

Introduction of Mississippi State University College of Architecture, Art, and Design

－ Activities of the Department of Conceptual Design －

Mississippi State University
Nihon University

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1. Introduction

The College of Architecture, Art, and Design (CAAD) at Mississippi State University (MSU) and the College of Industrial Technology (CIT) at Nihon University (NU) further advanced the relationship between the two institutions with the execution of a Memorandum of Agreement ¹ (MOA) in May 2018. The agreement builds upon the strong research relationship between MSU's Center for Advanced Vehicular Systems (CAVS) and NU ² to advance shared goals of teaching, learning, and scholarship.

CAAD is comprised of four departments and two research units: the School of Architecture and its Carl Small Town Center and Gulf Coast Community Design Studio, the Department of Art, the Interior Design Program, and the Building Construction Science Program. These units support CAAD's mission to promote and engage students and faculty in the conceptualization, craft, media and technology, history and theory, aesthetics, and ethical issues associated with making artifacts.

The MOA identifies key initiatives in architecture, art, design, and building construction science/building construction management in which faculty and students in each college are engaged; collaborative

faculty research and teaching and student programs—initiatives that support both institutions' globally focused missions.

2. Faculty Research

Initial faculty discussions identified common research interests for collaboration:

- Interior design for the needs of specific populations such as the aging and elderly; those with impaired vision or blind; and those with other conditions that require design consideration for issues such as spatial configurations, furnishings, materials, color, lighting, acoustics, and wayfinding
- Design technology including AI, VR, AR, and BIM; application in professional settings; and incorporation in education; and optimization of computers, printers, 3D printers, laser cutters, and CNC machines in maker spaces; and immersive digital arts and VR and AR technologies
- Construction optimization of plant, technology, and labor for greater quality and productivity
- Hybrid and composite building materials offering increased resiliency, sustainability, and performance

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- Community planning to increase preparation for economic, climatic, and environmental challenges
- Design studio pedagogy and how it can increase students' creative, professional, and collaborative skills

3. Student Programs

The MOA also includes provisions that will allow students to study at the other institution through MSU tuition scholarships for NU students and NU tuition waivers for MSU students. Both colleges look forward to these student opportunities.

More immediate are jointly planned student programs proposed for spring 2019. There are two parts of the proposed two-week programs: NU students led by faculty will visit Mississippi and MSU in March, and in May MSU students led by faculty will visit Tokyo and NU. These will provide initial college-to-college engagement that will help form a strong foundation for future cooperative initiatives.

Activities will focus on professional and academic engagement in order to increase students' firsthand understanding of various professions, businesses, and industries in each location through site visits and project observation (e.g., offices, construction sites, manufacturing facilities, showrooms, laboratories) and meetings and discussions with professionals. Cultural activities are also planned so that students gain an understanding of the contexts in which these industries and professions developed and exist.

Activities within each program will respond to student interests and academic needs; the MSU program is being developed by CAAD in collaboration with MSU's College of Business' International Business Program and will be open to students across the university. These and other interdisciplinary aspects will increase students' exposure to a wide range of professions, viewpoints, and experiences.

The programs will provide ample opportunities for student engagement. Students will serve as informal hosts at their respective institution, and they will participate in a multi-week, joint collaborative project. In March, when NU students visit MSU, students will begin a project that they will continue virtually during April and conclude when MSU students visit Tokyo in May. The opportunity to gain and practice international collaborative skills is important for students preparing for an increasingly global world.

Faculty will help students observe the environment through daily activities in each place by interacting with and appreciating the environment, society, culture, and history on a daily basis. These are relevant aspects due to the focus of our academic programs on physical objects and the built environment and understanding the individuals, processes, and forces that created them.

5. Conclusion

Faculty and students in the College of Architecture, Art, and Design at Mississippi State University look forward to collaborating with faculty and students in the College of Industrial Technology at Nihon University in these and other academic activities that support our shared goals of teaching, learning, and scholarship.

References

- 1) Memorandum of Agreement between Nihon University College of Industrial Technology and Mississippi State University College of Architecture, Art, and Design, May 2, 2018.
- 2) International Research Collaboration Agreement between Mississippi State University and Nihon University, College of Industrial Technology, June 3, 2018 and July 7, 2018.