Evidence-based approach keeps U ahead of the curve  

By Suzy Frisch

When an interior designer tackles a project, practitioners often don’t have the time or resources to pore over journal articles about gender restroom discrimination or the influence of ergonomics on workers’ productivity. But they can turn to InformeDesign®, an online searchable database of the latest research on design and human behavior.

Two interior design professors in the College of Design are the co-creators of InformeDesign, which was funded by the American Society of Interior Designers. It aims to help professionals use current research to inform their design decisions, a concept called evidence-based design. Simultaneously, the site serves as a tool for the University’s interior design program to teach students how to engage in evidence-based design while balancing it with creativity.

As evidence-based design emerged as a compelling trend in the past decade, the U’s interior design program stayed ahead of the curve by integrating this approach and InformeDesign into its curriculum. Starting in their earliest studios, interior design students learn how to take an evidence-based approach to their projects. And by the time they graduate, students are well-versed in the practice, said Professor Denise Guerin, Ph.D., who developed InformeDesign with Assistant Professor Caren Martin, Ph.D.

This is just one example of how the interior design program keeps up on industry trends and incorporates them into its evolving curriculum, noted Guerin, Morse-Alumni Distinguished Professor and interior design program director. “We’re not just addressing what’s happening in today’s profession,” she said. “We’re also forecasting where practice is headed so that by the time students become alumni, they are able to work in ways that will contribute to a firm’s growth and development.”

Other curriculum additions to the interior design program include sustainable design and the relationship of culture and design. Professors introduce sustainability in students’ sophomore-level studios, and this concept gets included in most subsequent courses. In fact, spring 2009 students can take an elective course that prepares them for the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) commercial interiors exam.

Due to the globalization of design, another studio focuses on developing cultural identity in the residential environment, encouraging student designers to consider the social and psychological needs of multi-cultural occupants. “It’s not just about international culture,” Guerin says. “We’re teaching a method by which students can gain a deep understanding of the occupants and their needs in any environment.”

The interior design program’s advisory board is a critical element in its success at staying on the leading edge. Composed of 12 interior designers, architects, project managers, and manufacturers’ representatives, the board meets twice a year to discuss industry needs, technologies, and future forecasts. In addition, the board helps evaluate the program’s strengths and areas to improve. Members have their pulse on the profession, serving as an invaluable resource that keeps the interior design program on the right track.
Recent grad Mandi Zanski advises students to converse, observe, interact  By Lori-Anne Williams

“I had amazing experiences,” Zanski says, looking back. In her freshman year, she traveled with Professor Brad Hokanson and other students to Buenos Aires, where she visited a variety of graphic design firms over two weeks. The following summer, she focused on the program, Zanski was awarded for Study Abroad (DIS). Although interior design students were in the minority in the program, Zanski was awarded the Architecture and Design Award for Academic Excellence at the end of her DIS studies. Zanski may one day return to DIS as an intern to obtain experience in the international workplace.

Back in Minnesota, Zanski never stopped working. As her honors capstone project, she worked with Denise Guerin, Ph.D. and wrote an InformeDesign® issue of Inquiry, a research brief on culturally sensitive design. She approached the project first by completing an exhaustive literature search, then crafting what she terms “culturally sensitive design for beginners,” a first step to understanding the complexities of working outside of one’s own culture. Zanski also took full advantage of her senior thesis project as well. With a team of students, she researched healthcare design. In the first semester, the team learned about healthcare design for children by interviewing doctors and other practitioners, visiting clinics across the Twin Cities, and completing a comprehensive design program. The following semester she designed a pediatric clinic—going through the phases of schematic design, design development, construction documents, and final 3-D representations. Zanski also found time to complete an internship with Studio Hive, Inc, where she had an opportunity to work on a project at the new TCF Bank Stadium. The internship led to a job offer at Studio Hive following graduation.

With such a variety of experiences, Zanski was a natural choice as the freshman convocation speaker last fall. She gave the new students simple advice that served her well during her years in the College of Design: converse with each other, observe the professionals, and interact with your professors.

Scholarships Make a Difference

The Interior Design program is focused on creating privately funded scholarships funds to help students meet the rising costs of higher education. The University is offering a rare opportunity to double the impact of gifts through the Promise of Tomorrow Scholarship drive. Gifts of $25,000 or more are used to create an endowment fund at the University of Minnesota Foundation and the payout from the fund is matched by the University, thereby doubling the impact of the gift. A group of interior design alumni is currently meeting to make a plan for developing at least one of these matching scholarships. Alumni and friends can help by making gifts directed to scholarships for interior design students that can then be added to this endowment.

For more information, contact Jan Sickbert at 612-624-3283 or ssickb007@umn.edu, or visit the U of M Foundation’s Web site at www.giving.umn.edu.

Summer internship turns into full-time job for Katie Kaiser  By Suzy Frisch

Kaiser, a native of Altoona, Wisconsin, started at Sasaki as a summer intern with a cohort of 12 other students from across the country. Unlike the other interns who had to return for their senior year, she had recently earned her bachelor’s degree in interior design from the University of Minnesota. So Sasaki kept Kaiser on through the fall and then extended her a job offer at the end of last year.

During her time at Sasaki, Kaiser has been designing the interior of a large corporate office in a nearby Boston suburb. She couldn’t be happier at Sasaki, an interdisciplinary design firm with its hand in architecture, urban planning, landscape architecture, graphic design, interior design, and eco-technologies. Kaiser credits her stretch at the University with preparing her fully for her first professional job.

“There are many opportunities at the U, and I loved being in Minneapolis because it’s a great place for design,” says Kaiser. “Everything I learned I’m seeing myself apply in the field. My education definitely prepared me for different scenarios.”

Kaiser took full advantage of many of those opportunities, including two study abroad trips to Argentina and Europe, several internships, the Honors Program, and a capstone project. She also served on the student and alumni board for the College of Design and participated in the American Society for Interior Designers student chapter.

Kaiser says she learned a lot from her capstone project, which got her involved with the Minnesota Interior Design Legislative Action Committee. Through this organization she helped lobby for a practice act in Minnesota that would regulate who can practice licensed interior design.

Her many internships—including stints at Target Corporation, Wells Fargo, RSP Architects, and a residential firm in her hometown—exposed Kaiser to how designers work in the real world. They also gave her a close-up view of different work environments and specialties, including corporate, in-house retail, and residential interiors.

“In being in an office is a great learning experience. You learn so much that you don’t necessarily get in the classroom,” she says. “I think it’s great that the U supports internships. I don’t think I would be a successful designer if I hadn’t had them.”

Kaiser plans to continue exploring interior design, eventually going back to school for an advanced degree. She’s well on her way to a promising future.

WHAT IF... HEALTHCARE FACILITIES COULD PREVENT INJURY AND DISEASE?

Increasingly, evidence-based healthcare environments are designed to promote healing and reduce stress. Health sciences and environmental health research also points to ways in which infection, illness, and injury can be prevented through good design. Check out these Research Summaries on InformeDesign!

Natural Sights and Sounds Reduce Medical Procedure Pain
http://www.informedesign.umn.edu/Rs_detail.aspx?rsId=2506

Promoting Healing in Health Environments
http://www.informedesign.umn.edu/Rs_detail.aspx?rsId=2178

Controlling Daylight for People with Alzheimer’s Disease
http://www.informedesign.umn.edu/Rs_detail.aspx?rsId=2058

Patient Outcomes in a Surgical Intensive Care Unit
http://www.informedesign.umn.edu/Rs_detail.aspx?rsId=2081
Evolving nature of the field leads two practitioners back to school

By Judy Arginteanu

Stefnee Trzpuc and Kari Ihle have the kind of career trajectories every budding interior designer dreams of. Each found good jobs with respected firms straight out of college and quickly took on ascending responsibilities. They find their work fulfilling, and they continue to learn on the job. Yet both have chosen to return to school for a master’s degree. The evolving nature of the field led them specifically to the vanguard work being done at the College of Design’s interior design program.

Stefnee Trzpuc’s path from North Dakota State University led her to an internship at BWBR Architects in St. Paul, which in turn led to a job after she earned her degree in 2002. LEED AP and a certified interior designer, she began with a focus on retail hospitality projects, but grew interested in the healthcare projects she has worked on while at BWBR. Through that work, she has also become more involved in evidence-based design.

Evidence-based design can encompass everything from environmental psychology to physiology, for instance, from what drains mental energy to how many miles hospital nurses walk per day. It’s also an increasingly important factor in the industry, Trzpuc said, and the primary reason she returned to school full-time in 2007, while continuing to work at BWBR. She will complete the master of science program in about a year.

She’s already started implementing what she’s learning into her work, and has started developing a new program at BWBR that will integrate evidence-based design into all the firm’s major markets.

Trzpuc considered other schools, but chose CDUs because of its emphasis on evidence-based design, which she said, is “more than just a trend. It’s a new way of doing things.” She’s also enthused about the interior design faculty. “It’s exciting to work with instructors who challenge me and are enthusiastic about the direction I’m taking,” Trzpuc said. She’s also enjoyed the opportunity to teach. “Working with students really brings back excitement of design; it’s made me a better practitioner.”

The opportunity to teach was a big draw for Kari Ihle as well. Ihle is one of the lucky people who knew from an early age what she wanted to do professionally. “I always liked rearranging my room, and about once a month I’d make my mom help me. We started watching Designing Women together [a 1980s TV show about a women-owned design firm] and I was really excited when I found out you could actually have a job doing what I liked to do. Little did I know how different interior design is!” After graduating from Iowa State in 1999, she moved to the Twin Cities. Before establishing her own consulting business in retail design, she worked at HGA Architects and Engineers, primarily on healthcare projects, ATS & R Planners/Architects/Engineers on K12 school facilities; and eq-life, a former retail chain aimed at women consumers, designing traditional retail and healthcare retail projects.

This professional experience actually rekindled her desire to teach. An invitation to speak before a beginning design class at the University reminded her just how much she loved working with students and cemented her decision to return. Another reason is her desire—and the need—to stay on top of new developments in the field, particularly evidence-based design.

“The University of Minnesota really teaches you how to do your own research, to understand the research out there, and read it and apply it,” Ihle said.

She’s also minoring in sustainable design, and plans to become a LEED AP this summer, an extra boost for her career. Although eventually she plans to earn a Ph.D., for the time being, she wants to continue her consulting business, not only for practical reasons but because it will help her stay relevant as she pursues her ultimate goal, to teach.

Like Trzpuc, Ihle sees teaching as a two-way street, whether the students know it or not. “Their passion gives me more passion for my career. I don’t think they even realize how much they give to us.”

WHAT IF… WORKPLACE LIGHTING COULD IMPROVE WORKER PERFORMANCE?

Dim Lighting Important in Counseling Rooms
http://www.informedesign.umn.edu/Rs_detail.aspx?rsId=2794

Dynamic Workplace Lighting http://www.informedesign.umn.edu/Rs_detail.aspx?rsId=2782
Building Overhangs Improve Electrochromic Window Performance http://www.informedesign.umn.edu/Rs_detail.aspx?rsId=2855
Productivity and Lighting in Factory Work http://www.informedesign.umn.edu/Rs_detail.aspx?rsId=2875
Dim Lighting Important in Counseling Rooms http://www.informedesign.umn.edu/Rs_detail.aspx?rsId=2794
Tasoulla Hadjijanni
Ph.D., EDRA
Assistant Professor, Interior Design
- Chair of the Residential Environments Network at EDRA (Environmental Design Research Association)

Scholarship Focus: Social Dimension of the Built Environment:
- Culturally sensitive housing
- Security and camera surveillance

Current Teaching Focus
- Interior Design Studio V (culturally sensitive housing and universal design)
- Work of students from Interior Design Studio V is exhibited yearly as part of the Building Two exhibit at the Hennepin History Museum

Current Research
- The dynamic among design, culture, and identity under conditions of displacement. This is a cross-cultural study of housing differences among five cultural groups (Hmong, Somali, Ojibwe, Mexicans, and African-Americans)
- The social dimension of security and camera surveillance
- Published and presented papers from the two studies noted above in interdisciplinary journals and at international conferences

Stephanie Watson Zollinger
Ed.D., ASID
Associate Professor, Interior Design
- Merit W. Buckman Professor in Design Education

Scholarship Focus: Teaching and Learning in Design; History
- Documenting the legacy of textile designer Jack Lenor Larsen
- Design education
- Learning styles of design students

Current Teaching Focus
- First-year studio
- Design history
- Design education

Current Research Projects
- Publishing "The Influence of Learning Styles on Design Students Academic Progress" with Barbara Martinson and Carina Gardner

Michael English
AIA, CID
Lecturer, part-time, Interior Design
- Partner in English and Smart Architects—architectural and interior design firm
- Registered architect since 1972
- Licensed in United Kingdom, Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota, Kansas, and Colorado
- Certified Interior Designer since 1994
- Teaching fourth-year Interior Design Studies since Fall 2002

Current Teaching Focus
- Senior thesis
- Design of large commercial spaces
- Office planning and design
- Building systems

Current Design Projects
- Dakota Sioux Casino and Hotel, Watertown, SD
- St. Cloud Surgical Center, St. Cloud, MN
- State Bank of Belle Plaine, Belle Plaine, MN
- Kaye Guest House, Belize

Caren S. Martin
Ph.D., CID, ASID, IIDA
Assistant Professor, Interior Design
- Interior Design Member of the Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture, Geoscience, and Interior Design, 2000–2007

Scholarship Focus: The Interior Design Profession
- Interior Design Professional Practice
- Interior Design’s Body of Knowledge
- The State of the Interior Design Profession

Current Teaching Focus
- Sustainable design
- Lighting design
- Business codes
- Office planning and design
- Design of large commercial spaces

Cheri Saari
Lecturer, part-time, Interior Design
- NCIDQ Certificate Holder
- Teaching Interior Design Studios since Fall 2004
- Principal, Kitchens that Cook

Current Teaching Focus
- First-year studio
- Presentation, rendering, and 3-D drawing
- Building systems and detailing studio

Current Research
- A comparison of accreditation standards for architecture to interior design education in the context of interior design professional practice
- Co-PI and Director of InformeDesign®
- IDEC Presidential Award for Significant Contributions to the Interior Design Profession (2008) and ASID Presidential Citation for Outstanding Contributions to the Society (2008)

Recent publications
- Interior Design: From Practice to Profession (ASID, 2007)
- Some of these projects were further documented in the Larsen Legacy, with interviews with Jack Lenor Larsen, Win Anderson, and former Larsen employees to document the Larsen legacy

Denise A. Guerin
Ph.D., FIDEC, ASID, IIDA
Professor and Interior Design program director
- President-Elect of the Interior Design Educators Council, 2009
- 2007 Educator of Distinction for the American Society of Interior Designers

Scholarship Focus: Human Behavior and Design
- Post-Occupancy Evaluation of Sustainable Buildings
- Licensure of Interior Design Practice
- State of the Interior Design Profession

Current Teaching Focus
- Design Process
- Ethics and Professional Practice
- Design Theory
- Design Research
- Senior Thesis

Current Research
- Post-occupancy evaluation of sustainable buildings to determine occupants’ satisfaction, performance, and behaviors
- Co-author of *The State of the Interior Design Profession: The Interior Design Professional Practice*
- Interior Design Professional Practice
- Interior Design’s Body of Knowledge
- The State of the Interior Design Profession

Recent publications
- Building systems and detailing studio
- Design education
- Learning styles of design students

Current Research Projects
- Funding from the Center for Craft, Creativity and Design for in-depth interviews with Jack Lenor Larsen, Win Anderson, and former Larsen employees to further document the Larsen legacy
- Published "The Influence of Learning Styles on Design Students Academic Progress" with Barbara Martinson and Carina Gardner

Current Design Projects
- Dakota Sioux Casino and Hotel, Watertown, SD
- St. Cloud Surgical Center, St. Cloud, MN
- State Bank of Belle Plaine, Belle Plaine, MN
- Kaye Guest House, Belize

St. Cloud Surgical Center, St. Cloud, MN
- State Bank of Belle Plaine, Belle Plaine, MN
- Kaye Guest House, Belize

Tasoulla Hadjijanni, Stephanie Watson Zollinger
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Tasoulla Hadjijanni, Stephanie Watson Zollinger

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Highlights of InformeDesign

By Brandie Adams, associate director

InformeDesign® (www.informedesign.umn.edu) is the first searchable database of design and human behavior research on the Web, created at the University of Minnesota by Denise Guerin, Ph.D. and Caren Martin, Ph.D. in the Department of Design, Housing, and Apparel in the College of Design.

InformeDesign was launched in January 2003 with support from founding sponsor, the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID). InformeDesign’s mission is to facilitate practitioners’ use of current, research-based information as a decision-making tool in the design process, thereby integrating research and practice, improving the quality of design solutions, and enhancing the public’s health, safety, and welfare.

Research that has a connection to design and human behavior is gathered from a wide range of articles published in over 200 scholarly journals. Research findings from journal articles have been transformed into evidence-based design criteria in over 2,100 Research Summaries. New Research Summaries are added weekly, and over 60,000 Research Summaries are downloaded monthly by users around the world.

In addition to the searchable database of Research Summaries, the site features Implications, a monthly newsletter about a design topic of interest, Web casts that enable in-depth learning from an expert in the field, a calendar of research-related events that enable planning of learning experiences a year in advance, and a glossary of terms. Early in 2009, a continuing and professional education curriculum was launched.

InformeDesign is used by architects, interior designers, landscape architects, and urban designers and planners from around the world. Proven to be an invaluable resource, thousands of practitioners, educators, and students use InformeDesign to further their knowledge and practice.

The site is free, and registration is optional. To learn more about InformeDesign’s mission, history, and features, visit www.informedesign.umn.edu