

# NCARB Expands Scope of Prize Initiative: Seed Money Grants Debut This Fall



Up to three NCARB Prize Grants, totaling \$10,000, are expected to be awarded in early December 2006 to accredited programs in architecture. These seed money grants will further support efforts to integrate practice and education in the academy.

The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards has expanded the reach of its successful and well-received NCARB Prize initiative by establishing the NCARB Prize Grants program, which is expected to award up to \$10,000 per academic year.

Under the direction of the Council Board of Directors, the NCARB Prize Grants is a separate funding venture that will support the creation and implementation of new ideas and methods of integrating practice and education. The Prize Grants were developed by the 2005-2006 Practice Education Committee (PEC) with specific guidance from Barbara Sestak, AIA, a professor at Portland State University and a member of the Oregon Board of Architect Examiners who twice chaired the NCARB Prize jury.

Last year's PEC Chair and Council Past President Robert A. Boynton, FAIA (2004), explained, "The Committee created and had approved a plan to offer grants to accredited programs to provide funding to assist in cre-

ating new practice/education initiatives. We believe that the grants will create opportunities for certain programs to expand their practice/education curriculum."

#### **BUILDING ON THE NCARB PRIZE'S MOMENTUM**

The Prize Grants build on the momentum created by the NCARB Prize for the Creative Integration of Practice and Education in the Academy, which was introduced in 2001 as a response to *Building Community: A New Future for Architecture Education*, a report drafted by Lee Mitgang and the late Ernest Boyer for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Education. As envisioned by NCARB Past President Peter Steffian, FAIA (2001), the NCARB Prize encourages, rewards, and showcases diverse programs and activities that wholly integrate practice and education in an academic setting.

Now in its sixth year, the NCARB Prize has awarded more than \$310,000 to NAAB-accredited schools of architecture. Since the

## The NCARB Prize Grant Program: Part of a New Funding Momentum

*Michael Everts, AIA, an assistant professor at Montana State University and program coordinator for the 2006 NCARB Prize grand prize winner, shared his thoughts about the NCARB Prize Grant program and efforts to create “funding momentum” within the academy.*

In many schools, especially our state university, there is an increased need for alternative funding because the expectations of architectural education are growing faster than the ability of traditional funding sources to keep up (i.e., student tuitions are already high, and the state is actually cutting back its subsidy percentage).

The pressure of generating alternative revenue is shared between administration and faculty. In addition, institutions whose primary mission is teaching are especially challenged because their research needs to be directly related to course content. Naturally, alternative funding (grants, scholarships, sponsorships, awards, etc.) has values that are emphasized through their awarding. These values tend to affect course content.

Recognizing this change in the academic funding environment gives context to the “funding momentum,” which, yes, is occurring. This context is important because with increased alternative funding comes a richer complexity of interests and values. The hope is that this will lead to an enriched architectural education, especially with the progressive goals that institutions such as NCARB and the Graham Foundation emphasize.

I speak for many of [my peers] in my [response above]; however, the flip side, which I don’t hear often, is that the agenda attached to alternative funding is sometimes too determinant of course content. This isn’t so much with [NCARB and the Graham Foundation], but more with private business alliances.

I think it is becoming more self-evident that the funding momentum is increasing the range of funding opportunities. It is widening so broadly that universities are beginning to be able to choose alternative funding emphasis instead of amount.



inaugural 2001 competition, NCARB has received 175 submissions that represent 78 of the 115 accredited programs in architecture.

### PRIZE GRANT OBJECTIVES

The objective of the NCARB Prize Grants is to support and encourage concepts that may present more of a risk than a school can initially afford to take on its own. Ideally, an NCARB Prize Grant will make possible a project that has not been implemented. Schools receiving Prize Grants are encouraged

- to explore different venues or innovative curricular methods/programs to increase the practice/education link or
- to support efforts that, for a variety of reasons, have not materialized into for-credit curricular activities and, therefore, have not been submitted to the NCARB Prize program.

The Prize Grants also represent another vital funding source for accredited programs of architecture. Montana State University Assistant Professor Michael Everts, AIA, the program director of the 2006 NCARB Prize grand prize winning entry, noted, “For the most part, architectural departments don’t have the type of grant money available as other departments such as engineering. Therefore, funding, such as the new \$10,000 NCARB Prize Grant program, has a huge, direct impact on the quality of education.”

### Prize Grant Guidelines

Under current guidelines, an NCARB Prize Grant may not be used for university indirect costs or overhead, salary for adjuncts to teach proposed class, or expenses for existing courses. NCARB does not place additional restrictions other than to suggest that the grants are to be used for work that results in interaction between students and practitioners. Grants are not intended for individual faculty enhancement activities. Budget items may include but are not limited to items such as:

- faculty release time to create the program (The studio/class will need to be part of their teaching load when initiated.)
- cost of new technology providing long-distance interconnectivity with architectural or other appropriate offices
- cost of materials
- travel costs for students

### Prize Grant Application Process

Each academic year, the Council anticipates awarding a total of \$10,000 through one, two, or three grants to a NAAB-accredited school(s) to support the creation of a new curricular initiative(s) at the institution(s). NCARB reserves the right not to make any awards, based on the quality of proposals received.

Members of the Practice Education Committee will review all proposals, which will comprise an application form, a narrative



no longer than five pages, a supporting letter of commitment, an itemized budget, and a letter from the dean authorizing the project. Written notification of the Committee's decisions will be mailed at the beginning of December so that project(s) can begin in January with the implementation of the studio/class being offered the following fall semester at the latest.

The selected institution(s) will receive a check and an award letter outlining specific terms and conditions for the Prize Grant, which include a project report after the project is completed that will be included in NCARB publications.

For more information about the NCARB Prize Grant program, visit the NCARB Prize section of the Council web site ([www.ncarb.org/prize/](http://www.ncarb.org/prize/)) for a downloadable application and detailed instructions. NCARB Prize Grant submissions for the 2006-2007 academic year are due in the NCARB offices, on or before 5:00 p.m. EST, on Wednesday, November 1, 2006. **DC**

## Improving Ties Between Practice and Education: The Collateral Organizations Vis-à-vis Building Community

by Mark Mistur

*The NCARB Prize initiative and its recently developed offshoot, the NCARB Prize Grant program, are among the most visible responses to the 1996 report, Building Community: A New Future for Architecture Education, written by Lee Mitgang and the late Ernest Boyer for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Education. Mark Mistur, an associate professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and program coordinator for the DD/Bedford Studio, a 2006 NCARB Prize winner, recently shared some thoughts about the collateral organizations and their roles in improving ties between practice and education.*

In recent years, the collateral organizations have played increasingly active roles in promoting and/or strengthening a constructive relationship between practice and education. The NCARB Prize has proven to be an excellent stimulus of initiatives that strengthen ties between the academy and practice. By underwriting the Prize with substantive monetary awards that stimulate interest in the initiative, support existing programs, and seed their expansion, NCARB has demonstrated its dedication to this mission and has found at least one effective means of making a substantial difference.

The Intern Development Program (IDP) is a comprehensive tool that by its charter implies a linkage between learning and practice, but it could have a greater impact on student/practitioner relationships (and school/practice awareness) if NCARB (and/or others) were to make increased efforts to better engage faculty and increase the number of student registrants. I would suggest that more robust support for, and expectations of, IDP state and education coordinators could be effective in stimulating greater awareness and higher quality participation, and that it would lead to an early framing of more constructive relationships among schools, practices, and the students that bridge them.

NCARB is not alone. Though the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) does not seem to have many initiatives that target the relationship between educators and practitioners, it has found an effective medium through its Collaborative Practice and Research Awards that function much as the NCARB Prize, though they are less broadly distributed or known.

In recent years, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) has changed course and taken a less adversarial stance toward schools. It has opened its National

Convention to academics, inviting them to give talks, and has included educators on its National Board. Through its charter and proactive involvement with issues of practice and education, the Large Firm Round Table has spawned initiatives that address the recommendations of the Carnegie/Boyer Report, most notably the recommendation for the development of a unified profession. The Large Firm Round Table also has been instrumental in bridging the divide through the Case Study Initiative, which takes students (and faculty) deep into architect's offices for observation and analysis of completed projects.

The American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) consists of and represents those architecture students who are among the most vocal in demanding access and exposure to best practices while in school. They are the most complementary and best champions of programs that provide positive out-of-classroom experiences with and exposure to practice(s). These kinds of experiences are among the most impressionable and important a student can have. To assist local chapters where there are no school initiatives to provide for a constructive interface with practice, I recommend that AIAS National consider developing a guide for chapter groups to use in developing their own grass-roots lecture or seminar series, or office and construction site visits with local practices.

Like all accreditation boards, the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB), in establishing the criteria for accreditation, has the task of setting the "low bar" to determine whether a school is performing adequately. In addition, I would suggest that NAAB do more to stimulate creativity, unique enterprises, and experiences by providing positive evaluation where schools exceed the requirements and have model initiatives and/or experiences for its students. Instead of placing such an overwhelmingly strong emphasis on **CRITERIA**, I suggest that schools be challenged, and expected to provide, certain "out-of-classroom" **EXPERIENCES**, including but not limited to international, interdisciplinary, community, hands-on building, construction site exposure, and, most appropriate to this discussion, first-hand exposure to various types of architectural practices and their work. While these may be implied within the existing criteria, I suggest that a more general set of requisite experiences would operate to open "first-hand" learning and spin off many productive education and practice relationships.