



THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

Committee on Architecture for Education

Higher Education Sub-Committee Report – April 12, 2011

The AIA CAE created the Higher Education sub-committee alongside several others in 2009 and charged it with the responsibility to create, gather and disperse new knowledge regarding the design of learning environments in tertiary educational systems. Under the leadership of Lisa Johnson of DLR Group, this sub-committee approached the task set before it with two underlying premises:

- That learning environments influence the learning process and
- That learning environments and/or facilities should support (and not impede) the learning process.

The sub-committee comprised of practicing architects, academic researchers and university facility owners/managers. It identified three major areas in which research and information gathering were deemed necessary and divided into smaller initiative groups to address each of them. These areas of initiatives include:

- a) Innovative Learning Environments and Bench-marking
- b) Higher Education Master Planning
- c) Design Process and Sustainability

Through the innovative learning environments and bench-marking initiative, the sub-committee reviewed a Steelcase Learning Labs webinar. The Steelcase Learning lab researches learning spaces through observation and videography in order to create positive learning experiences in higher education facilities. It also conducted a webinar on creating Net-Zero Campus Architecture in conjunction with the Society for College and Universities Planning and the New York Times Knowledge Network.

Currently, we are working on an analysis of design responses to the SCALE-UP pedagogical approach in universities. SCALE-UP is an innovative and successful teaching method which uses large, medium and small learning groups to teach academic content and is gaining traction across the nation. It will also embark on post-occupancy evaluations of cutting edge, award-winning facilities to help identify and consolidate user responses and lessons learned to other designers.

The sub-committee meets once a month via phone conference calls and communicates largely through linked-in and occasional emails. We'd like to invite more members to join us. Please send an email to the address below if you are interested.

Thank you.

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