

Calendar year 2006 marks the fifth anniversary of the NCARB Prize initiative. In celebration of this milestone, *Direct Connection* offers a look back at the NCARB Prize winners from 2002-2005.

# The NCARB Prize: Celebrating Five Years of Excellence

Ten years ago, Lee Mitgang and the late Ernest Boyer published a ground-breaking research report that catalyzed the profession of architecture. Among the many subsequent responses to *Building Community: A New Future for Architecture Education and Practice* was a practice education awards program proposed by NCARB in 2001, under the leadership of Peter Steffian, FAIA.

Steffian's concept of an awards program that "honors innovative ways of integrating practitioners into the academy in order to expose students to the reality and culture of day-to-day practice" has evolved into the highly anticipated and well-respected NCARB Prize initiative. Since its inaugural 2002 competition, the program has awarded \$312,500, each year recognizing six schools. (See page 11 for information on the 2006 NCARB Prize winners.)

Between 2002 and 2005, 70 accredited schools of architecture have submitted 159 entries. More than one-half of accredited pro-

grams in architecture have participated in at least one NCARB Prize competition.

### Looking Back, Looking Forward

When asked to consider the first four years of the Prize program, NCARB Past President Steffian explained, "The NCARB Prize has indeed met my expectations. At first, I was afraid that the five \$7,500 prizes would not be particularly attractive to the schools. I did not realize how little discretionary money a school of architecture has each year and how well \$7,500 can be spent."

Schools have used the funding in multiple ways. For example, two Prize winners from 2002, Miami University and the University of Pennsylvania, purchased additional materials—two high-end laptops and construction supplies, respectively—with their \$7,500 stipends. The Clemson Architecture Center in Charleston, a 2003 Prize winner, and the University of Illinois at Chicago, a 2005 Prize winner, both used their funding to incubate new stu-

dios/initiatives that carry on Prize-related work. Other Prize-winning programs have used their stipends to publish media about their projects and to cover basic overhead costs associated with their work.

Robert A. Boynton, FAIA, a fellow past president of NCARB and the current chair of the Practice Education Committee, which oversees the NCARB Prize, described a new component of the initiative: "The committee created and has approved a plan to offer 'grants' to accredited programs to provide funding to assist in creating new practice education initiatives. We believe that the 'grants' will create opportunities for certain programs to expand their practice education curriculum."

Boynton also noted that the committee would like to have a representative from the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) appointed. This individual could help encourage more accredited programs to take



part in the Prize initiative.

### **The Prize Winners—2002 through 2005**

The 24 NCARB Prize winners, representing 22 accredited schools of architecture, showcase a variety of ways in which practice and education are brought together in a studio environment.

### **2002 NCARB PRIZE WINNERS**

#### **Grand Prize Winner**

#### **The University of Detroit Mercy**

#### **Detroit Collaborative Design Center**

A fully operational nonprofit design center searching and (re)searching architectural design and neighborhood development received the inaugural \$25,000 grand prize award of the NCARB Prize. Physically located in the University of Detroit Mercy's School of Architecture, the Center brings together students, faculty, practitioners, and community members in the pursuit of educating future leaders in urban revitalization.

#### **Arizona State University**

#### **Stripscape: Pedestrian Amenities**

#### **Along 7th Avenue**

The Integral Studio, a faculty-led design program at ASU, re-envisioned and revitalized a specific metropolitan corridor in the heart of Phoenix. The ASU team reversed the conventional approach to urban design—seeking the street's "latent" order rather than imposing a "foreign" one—as a means to turnaround economic disenfranchisement for area merchants.

#### **Auburn University**

#### **The Rural Studio**

Fully embracing the concept of "context-based learning," the Rural Studio is a well-respected, seminal project on the university level. Students from Auburn's School of Architecture design and build housing and community projects in economically depressed Hale County, Alabama. Through the Rural Studio, students learn critical skills in a socially responsible manner; a community gains suitable and dignified housing; and a profession is enriched by a new

generation of leaders well versed in the ethics of community service and individual responsibility. The late Samuel Mockbee, FAIA, along with Dennis K. Ruth, established the Rural Studio in 1993.

#### **Miami University**

#### **Toward a More Mutual Partnership: Pushing the Boundaries of the Internet Studio**

The multifaceted Internet Studio provided students, faculty, and practitioners with the means to successfully integrate technology in architectural education and day-to-day practice. The experimental collaborative studio brought together architecture and interior design students from neighboring universities (Miami and Ohio) in order to work with design firms in Chicago and Cincinnati. Due to the interactive nature of the studio, students were exposed to a wide range of feedback, which required them to negotiate the demands of collaborative team design.

## North Carolina State University Case Studies

An unconventional use of case studies characterized the NC State entry. Students enrolled in a 16-week graduate level professional practice course researched and wrote case studies about real buildings and real clients. The combination of hands-on research—students made site visits and regularly communicated with the architects responsible for the projects—and classroom-based lectures created a seamless, holistic continuum. Thus, concepts discussed in class were made “real” as students delved into the actual built environment.

## The University of Pennsylvania Master(s) Building 2010: Transfer Technologies in Architecture, Construction, and Production

Through a Masters Studio, students from Penn established a new model of architecture that implemented transfers of process and material science from other industries, including aerospace, automotive manufacturing, and shipbuilding. Their objective: To break down the

barriers that can separate architects and contractors—and likewise slow the emergence and assembly of new building products for architectural use.

## 2003 NCARB PRIZE WINNERS

### Grand Prize Winner

#### The University of Kansas

##### Studio 804, Inc.

Studio 804, Inc., recipient of the \$25,000 grand prize in 2003, is both a two-semester graduate-level course and a not-for-profit organization that integrates students in the design and construction processes in the Lawrence, Kansas community. For more than a decade, students have worked with local architects, businesses, tradespeople, and manufacturers on several full-scale projects, including five homes. The studio is known for its innovative restoration efforts that often are combined with affordable housing initiatives. Accessibility, sustainability, and design excellence also characterize the studio's work.

## Clemson Architecture Center in Charleston Upper Concord Street Neighborhood

Focusing on an eight-acre parcel in downtown Charleston, South Carolina, 18 undergraduate and graduate students worked with faculty, a local practitioner, and two city officials as they analyzed the site and its context, and conducted design investigations. Their efforts culminated in a week-long public charrette, which focused on local stakeholders and provided the guiding vision for the parcel's redevelopment.

## Mississippi State University

### Dialogic reciprocity: Binding form making to practice in first-year design

The tenets of dialogic reciprocity—a communication theory based on ethically bound intersubjective discourse—are at the heart of this collaborative, first-year design studio. By focusing on first-year design students, the studio redefines the architect-client relationship at an early stage in architectural education. Using dialogic communication, students apply color theory, figural composition, and spatial ordering principles as they design small spaces.

## Long-term Benefits of the NCARB Prize Initiative

2002 NCARB Prize Winner

John Weigand  
Miami University

***Toward a More Mutual Partnership: Pushing  
the Boundaries  
of the Internet Studio***

The biggest single value of the NCARB Prize, as it continues to become institutionalized, is that our faculty are aware of it and frame studio topics around the possibility of entering the competition. Since 2002, we have entered two other NCARB Prize competitions and won one of these this past year.

2003 NCARB Prize Grand Award Winner

Dan Rockhill

The University of Kansas  
Studio 801, Inc.

Being recognized by your peers is always beneficial and helps to legitimize what we do. Pointing to this accomplishment encourages others to engage our organization. What we do is very different—and being different will always bring out the fears lurking in the background of the public. Lending institutions, industry, and clients all feel comforted by an endorsement from the profession—and the NCARB Prize is at the top of the scale.

2003 NCARB Prize Winner

Robert Miller, AIA

Clemson Architecture Center in Charleston  
Upper Concord Street Neighborhood

The credibility of the Prize has strengthened support within the university for hands-on, service-learning studios. The credibility has also helped us develop partnerships in the community.

2003 NCARB Prize Winner

Christopher Monson, AIA  
Mississippi State University

***Dialogic reciprocity: Binding form making to  
practice in first-year design***

The award precipitated many other opportunities for recognition and research. Following the NCARB Prize, the studio project won a 2003 AIA Education Honor Award, and the collaborative aspects of the work were furthered in a fourth-year studio, which was awarded a 2003 Architecture for Social Justice grant from Adaptive Environments. The NCARB Prize has given our faculty strong encouragement to continue pursuing design collaboration as a substantive pedagogy for professional design education.

2003 NCARB Prize Winner

Amy E. Gardner, AIA

The University of Maryland  
Building Connections . . . Building Practice

In 2003, when we were awarded an NCARB Prize, we were contemplating the “next generation” for Arch 600/611 Comprehensive Studio. We elected to focus on the course content as it relates to sustainable design and building strategies. The Prize funding allowed us to bring in more colleagues and activities to enhance the program's embrace of a sustainable future for building design.

2004 NCARB Prize Grand Award Winner

Randy Seitsinger, AIA

Oklahoma State University  
***Integrated/ Interactive/ Innovative:  
The Comprehensive Semester***

Our standing in the university has been recognized by a wider audience and our recognition nationally has increased. One side benefit of this increased recognition has been that the university gave us top priority for a capital building project, and we recently secured a \$14.8 million gift from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation for the renovation and expansion of our architecture facility. While this was not a direct result of receiving the NCARB Prize, the recognition that we received for this prestigious award helped us in this process.

**Pennsylvania State University/The University of Washington**

**The American Indian Housing Initiative**

This initiative is a year-long, three-part design/build service-learning course that culminates in a summer building program on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Montana. Students, faculty, and design professionals help to develop sustainable community building practices as a way to address the pervasive housing crisis facing many American Indian reservations. The initiative also has established an apprenticeship program with the Northern Cheyenne Housing Authority, where tribal members learn how to utilize strawbale in the building process.

**The University of Maryland**

**Building Connections . . . Building Practice**

A sequence of co-requisite graduate courses—which brought technical material into the design studio and focused on the material realization of architectural ideas—constituted this winning entry. By encouraging students to “learn how to learn,” the courses exposed

design as an iterative, trial-and-error, additive process. Students worked with a variety of participants (including core and guest consultants, faculty members, and topical experts) as a way to form relevant questions and find answers.

**Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University**

**The Art of Integration/The Science of Building**

Under the auspices of the 2002 Solar Decathlon, a team of Virginia Tech students and faculty, professionals, and tradespeople designed, built, and operated a residential house that was solely powered by converted sunlight. Through their efforts to create a functioning, transportable, solar-powered home, the team made great strides toward their long-term research goal of designing more efficient, affordable, and livable buildings.

**2004 NCARB PRIZE WINNERS**

**Grand Prize Winner**

**Oklahoma State University**

**Integrated/Interactive/Innovative:**

**The Comprehensive Semester**

During the Comprehensive Semester, fifth-year students explore structural design, environmental performance and controls, and project management as they complete three integrated courses. This intense, multifaceted semester comprises four phases: pre-schematic and schematic design; design development; design documentation/construction documents; and design documentation/project portfolio. Students also benefit from the participation of several faculty members as well as a group of 50 practicing architects, structural engineers, mechanical engineers, and code officials who review student work and provide feedback.

*2004 NCARB Prize Winner*

**Steve Badanes**

**The University of Washington**

**Urban Acupuncture**

Our program is terrifically under-funded—the \$7,500 award was twice what they give us for an annual operating budget. We used it for tools, TA's, materials, and documentation. It gave us a great boost!

*2005 NCARB Prize Grand Award Winner*

**Brad Wales, AIA**

**The University at Buffalo/SUNY**

**West Side Streetscape/**

**Small Built Works Project**

We have the option of expanding our scope to take on larger building projects. This has been a goal of the program for a few years, and now we may have the opportunity. There are other highly accomplished faculty members at UB working in a similar vein, and there has been considerable discussion about teaming up to form a materials-based, conceptual design/build group to take on larger work.

This possibility is supported by an increased demand within the community. Because of the local publicity surrounding the award, more potential client organizations in the city are coming to us with project ideas. Fundraising within the community for our

projects has also increased. Even the City of Buffalo is giving us a little more help than before.

*2005 NCARB Prize Winner*

**Stephen Luoni**

**The University of Arkansas**

**The Big Box Studio in the Community Design Center**

The university administration has committed more resources to UACDC's (University of Arkansas Community Design Center) annual budget, which needs subsidizing to remain operational. The award has advanced UACDC's visibility and credibility in the both the university and the community. One of our project sponsors for the award, Wal-Mart, has recognized the expertise in the school, leading to further collaborations with the retailer. The NCARB Prize has been a great source of pride for our school's current students and alumni.

*2005 NCARB Prize Winner*

**William Worn, AIA**

**The University of Illinois at Chicago**

**Organic Farm Market: A Collaborative Studio**

The funds have been used to partially fund a design/build studio called 1:1, which has been led by Professor Daniel Wheeler for the past two years. The purpose of the 1:1 studio is to

make specific improvements in the UIC School of Architecture Building.

The 1:1 studio has had a dramatic impact on the image and conditions at the school. Students compete to enter the studio, and their work has contributed directly to their education in terms of detailing and fabrication. The studio has given them an opportunity to explore critical design and the implications of materiality and fabrication.

*2005 NCARB Prize Winner*

**Daniel S. Friedman, Ph.D., FAIA**

**The University of Illinois at Chicago**

**Organic Farm Market: A Collaborative Studio**

The NCARB Prize greatly enhanced and enriched the stature of the school in the eyes of the client [Prairie Crossing]. I can report that the managing member of the client team deeply appreciates the national recognition won by Professor Worn and his studio co-instructor, Professor Mhairi McVicar; he now regularly attends school events.

Trust that the success of Professor Worn's studio and our 1:1 projects has attracted the attention and interest of upper-level college and university administrators, and that I fully expect new opportunities to blossom.

**California College of the Arts**  
**Collaborative Teaching With Professional**  
**Mentorship**

Second-year architecture and interior design students explore building technology through a highly collaborative teaching partnership comprising faculty, professional mentors, and a consulting engineering firm. By exposing younger students to the complexities of building systems, the course helps them to establish a firm base onto which future knowledge can be added. Students study actual buildings and their respective systems, and work with the original designers of the chosen structures.

**Rice University**  
**BW + RH (Rice Building Workshop +**  
**Project Row Houses)**

In operation for nearly 10 years, the Rice Building Workshop is an elective course spread over several semesters that offers students an opportunity to take part in local revitalization efforts. Students are thoroughly introduced to all stages of design and planning, as they meet with community clients, create solutions for the defined objectives, seek out feedback from practitioners and allied professionals, draw up construction documents, and apply for city approvals and permits.

**The University of Kentucky**  
**The Comprehensive Project: A Practice-based**  
**Studio**

A capstone course initially organized in 1999, the Comprehensive Project creates an accelerated learning environment for students who are engaged in community-level projects. A “team teaching-team learning approach” approach is emphasized as a means to emulate the professional office. From programming to schematic design and design development, students are fully involved in all aspects of the given project.

**The University of Miami**  
**Interdisciplinary Community Building:**  
**Strengthening a Neighborhood**

Interdisciplinary work is at the heart of this community outreach program. For more than seven years, six university schools and departments have taken part in initiatives that help a distressed neighborhood in the greater-Miami region. The program takes a holistic approach in order to improve both the built environment and the sociological environment. Among its

accomplishments is the construction of four student-designed homes.

**The University of Washington**  
**Urban Acupuncture**

Founded in 1988, the Neighborhood Design/Build Studio works with Seattle’s Department of Neighborhoods on community redevelopment projects through the Matching Funds Program. The studio’s forward-thinking objectives are based on two principles: Society as a whole is an architect’s clients and community outreach is a key component of education. With more than 15 small-scale design projects completed, the studio continues to emphasize interdisciplinary collaboration, teamwork, and service in a hands-on, real-world environment.

**2005 NCARB PRIZE WINNERS**  
**Grand Prize Winner**

**The University at Buffalo/SUNY**  
**Westside Streetscape/**  
**Small Built Works Project**

More than 120 undergraduate and graduate students have created thesis-like conceptual projects within the framework of civic involvement through the “Westside Streetscape/Small Built Works Project.” Initiated in spring 2001 as an optional undergraduate studio for seniors, Small Built Works has focused on four umbrella projects that emphasized green design, renewable energy strategies, and tectonic design strategies. Students also work directly with the community and provide construction documents (including shop drawings, bill-of-materials lists, and project budgets) to City Hall as part of the permitting process.

**Miami University**  
**The Alumni Traveling Studio**

Organized by alumni practitioners and faculty members, the alumni traveling studio fully exposed students to the intricacies of practice. While exploring topics chosen by Miami University alumni, the studio focused on such practical concerns as compliance with building codes, construction costs, and integration with other design disciplines.

**The University of Arkansas**  
**The Big Box Studio in the Community**  
**Design Center**

The Big Box Studio developed community-based design solutions that are ecologically,

socially, and economically responsive to “big box retail,” which has created its own form of urbanism. Originally commissioned by large discount retailers, the Big Box Studio worked with leading industry designers and consultants to create best design practices and models addressing community development.

**The University of Florida**  
**Bridging: The Links Between Practice and**  
**Education in the Academy**

This submission is based on a collaborative, comprehensive project that embraces a new understanding of “interdisciplinary bridges.” Graduate architecture students enrolled in a seminar on environmental technology and senior and graduate students in interior design jointly provided a design program for the renovation of a university building.

**The University of Illinois at Chicago**  
**Organic Farm Market: A Collaborative Studio**

This accelerated design/build studio encouraged students to design, detail, and create permit documents under the direct supervision of local architects—and then construct an organic farm market for an internationally known conservation community. Through this capstone graduate project, students focused on the principles of sustainable design and built full-scale mock-ups for client approval.

**Virginia Polytechnic Institute and**  
**State University**  
**Chicago Studio**

As an alternate model for traditional upper-level design studios, this entry comprises a series of integrated, collaborative courses that introduced daily professional practice activities in an urban setting. Student teams created a collective master plan for one of three sites along the Chicago River; each student then designed a building for that master plan. **DC**