work, even though much of it has been going on for years. Packaging these courses/projects under one umbrella, while allowing them to maintain their unique identities, increases their promotional impact and clarifies opportunities to connect faculty and students, enhance existing projects, and create new experiences.

Unique Features

- *Multi-disciplinarity*: crosses departmental and divisional frontiers across the entire university structure.
- *Faculty*: participating professors will represent every division of a university. Such broad faculty participation is striking and unique.
- *Experience*: driven by design-based projects and hands-on experience in iterative process.
- *Structure*: managed by a Director, the initiative receives strategic leadership from an internal steering team, Deans, and external industry partners.

Examples of Possible Project Types

- *The EcoWall*: A wall constructed from recycled material that is both demountable, reusable and recyclable. The project is realized through a collaboration of architecture, interior design, paper science, manufacturing engineering, marketing, and communications.
- *Animal Habitats for Urban Areas*: The creation of year-round habitats for animals, such as bats, living in urban areas. The habitats also act as educational visitor attractions. Such a project requires the involvement of biology/sciences, architecture, graphic design, interior design, communication, interactive media studies, education, marketing, etc.
- *Building Brand Experience for Clients*: Large, complex branding projects can be realized through the collaboration of architecture, interior design, graphic design, marketing, interactive media studies, communication, English, etc.

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