What trends are you seeing and/or being in taught in your architecture program that you believe will come to
fruition in your professional career?

Throughout my years of study in architecture I've began to notice a similarity in comments students have received by professors on their work. The idea of progressing in one's work and process was a significant issue within our architecture program. On a personal experience I was once harshly criticized for presenting a specific diagram in which did not evolve progressive from class to class. Truthfully, the diagram consisted mainly of just boxes in which became bigger and smaller as each class progressed, nothing seemed to emerge except what was already there. Though the boxes were merely representative, after a critique of the drawings, I understood why I wasn't going anywhere in my design. It was as if all the clouds have cleared from my mind, and the self-realization of what I had to finally hit me. The process of design has to be constantly moving, at times even eccentric. Settling down on a specific style and becoming victim of a monotonous design hinders the project from becoming something innovative and interesting. The question asked repeatedly was "*what's the next step?*", pushing our ideas even further. After a few years the question is embedded into the fabric of our intuition and we begin to ask the question ourselves. Its better for our designs to stay off the beaten path and wander somewhere new and innovative. In our program, the practice of the continuous growth of our designs, reveals a true process and time line of each project.

The issue of remaining within similar design outcomes is one thing our architecture program tries to address, and a new method finding its way into our practice is the introduction of a new media. There is no doubt that the pedagogy and methodology of our school is undergoing a transitional period, as we see a shift from an analog and physical thinking to a surreal and virtual thinking. The discussion of whether something should be hand-drawn or realized in a computer almost always becomes a question in which we encounter at the beginning of any assignment. The hand drawn holds qualities in which directly transfers physical technique and the human element down onto a blank page. The digitized drawings with the use of numbers controlling the variation provides an expansive amount of combinations and a number of outlets for a drawing. Both mediums offer tools in

which are crucial, and leaving out either would pay a toll in our designs. It would be ignorant of us to remain with our own stubbornness stay with the old or be completely swept away with the new age. Within the evolution of design techniques of the old do not simply disappear as a new one arises but combines together to create something greater. It is terrible to think because something is new, and almost radical in changing the way we design, that all the work done with our precedent is thrown away. This is false. In a successful design process, the use of both physical and digital media in present. Currently the design environment has already been reassured to use both mediums. The encouragement of switching between the two has developed a process of having both digital and physical lines in one drawing to be almost second-nature.

Though a digital program has been introduced the need for a physical process is still stressed as much as the digital work. Working in a digital modeling program can quickly help to visualize a space, but to have a physically built model in front you it can really help to visualize the design in a tangible manner. A three-dimensional model in a computer is always going to be two dimensional behind the screen, and until the model is built physically the design is able to take a deep breath. Nothing can generate an idea faster than simply drawing it down, or scrapping together a model together. I am not putting down digital work but reassuring the importance of the use of our hands. It is very common for many student to embrace the digital media and entirely forget what they've learned in the past two years. What the pedagogy in our program does is remind us we do have hands and need to use them. The collaboration of both digital and physical creates a thorough process in which helps us visualize our project from a variety of views. Once in the professional field of architecture, the knowledge of digital programs are valuable but to construct ideas physically and quickly is something I consider essential to a design process.

Another trend in teaching which I have noticed during my time in architecture was the development of the idea behind one's work. It is easy to make an interesting building, but to develop an interesting meaning behind all the work is probably the hardest thing to do. Explaining the project thoroughly justifies your knowledge of your own ideas and the product you've created. It is the architect's job to research not only the site but to understand the people, events, and culture of the

site's surroundings. The knowledge we gain about the project isn't just limited to the building but everything around it. Students are asked questions of how we can make something better and why; this forces us to thoughtfully carry out our designs with a reason for everything we do. The process of understanding the culture and community and how a design may come into effect with the installation. Thus the research is the justification of our designs. Having the ability to develop a solid thesis of how we want to design is the driving force behind meaningful architecture and can help provide creativity within the professional field. We are taught so many methods of approaching a design, the problem of being stuck or stagnant in design shouldn't become an issue. Learning to gather resources and research, the quantitative data and information in which we know is available gives us unlimited opportunities and combinations to progress through a project. The way the program appears to be organized is to introduce the students with a variety of mediums and it is up to us to decide how we would carry out the process. We are given the freedom to decide how we want to design which helps us evolve our own process in making something.

Being able to manage your own work and process is something I believe in which will be essential when working in the professional field. The work flow professionally is constantly on the move, and any dull moment in design could jeopardize the project. Using the methods learned in school, I am aware of all the opportunities of how to begin and where to go from there. Keeping the process moving is was maintains the liveliness of the project and work environment. Frequently was experimentation encouraged in our architecture program, which assisted in seeing ideas under a different scope. For example, as mentioned, the movement between the hand drawn and digitally drawn pushes the design to the limit and reveals fresh ideas of opportunity. Though we are learning techniques of each medium, I believe it is the concept of taking an idea and implementing it into a new domain which is essential to design.

What we have learned in our architecture program is to be versatile in our practice. Rarely have you seen a proficient architect turn turn down a project because of its location or nature, but took up the challenge. As we have learned in our program, we must research the site and know everything about everything. In some sense the designer has to become almost an anthropologist for the site.

Learning in school what we should be focusing on when designing would behoove us in becoming fluent in creating relationships between the people and the buildings.

The idea of become more than just the architect is one thing I consider essential in architectural design. In modern times there is the common misconception that the architect is this stern, egocentric being obsessed with monolithic skyscrapers .The association of the word "architect" frequently presents a Howard Roark-like figure who falls in distress living a life a Shakespearean tragedy. But what upcoming architecture students are trying to do is defeat this pre-bias in which is displayed by pop culture and bring forth our true role in society. Drawing inspirations from other other arts such as music, paintings, and even literature is heavily encouraged to tear down the walls that separate the architect from everyone else. We are not limited entirely to the structural means of a building or an elaborate home decorator but person who takes in all issues pertaining to one thing. If there is a new park to be designed, we must ask where is it, who are there now, who was there, who will be there, what do people do now, and what can we make people do in the future. The education from our architecture program has taught us what we need to be seeking in design and how can we reinvent it. Our image is characterized with a level of humbleness, constantly asking questions for a more perfect understanding. The introduction of this kind of thinking into the professional field would bring to public the reality of our work. Our work isn't simply restricted to only the building but become a catalyst in manipulating everything around it.

An example of architecture being more than a building is project a professor of mine, who is also a practicing architect, is constructing in a historic and delicate neighborhood. His project is a residence home built from large shipping containers, stacking up to three stories in a neighborhood with a majority of single story houses. But the building wasn't blindly placed on the lot. Prior interviews and input from the local residents had to be done in considering their options. The context of the building is of great importance in speculating what could a container house do to such an old neighborhood. Upon visiting the residence, I've noticed the neighbors were excited for the building and did indeed bring in more people through the neighborhood. It brought a social uplift to the community and gave the neighborhood a deeper meaning in their pride. The architect in this case was very

involved in the community, learning about the people around it and assimilated with the community. To learn everything you need to know about the context before you build on it, will indubitably become of great importance once in the professional field. The significance of defeating all the misconceptions of architects restricted only to the building would finally bring into realization that the architect is entirely essential to the social lives people everyday. Architecture can become more meaningful and thus beautiful to the people who occupy it. Seeing how people function everyday and their relationship with their environment can help the architect develop a building which the people become appreciative of.

I have come to the realization that the way we must see architecture should be open and not limited to the sake of only building. Frequently emphasized is the quality of our process following up to the final product. The focus of refining our ideas down on paper generating a thoughtful thesis for the project proves our intentions to bring innovations and fresh ideas to society. Within the process is where the architect does not have to be the architect. The on-site research, the unlimited number of ways and elements that is available to express our designs, and the interaction with the community all play part in the in-depth process. Though the final product is almost always a single building, one can look into our research and process and see that the architect does an abundance of work outside of their working field. Learning how to maintain a thorough line of thinking throughout the project can benefit once in the professional field. Never would there be a dull moment, with the project constantly evolving into something better. The trends in my architecture program in which I have noticed over the years is not necessarily technical teachings but more of a teaching of how to think. Though those teachings may be indirect, the students minds are taught to breakdown then reassemble itself into a fresh mind. Our methods of problem solving is not natural and not what normal students would do. When something is causing a problem, we flip it upside down then start working again. Our process of approaching a project is completely different compared to another non-architect who is asked to to the same. The love for subtlety and the attention to detail is the reason for our need to know everything about everything; they are essential for a meaningful building. In the professional field, the need to explore and analyze what is affected by the architecture, makes the us something more architect.
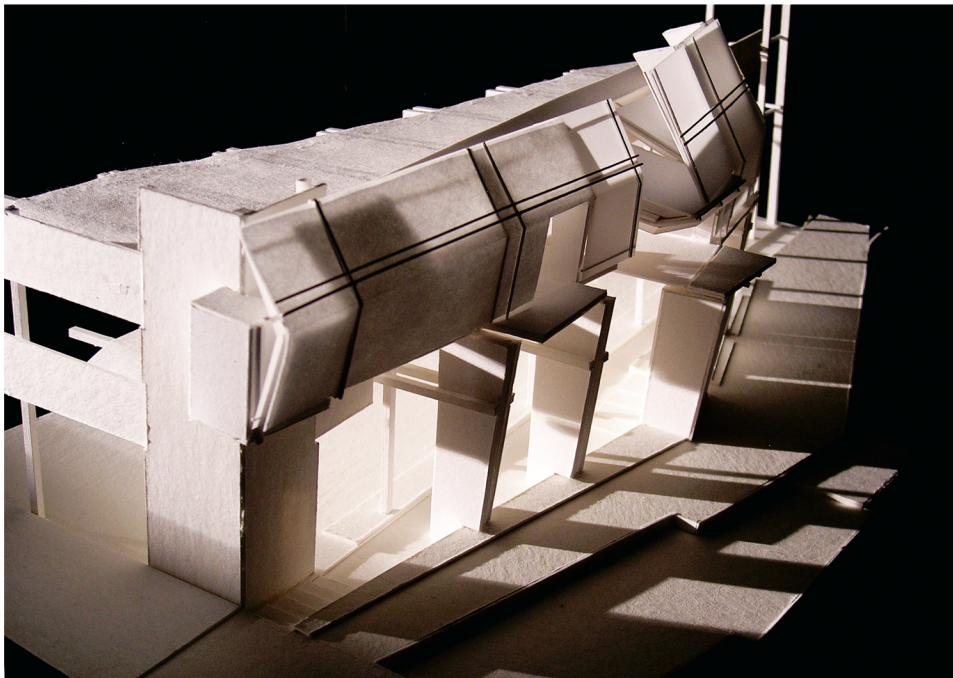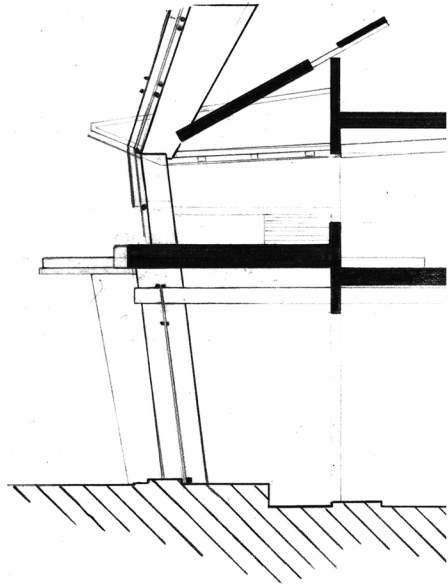
Second Year Project: Grafting Norman Garage

The focus of grafting an intervention on a single side of a parking garage produced a project which seemingly grows from and becomes an extension of the existing program. The addition is programmed to be include marching band podiums, two performance spaces, restrooms, and areas for rest. The rhythmic columns follow are projections of the garages columns which maintains pedestrian accessibility in and out of the garage. The public performance space is located on ground level giving a "street performance" type of shows and a private performance space is elevated on the second level away from public traffic.
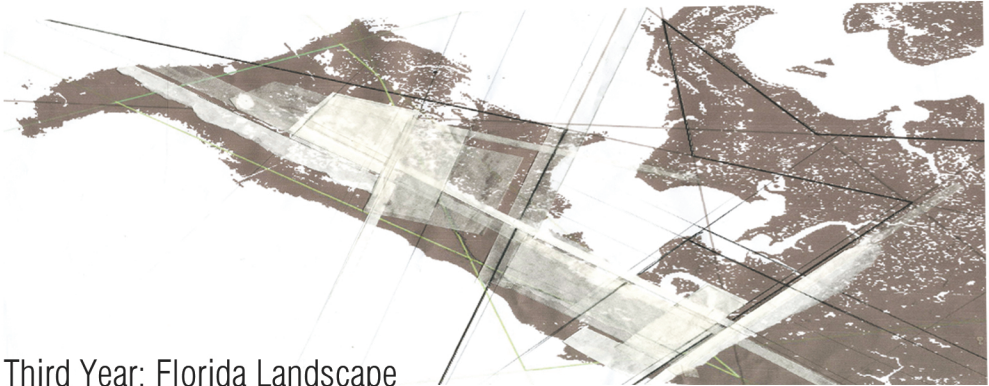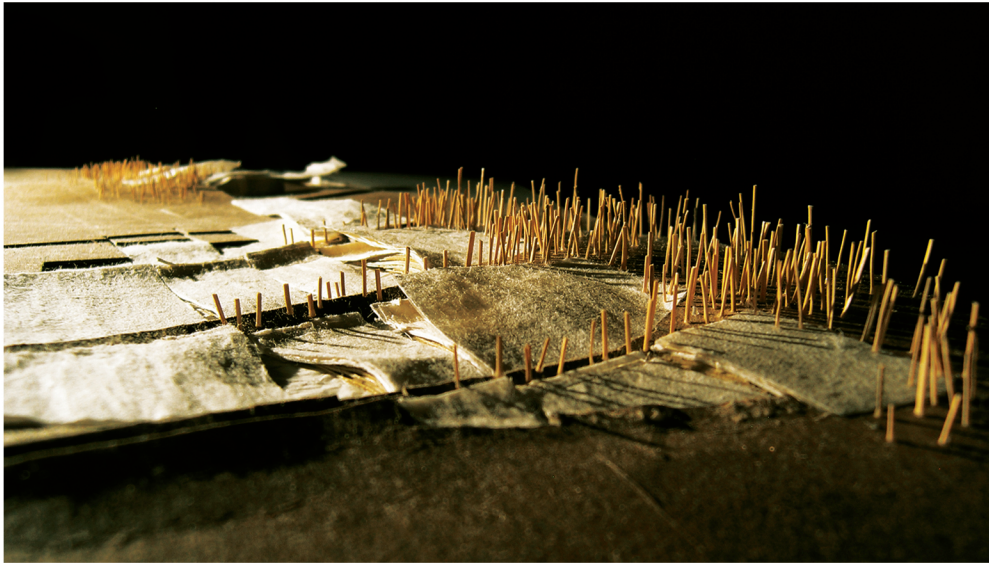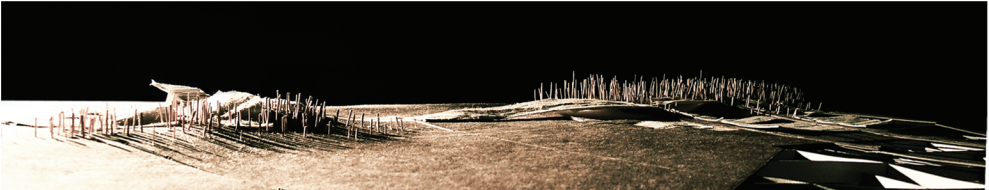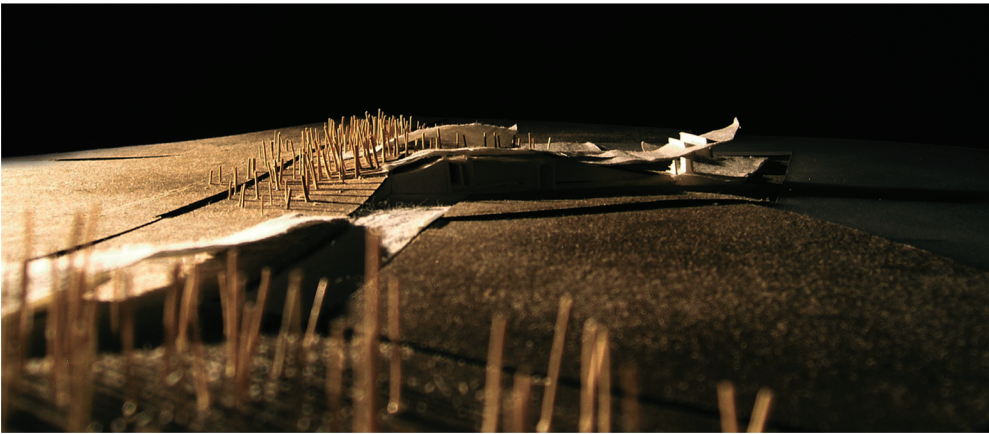
Third Year: Florida Landscape

The Florida landscape is dominanted by mostly flat terrain and marshlands. The landscape is unique, where digging into the earth is rarely a given opportunity, though slight hills vary the elavation. The site in which the area of intervention is on the coast of Crystal City, Florida facing the Gulf of Mexico. Made up of primarily marshland, the site is subject frequent land formation changes and prone to hurricane weather. In order to stabilize the landscape, the idea of using the existing tree hammocks to help build the ground up drove my project to develop a "mat landscape". The mat is a series of overlapping built-ground in which captures sediment from prevailing winds while drawing water up to the hammocks. Over time the hammocks' growth would extend over the landscape reshaping it and stabilizing the marshland.
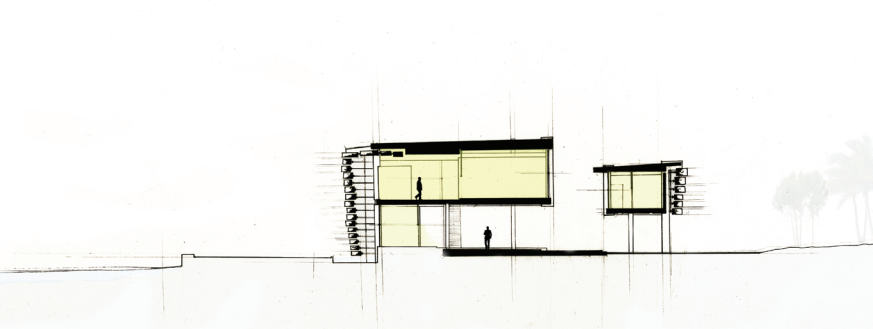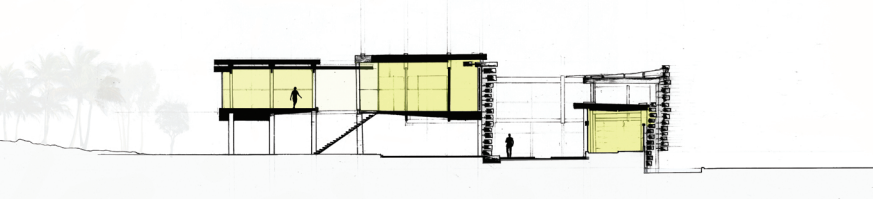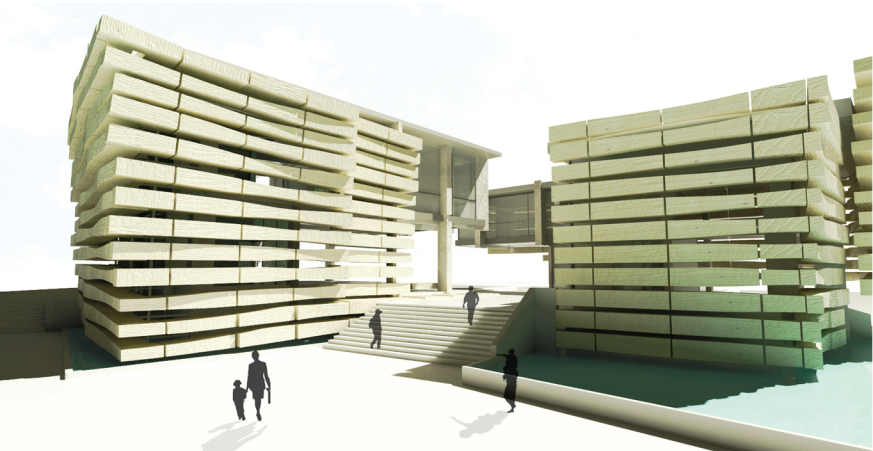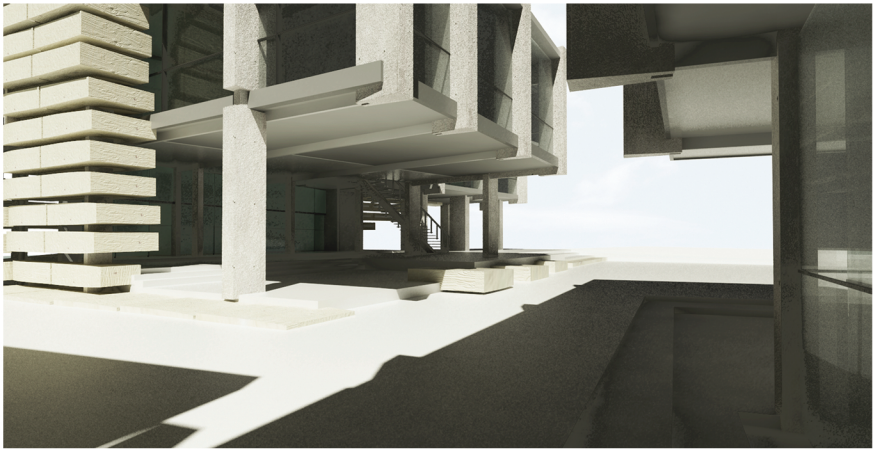
Third Year: A Protective Surface

This project is the continuation of the previous Florida landscape project. Programmed as a U.S. Coast Guard Community and Training Center, the set of buildings must develop a protective exterior surface that will help provide shelter from debris and winds from hurricanes. The surface consists of a system of large wooden blocks which endulate to break up winds forces.