

Strategic Planning Report

I. CBE Narrative

Why the Urgency, Why Now?
Vision, Mission
CBE Narrative

II. CBE Research Clusters/ BELABS

Health and Built Environments
Sustainability/Energy of Built Environments
Human and Social Dimensions of the Built Environments
Life-Cycle Process of the Built Environments
Urbanism and Built Environments

III. CBE Strategic Responses to 2Y2D

IV. CBE Budgeting

V. Addendums available on-line

May 7, 2011 Retreat excerpt
2010 Retreat excerpt
2009 Retreat excerpt
2007 Retreat notes
Summary Recommendations: Outline for a Renewed CBE Strategic Plan
Core Values/Practices
Clusters worksheets
Strategies worksheet
March 13, 2012, CBE Caucus Comments on March 3rd Draft Plan

I. THE COLLEGE OF BUILT ENVIRONMENTS

Why the Urgency, Why Now?

Our college is uniquely positioned to address the grand challenges of 21st century built environments. What we “do” is investigate, produce, and disseminate the *essential* knowledge of planning, design, construction, and real estate required to envision, construct, operate and evaluate the full life cycle of such environments. We offer the unique body of knowledge, process of critical inquiry and means of engagement necessary to help guide the future of urbanization, globalization, and sustainable development in a positive, unified and integrated way. We address the ever-expanding array of grand challenges, which are amplified by the need to accommodate the unabated pace of global population growth while improving the unacceptable plight of many members of our planet. These challenges are critical, exciting and transcendent and compel us to advance beyond narrow approaches to critical thinking and problem - solving,

Creative and bold approaches are essential to the continued support and resources necessary to discharge our shared vision and mission. We must devise means to attract greater support for our existing programs and to nurture future initiatives that cross disciplinary lines. This is best accomplished by strengthening our respective disciplinary cores while blurring the boundaries between them to foster collaboration and innovation. The challenges we face as a college demand that we seize this opportunity to reconsider our relationship to the broader community and how as a whole we might contribute beyond the potential of our individual faculty and departments.

Proposed Vision

To mobilize the CBE professional and academic disciplines and to capitalize on the synergies among them in our shared effort to address the 21st centuries Grand Challenges of urbanization, globalization and sustainability.

Proposed Mission

As a college that embodies multiple perspectives on the creation and stewardship of built environments we are at the forefront of a global discourse increasingly focused on the processes of urbanization, globalization, and sustainable development. Our work has immediate and tangible impacts in the physical world and profound implications for urban systems, human health, environmental resilience, social equity and economic vitality. As an academic community with a strong professional orientation we are committed to the advancement of integrated planning, design, construction, development and investment through teaching, learning and research in the built environments.

Our collective work as a college sits squarely within the broader mission of the University as a whole - to advance and disseminate new knowledge through scholarly exchange, creative practice and public service. Indeed, we exemplify the University's mission for imaginative inquiry through our teaching, research and service as well as the Provost's vision for teaching and research in the 21st century, as a collaborative enterprise resting in "nimble" educational models.¹

CBE NARRATIVE

CBE is unified by our shared commitment to the advocacy for and stewardship of built environments. The latent synergies of our five disciplines —Urban Design and Planning, Real Estate, Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Construction Management - offer us an unparalleled opportunity to address the 21st century challenges facing built environments, including urbanization, globalization, health, and sustainability. Our collective expertise can be brought to bear on every aspect of these challenges and uniquely positions us to harness diverse perspectives, offer integrated responses and advance best practices.

¹ Drawn from the November 2011 statement from the Office of the Provost about the importance of “Fostering Collaboration in the 21st Century.

We seek to nurture collaborative efforts throughout the CBE community. Students, staff, faculty and alumni already leverage knowledge and approach real world problems from multiple domains and recognize that single disciplines alone cannot solve complex problems. By formalizing and actively supporting collaborative teaching, learning, research, and service we empower our professions and practices to contribute to the interdisciplinary inquiry, synthesis and problem solving activities required to meet the challenges we face today and in the future.

The name "Built Environments" suggests planetary challenges and global urbanization is at the core of the issue. Over half of the world's populations already live in cities; by 2030, an additional five billion people will have joined them. The city today reveals a porosity of place between local and global forces, public and private realms, micro and macro scales and natural and constructed environments. This is not a simple increase in the consumption of space but rather "a significantly complex geopolitical shift in conditions of community, production, competition, and comparative connectivities that challenges everything from the local to the global."^[1] Many primary issues confronting society today are tied to this urban dynamic and the infrastructure supporting it. Our college fully engages in this discourse from multiple perspectives and considers process as critical as product. We employ diverse approaches to the study of built environments in the global context and acknowledge both historical continuities and the singularity of this particular urban moment.

Finally, as the College of Built Environments we endorse broader definitions of what we do that are centered on the concept of design, life cycle thinking and the shared vision that we can make the world better. As renowned political economist Herbert Simon notes: "Everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones." In this spirit, we embrace all of the practices, research, teaching, and service of our collective faculty, staff, and students as critical to the betterment of built environments across the nation and around the globe.

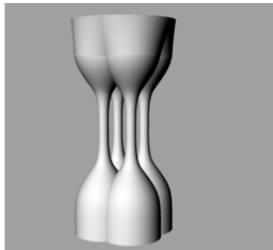


Figure 1: Hour Glass Multi-Disciplinary and Trans-Disciplinary Education and Research Model

We have found that a helpful metaphor for a new educational model in CBE is the hour glass. Figure 1. diagrammatically illustrates the hour glass model as applied the teaching framework of multi-disciplinary broad initial collaboration in the earliest undergraduate years, followed by a narrowed and specialized degree program focus then finally the student's education is synthesized in broad trans-disciplinary work at the highest undergraduate and graduate professional program levels. Figure 1. attempts to illustrate:

- That students in their early years of undergraduate learning would be educated broadly in built environments, in college-wide multi-disciplinary foundation courses, for example classes with broad, unified presentations of complex material, prior to becoming "majors". This would allow students and faculty with diverse interests to join together in large classes or other learning formats in order to consider the multiple facets of our built environment and for the college to increase the number of introductory large classes, thus also benefitting the attendant efficiencies.
- In a second phase, students would specialize in our multiple degree programs, still with the possibility of joint degrees and certificates. Even here we can find ways to engage students from several units in many of our unit-specialized offerings, either because of shared subject matter interests or to forge new combinations of specializations.

- In the last phases of education within each degree program, synthetic work would bring together students and faculty in trans-disciplinary BE Lab teaching and research teams to experience the active overlay of disciplinary knowledge and practice.

II. CBE TEACHING AND RESEARCH CLUSTERS

A core mission of the College is to promote and foster teaching, research and innovative thinking by leveraging the disciplines within and partners outside of the college, around the challenges of urbanization, globalization, and sustainability. We strive to transcend what we already do by creating NEW interdisciplinary engagements that challenge us to move our respective disciplines and practices forward.

We propose the establishment of CBE Labs, Clusters, Collaboratories or Nodes to identify points of common interest around which faculty, students, and staff can gather to pursue trans-disciplinary teaching, learning and research. Some themes will be immediately evident, with support structures and team members in place. Others may emerge through the arrival of new faculty, developments of new resources, and opportunities to respond to new concerns or practices.

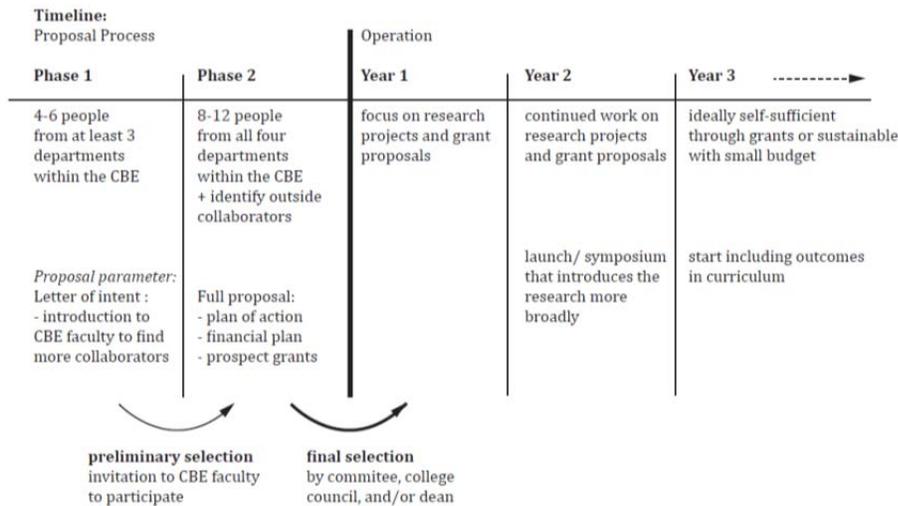


Figure 2: Possible Model for Teaching and Research Cluster Development and Selection

Proposed clusters could be developed and proposed by means of, see Figure 2. above and:

- A strategic initiative and the decision to pursue an identifiable area of inquiry
- Research of potential area to produce a Lab
- Identification of individuals with expertise that catalyzes the development of a Lab
- Identification of potential strategic alliances, relationships and activities that stimulates the development of a new teaching and research Lab.

Once selected, a proposed Lab might be developed by the means of:

- The identification and further development of advancement opportunities and sponsored programs for long-term funding
- Year-long program of college-wide classes, symposiums, lectures and published teaching and research results.
- Formation of new curriculum and support that provide long-term life to the new Lab.

Potential BE Teaching and Research Labs

The Labs listed here are those that the Committee had time to discuss and agree upon as promising for the whole college to consider. The list is not meant to be complete or closed: there are other possible themes that emerged that we did not prioritize so far or did not have time to fully consider further themes may arise from the discussion within interested groups of the entire faculty.

A. Health and Built Environments

The conditions of the built environments, human health and ecological resilience are inextricably linked at multiple scales and across multiple time frames. In ‘developed’ urban contexts, for example, poorly planned transportation infrastructure contributes to obesity, diabetes and heart disease. At the same time, it contributes to carbon emissions, hastens climate change and the increases the prevalence of natural disasters with particularly devastating impacts in vulnerable communities. Lack of appropriate use of daylighting increases energy use and undermines psychological wellbeing. Toxic building processes and products degrade local ecosystems while reducing indoor air quality with direct impacts on occupant health.

One-third of the urban population in developing regions lives in slums, and the number is growing by 6 million a year, according to U.N. Habitat, the United Nations department that focuses on urban development. U.N. Habitat estimates that by 2020, 889 million people will be living in urban slums. Lack of potable water and sanitation infrastructure pollute local water bodies and contribute to the spread of fecal oral disease. Lack of public green space and overcrowding increase the incidence of respiratory illnesses and degrade mental wellbeing. As designers, planners, construction managers, real estate entrepreneurs, and theorists we must address the complex challenge of human and environmental health. Our shared disciplines are positioned to uniquely respond to these challenges.

B. Sustainability/Energy of Built Environments

The most widely accepted definition of sustainable development is from the Brundtland Commission, set up by the United Nations. The Commission’s Report defined sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” In scholarship as well as industry, the spectrum of sustainability is wide. We recognize that many scholars work in their own discipline related to sustainability. Clusters offer those in different departments with a similar sustainability agenda the possibility to work together. Examples could be:

- Delivery system group: a group which studies contractual and structural formation where different stakeholders such as designers or constructors can work more collaboratively pursuing sustainability,
- Sustainable engineering group: this group could investigate sustainable materials/production as well as engineering-based assessment such as life cycle assessment
- Integrated Design group: this group could investigate issues related to integrated design.

C. Human and Social Dimensions of Built Environments

The articulation of a theme on the Human and Social Dimensions of the built environment professions is intended to recognize both the value and importance of the human and socio-cultural aspects of the work conducted within the CBE, and the social responsibility that is a fundamental part of the various Built Environment professions. This theme encompasses a full range of scales from the individual level (human behavior in response to the physical environment, place meanings, experiences and preferences) to the societal level; i.e., processes of human organization which themselves range from organizational management and team dynamics to building community in a neighborhood, to empowerment, social justice and democracy on larger societal and geographic scales.

We believe that this theme can help CBE claim a **civic mission** and deepen the College’s civic identity, values and vision. Such a mission can include building and strengthening community-campus connections, advancing civic engagement among students, expanding public scholarship and research and strengthening the

College of Built Environments, Report of the AdHoc Strategic Planning Committee

2012-2020 Strategic Plan, April 27, 2012

College's capacity to create solutions across different disciplines.² This could be one of the most powerful and valuable contributions of this theme – defining a College Mission and specifically defining a *civic* mission befitting of a public university.

D. Life-Cycle Process of Built Environments (or Full Life-Cycle Integration, Integrated Project Delivery, etc.)

A distinctive feature of CBE is that we engage the entire built environments process, from beginning to end. Our research, professional education, and community relationships span the entire spectrum of research and teaching in built environments. The advancement of life cycle thinking that incorporates and integrates planning, design, construction and operational dimensions is a theme that might result from this distinct feature. This theme may focus on more integrated practices across real estate, planning, design, construction and operations that leverage technologies such as Building Information Modeling as well as collaborative practices. Just as industry is challenged to break down the walls/silos between professions, we would explore through teaching and scholarship a deeper meaning of what it means to be integrated.

E. Urbanism and Built Environments

Urbanism is about the metropolitan region, “the collections of cities, suburbs, and rural areas that house two-thirds of America’s population”³ It is also about the environment as Stewart Brand, founder of the Whole Earth Catalogue, has argued. Urban is about a way of understanding the 21st century world. We have the resources and knowledge in our College of Built Environments to respond to the urban challenges ahead of us in unique and critically important ways.

As noted in a report for the state of Washington “The sustainability of our cities—as measured by both the quality of life they provide today, and the long-term environmental protection they promise to future generations—will determine the future of our planet. Considering the host of social and environmental challenges we currently face—including global warming, air quality concerns, water scarcity, food and energy security, poverty and declining social equity—the global trend toward urbanization demands that cities will need to be a part of the solution.”⁴ In turn our position in a public university demands that we are a critical part of the response.

III. Possible Strategic Responses to 2Y2D Challenges

In response to 2Y2D challenges we propose strategies that build upon and strengthen our CBE Narrative. The strategies are intended to provide a congenial environment for the growth of Clusters as well as to contribute generally to the health and growth of the college.

The following strategies are actionable items distilled from the Committee’s conversations to develop a College narrative and intellectual clusters. They also draw significantly on the notes from past CBE retreats. Whereas the narrative and clusters are intended to define and focus our efforts, these strategies are intended to position our resources. Consider each “strategy” as a collection of actions, intended to better align our resources with our current, and proposed future programming. Each improved alignment, should, in time, be accompanied by either an increase in efficiency or an increase in capacity, and in some cases, an increase in both. Alignments include characteristics specific to each strategy as well as many of a general nature such as recruiting, outreach, focus on the college as a place of research or specific expertise, curricular coordination, and funding opportunities.

CBE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Strategy: Increase opportunities for undergraduate and graduate research experience

Develop research programs through BELABS/ Clusters by engaging students in direct research. This would strengthen the role of research in CBE.

²A *Crucible Moment: Civic Learning and Democracy's Future*, a national call to action to the Department of Education by leading civic scholars and practitioners, released January 10, 2012.

³ State of Metropolitan America, Brookings Institute 2012, Executive Summary.

⁴ Transit-Oriented Communities: A Blueprint For Washington State, www.futurewise.org/toc

Strategy: Increase number of CBE undergraduate courses

Departments coordinate efforts to offer new and revised courses at multiple levels. This increases capacity to offer more integrated courses and for programs with different levels of support to engage in the course offerings.

Strategy: Streamline CBE course offerings

Working through the CBE curriculum committee, identify ways to better integrate and streamline course offerings in order to increase capacity within single courses, efficiencies across programs, flexibility of teaching loads and course offerings, and expand and enrich integrated research opportunities.

Strategy: Increase flexibility of program curriculum requirements

Working through the CBE curriculum committee, identify ways to increase the flexibility of program requirements to allow sharing and collaborative teaching across CBE.

Strategy: Expand honors program in CBE

Working through the UW Honors Program, identify ways to build a CBE honors program. Expand current honors offerings throughout the CBE curriculum.

Strategy: Develop a robust “Summer in Seattle” program

Develop summer program for incoming undergraduate and graduate students, and potential professional leadership students. This increases our capacity to run revenue-generating programs otherwise not possible. It increases the efficiency of our facility as well, which has great, untapped capacity in the summer.

CBE RESEARCH

Strategy: Identify director of research

The College and Departments currently offer differing levels of support for those who are or could be engaged in the pursuit of grant opportunities and subsequent research. Centralizing the support of research within the College would release individual departments and would allow the immediate identification and integration of related research topics and interests. It would further integrate PhD students where appropriate while drawing research assistants from the entire College. Supporting the formation of a position for a Director of Research would be a natural first step, and the nature of BE LABS could be changed to research-based, ongoing entities that could continue to sponsor studios.

Strategy: Increase access and integrative nature of CBE BELABS through Research Clusters

Initiate a series of BE LAB explorations to further integrate research across CBE. Increase the identification of CBE as a research and practice institution. Build a commitment to critical research throughout the college.

CBE SERVICE AND STAFFING

Strategy: Potential centralizing of some staff functions

Departmental staffing is potentially an area to consider as a collective resource that supports our college narrative and our contributions as researchers and teachers as well as our community service. Some staff resources in the College are already centralized. Centralizing staff roles around key responsibilities might create efficiencies in the execution of those roles, but it might also free faculty and staff resources, thus creating capacity to support and pursue other initiatives.

Strategy: Further coordinate fundraising across CBE to fund research, teaching, and service

Coordinate fund raising efforts to engage a broad range of teaching and research efforts by faculty, staff, and students. Focus efforts at multiple scales from small projects (studio projects) to medium projects (abroad programs) to large scale (research labs).

Strategy: Potentially centralize program coordination and roles

The College and Departments currently provide support to activities that might enjoy some consolidation and

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2012-2020 Strategic Plan, April 27, 2012

central management, such as lectures and symposiums, and college-based course offerings contributing to "Fuzzy Boundaries". Given the depth and breadth of faculty research and interests as well as teaching and pedagogy, it might be useful at some point to consider a cross-disciplinary approach to programmatic issues such as the curriculum of concurrent and professional degrees. Other areas that might be shared:

Degree Program Directing and Coordination (especially concurrent degrees)
International Programs

Strategy: Establish CBE service office

Develop one central office to oversee studios, projects, research, and teaching that serves the larger community coordinating funding, academic rigor, and service objectives.

Strategy: Ongoing integration committee

Support the ongoing strategic, collaborative and integrative efforts of CBE through a CBE strategic plan implementation sub-committee of the College Council.

IV. CBE Budgeting

Response to University mandate for ABB Funding Structure

The committee notes that the CBE *as a whole* is not under threat by the ABB budget model currently being implemented by the University. However, if this model were to be strictly applied to the CBE at both the College *and* departmental levels some departments may be at risk. The viability of our College is largely dependent upon the survival and vigor of all of its programs and departments. The committee recognizes that College budgeting is the responsibility and purview of the dean in consultation with departmental chairs. However, given the potential risk that strict ABB budgeting would pose for some of the College's departments, the committee proposes that ABB budgeting be limited to the College level at the outset. We further propose that individual departments and programs be given ample time to determine responsible strategies in response to ABB budgeting that do not fundamentally alter the nature or quality of said programs. This is proposed in a spirit of collegiality and with the understanding that the collaborative and interdisciplinary proposals outlined above will be thwarted by strict adherence to ABB budgeting at the departmental level.