



In late March 2006, the most recent winners of the NCARB Prize were announced at the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) Annual Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah.

## Montana State University Is Awarded \$25,000 NCARB Prize

A Montana State University entry, **“Engaging the Advancing Edge of Architectural Practice,”** has been selected as the grand prize winner of the 2006 NCARB Prize for the Creative Integration of Practice and Education in the Academy.

In the 2006 grand prize winning entry, students who are enrolled in a professional practice class investigate trends and focus on business research and strategy in architectural practice by working with firms and other entities such as Montana State’s School of Business. Coursework is iterative as student investigations flow from one semester to the next—that is, a topic explored during the fall semester will be revisited during the spring semester with another group of firms as its focus. Because practitioners often are the object of such investigations, students are constantly working with primary sources.

The 2006 NCARB Prize jury, chaired by Barbara Sestak, AIA, noted that the MSU submission “was innovative in looking at how a practice evolves in relationship to trends and a firm’s response to them.” The jury also recognized that “students are developing theory” by way of their participation in this course.

Jurors explained, “Students are on the cutting edge of how practice is changing.”

The 2006 NCARB Prize jury also honored the following programs, each of whom will receive a \$7,500 monetary award.

### **California College of the Arts— “Studio/Practice Program: Comprehensive Building Design”**

Through the Studio Practice Program, staff members from three firms take part in a campus-based studio where students reappraise and rethink an actual project from each firm. Not only do students conduct detailed studies of drawings and visit job sites, they also provide another design solution with guidance from faculty and firm staff members. As an additional facet to the studio, each firm also receives a stipend. The firms have financed a publication related to the studio’s work. According to the Prize jury, “Strengths of the program are the dialogue with the firms and the publications that can share the experiences with a broader community and through time.”

*California College of the Arts received the NCARB Prize in 2004 for its entry,*

*“Collaborative Teaching With Professional Mentorship.”*

### **Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute—“Bedford Studio Initiative”**

The Bedford Studio Initiative intricately links a professional practice course with a studio. Through the studio, students concentrate on the design development of a project they previously created or of an unbuilt, published project. Students also visit construction sites and professional offices to discuss practice issues related to their work. Through this initiative, six architecture students and six engineering students participate in a traveling workshop that focuses on firms in the United Kingdom and in Germany. Workshop participants are tasked with developing an integrated design proposal for part of a structure or building. By traveling abroad, students can observe how practice differs in other countries. According to the Prize jury, “One of the strengths of this program is that the studio engages fourth-year engineering and senior architecture students in a setting where they jointly work on design development.”

**Texas Tech University—“Practicum + Studio”**  
Since 2001, students from the rural Texas

Tech campus have enjoyed opportunities to work on large, complex building types in a metropolitan setting. This ongoing effort—17 studios completed over the past five years—has successfully introduced students to urban design issues. Those taking part in the studio work 35 hours per week in a firm-setting and then meet at a host firm for a weekly studio. Prize jurors were pleased to recognize the long-term, successful way in which the university developed and sustained a program of integrating practice and education in response to their context.

**The University of Arkansas—“Thickening Professional Knowledge Base: Developing Planning Models and Solutions for Our State”**

For more than 10 years, UA’s Community Design Center (UACDC) has tackled a variety of projects, notably beginning with a focus on historic preservation. Since 2002, UACDC has broadened its scope to include multi-disciplinary issues such as a watershed urbanism project that has drawn the involvement of several organizations. The UACDC studio is renowned for its work on such initiatives, which is captured in a publication upon the

completion of each project. Emphasizing proactive responses, the UACDC has become a regional planning activist and leader of environmental issues for the surrounding area.

*The University of Arkansas received the NCARB Prize in 2005 for its entry, “The Big Box Studio in the Community Design Center.”*

**The University of New Mexico—“Small Town Urbanism: The Main Street Studios”**

At their essence, the Main Street Studios demonstrate the effective role that a university can play in improving small town design. Practitioners from 15 firms and UNM students develop and lead a series of community design charrettes and workshops, with a focus on nurturing small town urbanism. The Main Street Program is the primary funding source for these studios, allowing for a series of projects based on community strategy—as opposed to the development of several different and unrelated projects. Prize jurors described the projects as “well done and thoughtful” and noted that “they assess themselves and they have a sense of where

they are.”

Jurors named entries from the University of Texas at Austin (“Engage, Design, Build, Reflect”) and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (“No Compromise: The Integration of the Technical and the Aesthetic”) honorable mentions. Thirty-three entries, representing 29 different colleges and universities, were juried for the 2006 competition

As envisioned by former NCARB president Peter Steffian, FAIA, the NCARB Prize recognizes excellence and innovation when bringing together architectural education and practice. Initiated in the fall 2001 semester, the Prize is inspired by the 1996 Carnegie Foundation report, *Building Community: A New Future for Architectural Education and Practice*, written by Lee D. Mitgang and the late Ernest L. Boyer.

*The fall 2006 issue of Direct Connection will feature additional details about the winners of the 2006 NCARB Prize. DC*

**The 2006 NCARB Prize Jury**

The 2006 NCARB Prize jury comprises the members of the Council’s Practice Education Committee and six deans (or department heads or chairs) of NAAB-accredited architectural programs chosen by NCARB’s regional leadership. Committee members are

- Robert A. Boynton, FAIA, Committee Chair (Virginia)
- Arnold J. Aho, AIA (Vermont)
- Joseph L. Bynum, AIA (Alabama)
- T. Rexford Cecil, AIA (Kentucky)
- Frank M. Guillot, FAIA (Vermont)
- Stephen Parker, AIA, LEED (Maryland)
- Barbara A. Sestak, AIA, Jury Chair (Oregon)
- Michiel M. Bourdreux, AIA, staff liaison
- Demetrius Norman, staff support

The academy is represented by six deans/directors/chairs, each of whom is based in an NCARB region. They are

- Stephen White, AIA, Dean, School of Architecture, Art, and Historic Preservation, Roger Williams University
- Alan Balfour, Dean, School of Architecture, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- Ken Lambla, AIA, Dean, College of Architecture, The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
- Michaele Pride-Wells, AIA, Director, School of Architecture and Interior Design, The University of Cincinnati
- Robert G. Fillpot, FAIA, Dean, College of Architecture, The University of Oklahoma
- Brenda Case Scheer, AIA, Dean, College of Architecture & Planning, The University of Utah