Design Thinking

STRATEGY
Mike Smith of Designvox

PERSPECTIVE
Wege Prize:
Collaborative solutions

COMMUNITY
Downtown thriving by design
SEEN & HEARD

“This exhibition teaches you a lot more than you bargained for. It features an ingenious use of both materials and metaphors to inspire the imagination.”

– Alice Grace Dykes, ArtPrize 2013 Juror

ON DESIGN THINKING

Design thinking connects how we process with decision-making and action-taking processes. Business people, organizations, and companies recognize that they can have greater impact by doing things differently and disrupting their own status quo through design thinking. Sometimes KCAD creatives have known for a long time. Because design thinking is a continuous practice, a way of learning and doing and doing, it disrupts the field and challenges the true, requiring something better in its place.

KCAD aims to shatter through its impact, and it has impact by design. It’s easy for us to recognize the effect of design thinking in our design studios, but we also see it in the way our students pursue and Millican ethics and curiosity engage them, in the curricula our students design for the future. Or education is the impact of the critical discourses of art and design on our culture, politics, economy, and society. We recognize its potential in Grand Rapids, Western Michigan, and well beyond. I’ll say it: the world needs design thinking.

“Design. Think. Repeat.”

Vic Liptak, Dean of the College

Read Dean Liptak’s full essay on Design Thinking on the iPad version of Portfolio. Available at the App Store (search KCAD) or you can read it on our blog at kcad.edu/blog.

ON A MISSION

Kendall College of Art and Design (KCAD) has a simple mission: to develop artists and designers who make a difference, doing art and design that matters. KCAD believes in the creative achievement over perfection, boldness over complacency, and learning over acceptance.

Portfolio continues to evolve with KCAD, and we are committed to constant improvement. Let us know what you think: what should be kept, discarded, or improved. We welcome stories or queries you may have in the comments. Send them to us at kcadcommunications@ferris.edu.

ON THE COVER

KCAD alumnus James Peterson’s installation piece Sessilanoid at Gallery 825 in Los Angeles, in February 2013. This unique and well-received piece is literally taking James around the world, including to Grand Rapids during ArtPrize 2013.

The piece is for sale, and interested parties can contact him directly by visiting his site at www.artcontraptions.com. James is currently represented by Gallery 825.

Read more about James’ work and process on page 14, and visit his website at artcontraptions.com.

Photo by Todd Sali

CONTENTS
A NEW PATH FOR PROBLEM SOLVING: DESIGNVOX AND THE POWER OF DESIGN THINKING

Designvox owner Mike Smith left KCAD with a degree in visual communications, an impressive illustration portfolio, and something even more valuable. The head of the 20-year-old business credits the growth from a four-person graphic design studio into a mid-sized IDEO-style firm not with learning how to draw—but learning how to think.

By Karin Lannon

F"DOPE TO" is how Mike Smith, owner of Designvox—a firm based in the town of East Grand Rapids, from its inception complex problems ranging from changing corporate culture to reimagining the future of the entertainment industry. And no matter what the situation, Designvox’s problem-solving process begins with design thinking.

When clients ask Designvox to help pursue something they’ve been working on, or a problem they need to solve, he says, “We move them back upstream into what we call re-examining, which is human behavior and how to motivate and impact culture.” Understanding the roots of behavior that organizations hope to encourage or change reveals which tactics are likely to get the best results, starting the odds in favor of the desired outcome from the beginning.

One recent project involved working with an Fortune 500 company to help them make the shift into becoming a culture of health and wellness. According to Smith, if today’s organizations want to recruit and retain the highest level of employees, they need to demonstrate to people that they value their individual health and wellness—not just the skills they bring to the job. “Beyond attracting good people, creating this kind of culture can also help organizations manage their employees’ costs. We’ve worked with companies that specialize in health and wellness and found there are only so many tools you can adjust to keep insurance costs down,” says Smith.

The solution has been to communicate these complex issues to employees in a way that would motivate people to make positive choices for their health. But long before creating communication tools, Designvox began by researching its client’s environment, including the physical spaces where people work.

Thorough research is essential to coming up with effective strategies, according to Smith. “You have to understand their behavior today and how they get to where they are today,” he says. For Designvox, getting to know the client and their behavior, provides valuable content for making decisions. It also helps designvox understand the brand’s culture as the first solutions resonate with the organization.

For that reason, “framework” is an essential part of the job description at Designvox, and Smith says the results are easy to see. “The degree of preparation our clients go through before a client meeting creates empathy and a level of collaboration with the client that really inspires them,” he says. “And this drives breakthrough insights. There’s a great value to being engaged.”

For those who might think strategy is not “creative” work, Smith is quick to clarify. “We use the process to help us focus on what’s important,” he says. “The birth of innovation is imagining what could be. lateral thinking was great at imagining futures people didn’t know they wanted yet and tapping into the human psyche.”

Besides, the ability to think creatively can help the strategy process to areas more analytical minds might never explore. Smith says, “Creative people tend to see possibilities in terms of possibilities and potential. This alternative thinking lets us solve problems in an unconventional way.” When that new way is empathetic and imaginative, it leads to something that garners attention, which can be the first step in making things happen.

Seeing designers as strategists is a new idea to many inside the field, who may perceive them as draftsmen. “We’ve crafted the only foundation for Designvox’s process, if we do any front-end work, it’s the part where we engage our designers, design thinking applied to excellence in craft is the best possible combination,” he believes. “We believe design thinking and doing should coexist, and we have great craftsmen.”

In fact, Smith believes that sketching and shaping ideas by hand can inform the problem-solving process. “The ability to communicate in sketching and planning makes and simultaneously a certain type of thinking,” he says. “If I can catch my ideas, over my client never sees them, I can lend them to my entire team as a representation of what I was thinking in the moment. It’s a huge advantage for collaboration.”

Smith recommends that all design students learn to draw 20 minutes of material in the moment. But excellent illustration skills are not necessarily required. “When I was in school, all the best students were great at putting their hands on their tools, they could execute anything,” he says. “However, when the simplified drawings, they were formed, the rank of the conference room, help people focus in group ideas, and visualize abstract things like data.”

“Design can change the world one small step at a time or sometimes in large leaps of user joy that overlooked 50-year-old design and marketing concept sheets,” he says. “It is the large leaps of simple brilliance that overcomes the barriers of logic and reason and marketing spread sheets, “ he says. “When I was in school, all the best students were great at putting their hands on their tools, they could execute anything,” he says. “However, when the simplified drawings, they were formed, the rank of the conference room, help people focus in group ideas, and visualize abstract things like data.”

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Problems like environmental degradation are called “wicked problems” because of their fierce resistance to solution. Every day, scientists, engineers, businesspeople, and economists incur their respective fields for definitive solutions, only to discover more questions than answers. But what if every field had a stake in the problem stopped searching for solutions alone, and began designing them together?

KCAD and The Wege Foundation believe that the collaborative principles of design thinking can be used to solve any problem, on any scale, anywhere on earth. That’s why they’ve put their money on 30 West Michigan undergraduates to show the world how it’s done.

The first annual Wege Prize competition invites teams of five students from different fields of study to solve the wicked problem of creating a circular economy, an economic model in which resources and capital are kept in circulation instead of being degraded or lost.

According to another judge, Nathan Shedroff – author, entrepreneur, and chair of the MBA in Design Strategy program at California College of the Arts – that means learning to think in systems. “If you don’t, then you either end up with a higher risk of unintended consequences or failure because you didn’t see some sort of influential piece in that system.”

In order to allow for a systemic approach, Wege Prize organizers intentionally placed the least possible amount of restrictions on the teams’ solutions. “Especially in a competition geared toward students, you have to take those preconceptions out of your head yourself getting the benefit of that creative thinking,” Blackford says.

Following that creatively ensures that undergraduate students can become the next generation of thinkers and designers capable of solving wicked problems. “What’s great about starting with education is that it’s a very organic piece,” Shedroff says. “It means that we’re willing to be patient with the outcome, because we know that educating people now will pay off greatly in the future.”

Port of that grant ensures that cash prizes totaling $30,000 will be awarded to the teams whose solutions inspire the greatest hope for success. The funding also makes it possible for the teams’ solutions to be evaluated by both a public vote and a panel of judges comprised of some of the world’s leading design-thinkers, politicians and educators.

One of those judges is Michael Werner, a chemist, engineer, and sustainability strategist for Haworth who was drawn to the competition’s transdisciplinary approach to problem solving. “A person who successfully engages in society is one who rises up against ideas and disciplines that are divergent from their own,” Werner says. “It’s at that intersection that you get true innovation and true change.”

Regardless of discipline, Werner is adamant that to some extent we’re all designers, equally capable of the brainstorming and rapid prototyping that are the cornerstones of design thinking. “Wege Prize has already caught the attention of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF), a UK-based non-profit recognized as a global leader in circular economic thought,” Werner says. “We were very excited when we saw this online,” says Colin Webster, educational program manager for Haworth, “and we knew that if we had people interested in making an impact in the community.”

Excitement is a word that’s defined Wege Prize from the very beginning by planting the seeds of possibility right here in West Michigan, KCAD hopes to show the world that there is no such thing as an unsolvable problem.

Envisioning a better world is easy, so why does actualizing one seem so hard? As it turns out, all that stands in the way of solving the planet’s biggest problems is the simple matter of expanding our perspective.

By Kyle Austin
DESIGNING A CITY BUILT ON DESIGN

Streetlights. Red narwhals. And economic development. Yep, they all go together.

By Henri Lammens

When you look at what’s driving growth in West Michigan, one of the first factors that bubbles to the top is design. That’s true on a large scale, with major corporations like Amway, Bissell, Haworth, Herman Miller, Steelcase, and even Bowne & Co. headquartered in the area, and to a Newell Rubbermaid design center opening in Kalamazoo in 2014. The area was blessed in large and growing creative outpouring, including more industrial designers than any other city in the country, according to a recent survey by the Industrial Designers Society of America. But good design has always been about the small scale, too: how one human experiences a little piece of the built world. It’s that human experience that KCAD, Grand Valley State University (GVSU), and Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. were interested in when they teamed up to create Window Wonderland 2013—decking 21 downtown businesses with lights, snowmen, frosted cupcakes, and even street- chen — during the months of December.

The competition paired teams of students with merchants in the downtown Grand Rapids area to decorate the windows for the holidays. This public was invited to choose the best design at voting sites inside the downtown street, what’s the likelihood that a person.

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effective way to encourage people to slow down
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While events like the window contest provide
temporary solutions for slowing people down, other
design elements provide a lasting impact. For example, brick pavers can slow down movement so pedestrians can appreciate their surroundings.

“If you look at traditional streetlights, what are they lighting? Just the street,” said Larson. “By using historic lighting fixtures instead, you can light the whole pedestrian realm.” Something as simple as the scale of lighting and what it illuminates can enhance pedestrian safety and comfort and help establish a sense of place.

While these elements are not as visible as a city’s skyline or physical features, Larson said, “Well-designed infrastructure is a defining element of building a world class city. How we constantly thinking about how to improve the quality of the design and thoughtfulness of these spaces that become the thread that ties us all together.”

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and thoughtfulness of these spaces that
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- Kris Larson, Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc.

That’s because, more than just a design project, Window Wonderland was based in sound economic principles as well. “With an independent tester, there’s a heirloom that occurs when a consumer has no idea what’s on the other side of the door,” said Larson. “It’s a process of discovery. To encourage that discovery, we knew we had to compel people to go into the store. Ideally, this contest would compel new consumers to go into every store to exercise their votes. Loyal to artists who are compelled to do good work that attracts consumers so they can win the cash prize. And reward consumers for the behavior we want them to exercise, which is the patronage of our downtown businesses.”

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A visual celebration of creativity can also be an effective way to encourage people to slow down and linger in a city. “For the economic wellbeing of our cities, it’s been proven that congestion is a good thing, particularly in an urban center,” explained Larson. “If you’re a small business owner in a downtown street, what’s the likelihood that a person

in a car going 45 miles on hour will even recognize the sign on your storefront which is designed to be read on a pedestrian scale, let alone stop to engage in commerce? The 1970s and 80s way of designing cities was to move you through it as fast as possible, but today we understand that it’s okay to slow down. Traffic for the stores.

The choice of lighting elements can also influence behavior. “If you look at traditional streetlights, what are they lighting? Just the street,” said Larson. “By using historic lighting fixtures instead, you can light the whole pedestrian realm.” Something as simple as the scale of lighting and what it illuminates can enhance pedestrian safety and comfort and help establish a sense of place.

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Rather than the typical wood shop where students take a design and make another cookie-cutter piece identical, I would like to have the opportunity to create a woodworking class and see the students explore their creativity within the constraints of woodworking material. Few woodshop students would progress and develop their own artistic interpretations and unique approaches.
The thriving creative ecosystem of West Michigan is about to become even more versatile, thanks to KCAD and the region’s first Master of Architecture (M.Arch) program.

By Kyle Austin

In developing the new M.Arch, KCAD assembled a team of the nation’s best and brightest architectural minds to explore where practice and education have been and where they need to go. As a result, the M.Arch is a program that’s responsive to the present, designed for the future, and poised to lead architectural education into a new era of innovation.

Architectural practice and the role of the architect are evolving to adapt to the increasingly collaborative 21st century landscape. The idea of the architect as a solitary visionary isn’t just losing favor in progressive circles. According to James Timberlake, founding partner of the one of the nation’s most progressive firms, Kieran Timberlake, “it’s dismissed as downright mythical. Industry-leading firms, he says, are those “with a collective intelligence that are deep in their ability to solve a wide range of problems.”

But while the practice of architecture is moving forward, architecture education is still largely mired in the concept of working in isolation. Timberlake, who also teaches architectural history at the University of Pennsylvania School of Design, stresses the need for graduate architecture students to work across disciplines and engage with multiple perspectives during the design process.

“That’s how students are going to find themselves working out in the marketplace,” he says. “They should be taught that way so that they’re better contributors in this environment.”

That’s why the collaborative ecosystem of KCAD makes a fertile setting for this type of learning, exemplified by the transdisciplinary approaches of programs like Collaborative Design, Fashion Studies, and Industrial Design. With entry points for students with and without a pre-professional degree, the KCAD M.Arch will see architecture grad students heading alongside students from a variety of academic backgrounds. Timberlake says this enhances the perspective with which the program as a whole examines architecture.

There’s also an overwhelming excitement among M.Arch advisors about the unique opportunities to integrate the program within the vibrant design community of Grand Rapids. Norman Millar, Dean of Woodbury University’s School of Architecture, President of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, and founder of Los Angeles-based firm Millar Architects, believes that location is vital to a program’s ability to create impact.

“As a consultant to the KCAD M.Arch, Millar stressed the importance of enabling students to hone their design skills by tackling real world problems. “Grand Rapids should see architecture students crowding around everywhere,” he says. “There’s opportunities for partnerships with local nonprofits, industries, and all of the other design components that make the city a very important center of design in this country.”

The KCAD M.Arch features a curriculum structure that is wholly unique in the world of architecture education. Each semester will begin with an intensive immersion into the knowledge and theory that inform the practice of architecture. Following that instruction, students will get a chance to put those ideas into practice with a nine-week studio course that blends hands-on problem solving and design thinking. “If you think about the curriculum that way, then you have these intense immersions into the different aspects of the profession, but the intention is that the immersion is integrated into the whole of the studio work,” says Fairbanks. “The immersion doesn’t end with the immersion course.”

Fairbanks, Millar, and other program advisors fear that KCAD’s willingness to break from tradition and take the lead in the evolution of architectural education is its most valuable asset. As a program focused on the future, it will attract students with the vision and passion needed to fill the impending void in leadership expected when the Baby Boomers of the field of many large firms retire.

“What’s going to happen is that the void is going to have to be filled more and more by the Millennials who are in school right now,” says Millar. “The large firms’ owners are concerned that [architectural education] isn’t training Millennials to be leaders.

But as a brand new program, the KCAD M.Arch can respond to the changing market and shape its curriculum to prepare graduates for 21st Century needs.

“If students are looking at the KCAD M.Arch, they’re going to want a different experience from school,” Fairbanks says. “They’re going to want to be in a place that’s thinking about how to teach it in a new way, and they’re going to see that this is a program that’s decided to break from the norm by integrating design education and bringing new opportunities to the table. The students that apply will want those kinds of challenges.”

And they’ll mature into architects who know how to lead, working across disciplines to solve future challenges and carry design to unimaginable heights of innovation.
Q: Arts are never created in a vacuum. When and why did you get your first inspiration?
A: My mom was a very creative person and promoted my art from a young age. I spent a lot of time with sketchbooks, and in fifth grade I enrolled in an advanced art program that exposed me to sculpture, drawing, and collage, and my creativity and resolve.

Q: It sounds like you were driven and enthusiastic from an early age. Your time at Kendall must have been awesome.
A: I can’t overstate how much Kendall helped crystallize my vision. The school was much smaller in the early 90s, and that has always been most of it. They allowed me to mix and match my curriculum, starting in fine art drawing, then painting, and eventually sculpture. But even after I realized that sculpture was my real passion, I collaborated heavily with other departments, including furniture design. This exposed me to materials and processes I may not have otherwise known about. The experience and exploration continues to shape and influence the work I do today.

Q: And that work is now receiving attention on an international stage. The piece you made for ArtPrize is taking you around the world, isn’t it?
A: Seckerson drew a lot of attention at ArtPrize, and once it was removed from the GRAM I accompanied it to Los Angeles, it’s nice to showcase my work and a few other locations. After spending so much time in Los Angeles, it’s nice to showcase my work in new venues and to a different crowd of people.

Q: Los Angeles has been your home since graduating from Kendall. Why is your “alo hal”?
A: When I was growing up in the ’80s, I fell in love with the special effects in movies. I knew I wanted to help create those, so I combined my love of unusual materials and my artistic talents to become a sculptor in Hollywood, creating props. I’ve spent well over a decade building practical and mechanical props, visual effects, sets, and costumes. I specialize in fabricating special furniture and studio production, but I’ve actually been doing a little less of that recently as I devote more of my time to my personal art.

Q: So that the next chapter for you?
A: Yes, I’m putting all my energy into pursuing art as a way of life. With the great momentum behind some of my recent pieces, that passion is taking over. I’m focused strictly on not only making art that can have representation and notoriety, which will allow me to create larger pieces for the public sector. It’s already beginning to pay off, actually. I recently received a fairly sizable commission to do an original piece for Coachella in April.

Q: In your view, you maintain a specific interest in sustainability and energy efficiency. How has that influenced your work, or vice versa?
A: I’ve been fortunate to work with recycling and working with these type of materials. One of my greatest inspirations was a mid-20th century sculptor named Eva Hesse who became quite famous for her pioneering work with plastics, latex, fiberglass, and other materials that simply weren’t being used in those days. However, the translucent, see-through works attract up her art. She died from cancer at age 34, and the tragedy of her life has inspired me to find safer ways of manipulating these types of materials.

Do you have any examples of that?
A: Actually, Seckerson is primarily unplanted plastics, which means that when it reaches the end of its after-life is upcycled; it needs been made of things that can eat, and that has also a deeper context upon further investigation. I’d like to make interactive pieces, because people in a state of mind and space are dissolved, and that's when the idea of Seckerson developed. If people feel they are in a deeper piece of work, they start talking about why certain materials were selected and techniques were used to achieve the end result. After all, it’s not the material’s fault. It’s how we use it.

Q: By the way, you’ll be returning to ArtPrize 2013 entry.
A: Students Brianna Kelklinck, Chris Nguyen, Gabe Muhler, Jackie Oakland, Liz Barrett, Liz Brown, and Michelle Voss participated in the Make-able 2013 project, part of the annual Art Education for Special-B 2013 Project. The project partnered with the students with special education programs at Forest Hills Northern High School and Kentwood Explorer Elementary School to implemented a rigorous sculpture curriculum, with each student creating individual and incorporated art and integrated standards while considering multiple intelligences and learning styles.

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across the country.

Competition. This innovative competition asked students
Mention awards for the Steelcase NEXT Student Design
Chicago artists in order to build a stronger community
MFA Painting student
held by the prestigious Manifest Creative Research
were all selected to be
MFA Painting students
presentation on Storytelling in Writing Center Practice
awarded a special KCAD scholarship that recognizes
MFA Painting student
Art Gallery.

PAINTING

JEWELRY DESIGN

PHOTOGRAPHY

Allan Alwong,
Alyssah Johnson,
Ashley Sheldon,
Britney Turner,
Cheslea Seckel,
Hannah Keen,
Jessica Schimke,
Joseph Bott,
Kayla McCarver,
Miranda Davis,
Sabrina Frazee,
Samuel Jemmison,
Sarah Frazee,
Stephanie Favre
were part of a

Sculpture

Students
Erik Dendum,
Jackson Hansen,
Jacob Keputa,
Molly Madsen,
and Nathaniel Leforge
with professor
China with professor
Paul Amonte to assist at Art
Kraus-Engisrugg with the installation of his Multiple Edition
project at the Yuan Art Museum in October. In December,
the installation featured at the KCAD Art Atrium with
another installation of the MFA Thesis.

Student Julia Rist and Nathaniel Leforge attended the annual
Michigan Mud Clay Day Conference of Delta College,
where they were invited to speak at the KCAD MFA Thesis
and students from across the nation to take in
a plethora of demonstrations and lectures.

Faculty & Staff

Art History Professor
Anna Narcross is currently working on a project to digitize the archives of the

Kendall Furniture Company. The archives, which date back to the beginnings of the company's history, include items that were preserved despite a massive fire that destroyed the Kendall headquarters in 2012.

BFA Students
Case Milohcevic and MFA student
Steven Ranjoy curated a PhD Thesis exhibition. It featured art and works of art dealing with consumerism, and also included works by
Robert A. Schultz, a leading thinker and writer on the topic of the consumer society. This exhibition was then exhibited at the KCAD

Philosophy

Katherine Silva has been named President of
Community Engagement, a new position within the KCAD. Katie Mora, who
was a 2013 KCAD graduate, will work to broaden and
facilitate collaborative projects with partners, organizations, businesses, and non-profits that create shared value and increase the impact of the College in the region and beyond.

Art History Professor
Louise Whalley recently published her first book,
Renaissance, Gothic, and the Dow in Ivy
of England’s Royal Charters in the cultural studies
field.

KCAD Printmaking Professor
Marilyn Vadas was the
subject of a special exhibition at Northern Michigan University
On the Town Art Museum, October 16, 2013. Her book,
by which she featured large-scale print collages she completed during her recent sabbatical. The exhibitions are an introduction to her work.

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GALLERY NEWS

The Fed Galleries
Woodbridge H. Farris Building | 17 Pearl NW
Admission Free, open to the public. Other hours by appointment

Humor in Craft March 4–April 17, 2014

Presenting highly ironic, political, sarcastic and just plain amusing artworks by 33 makers from across the United States and abroad, Humor in Craft spans in The Fed Galleries on Tuesday, March 4 and continues through April 17. The exhibition is scheduled to open during LaughFest 2014. 

Guest-curious by Bridget Martin, the exhibition at The Fed highlights a diverse range of media, techniques, and work, as is sure to challenge viewers to move beyond their own horizons of reality when considering approaches to contemporary art. The concept of ‘Humor’ can vary widely due to a variety of factors, such as: background, personal experiences, social values, knowledge of popular culture events, education, and national origin. Martin comments, “I think it’s important in assembling images of humorous craft work, it becomes clear that even though everyone’s idea of humor varies, there are definite differences on different meanings. So the question arises, what do we laugh at? Are there images of things that everyone finds ridiculous? Are there topics that are off limits and how far can you go before it’s just not funny anymore? And who gets to decide that this point has been reached?”

Selected works highlight topics that range from parody to serious—the human experience, religion, pop culture, politics and history, among others—and draw attention to the craft materials—clay, glass, metal, fiber, wood and mixed media—which all have been processed with a great story-teller, easy to talk with and had a great sense of humor. Most of all Jeff enjoyed spending time with his family. He is survived by his parents, Dan and Nancy Fuller, his two brothers, Ryan, his sister, Brooke; Tops, Jim Emerich of Monroe, Michigan; (aunt and uncle) Jim and Karen Emerich of St. Charles, Minnesota; (Uncle and Aunt) Doug and Theda Emerich, their kids, Tony and Nick Thomas; and many, many other cousins, nieces and nephews.

The President’s Office was notified of the passing of Jeffrey M. Toole, a former Furniture Design student who last attended KCAD in 1986. The following is from his obituary on mLive: Jeffrey M. Toole was a good story-teller, easy to talk with and had a great sense of humor. Most of all Jeff enjoyed spending time with his family. He is survived by his children Ryan Toole, Justin (Tina) Toole and Hannah (Matt) Salsi; grandchildren, Malika, Samuel, Jacob, Braxton and Keleigh; sister Cynthia (Robert Young) and Jennifer (Ken) Gilchrist; grandmother Oliver M. Connor-Routson; aunt Martha (Joe) Preloznik; cousins, Tony and Nick Thomas; and many, many other cousins, nieces and nephews.

The President’s Office was notified of the passing of Melissa Ann Hromada, a former Illustration student who attended KCAD from 2002–2003. The following is from her obituary in The Cadillac News: Melissa was known and loved by KCAD students and alumni. She was a good story-teller, easy to talk with and had a great sense of humor. Most of all Jeff enjoyed spending time with his family. He is survived by his children Ryan Toole, Justin (Tina) Toole and Hannah (Matt) Salsi; grandchildren, Malika, Samuel, Jacob, Braxton and Keleigh; sister Cynthia (Robert Young) and Jennifer (Ken) Gilchrist; grandmother Oliver M. Connor-Routson; aunt Martha (Joe) Preloznik; cousins, Tony and Nick Thomas; and many, many other cousins, nieces and nephews.

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Upcoming Exhibitions: Excellence Awards 2014 and MFA Thesis Exhibition 2014

Open May 6, 2014

Our annual exhibitions which highlight the work of full-time undergraduates and graduate students. More details to come. Visit kcad.edu

INTRIGUING CONVERSATION

Featuring Professor Stephen McCullough and 12-current Irons Hall Fellows. We will share insights about the creation of Balancing Point.
HOMEWORK
DESIGN THINKING Vic Liptak, Dean of the College

Now that you’ve read about how design thinking functions as a tool for problem solving, try it for yourself! Though design thinking can take many forms, for the sake of this exercise, let’s agree that effective design thinking strategies typically engage these four values/processes:

1  Human-centered inquiry
   You’re doing this because it might benefit people

2  Open-ended approach
   You recognize there isn’t a singular way of working on the issue and there isn’t a singular answer or solution; you’ll generate multiple ideas

3  Hands-on work
   You can’t do this only by reading about it, and you’ll have to actually try out your proposals to test for implications and repercussions

4  Collaboration—you will rely on others’ perspectives as you try to synthesize your ideas into a proposal

This is your basic framework. Feel free to go beyond it as you work.

THE CHALLENGE
Let’s consider something we’re all familiar with: grades and grading. Why do we evaluate student performance? How could we do better? What would change, and why should it be?

THE ASSIGNMENT
Using the design thinking framework above, propose a new process for evaluating student performance at whatever level you’d like, from a single assignment to a course to an entire program. Talk about your ideas with peers, colleagues, students, instructors, and administrators, and then fine-tune. Then, share your findings with Dean of the College, Vic Liptak, by emailing your short proposal to vicliptak@ferris.edu by April 30, 2014. Dean Liptak will continue the process of design thinking by presenting your ideas (with or without attribution, as you wish) at an upcoming all-faculty development workshop. Proposals received after that are also welcome and will be considered for future workshops.