Detroit Studio Proposes Lifestyle Center For Low-Income Detroit Neighborhood

During the fall term junior and graduate students at the Detroit Studio of the College of Architecture and Design are working on plans for an urban agriculture, health, and fitness (UAHF) lifestyle center and a community master plan for a low-income neighborhood on Detroit's east side.

The UAHF lifestyle center project includes high-yield micro farms, greenhouses, community farms, and other supporting uses. The goal is to use urban agriculture to help create sustainable communities and to deal with the crisis of widespread vacant lots and buildings in Detroit neighborhoods.

Joongsuk Kim, associate professor of architecture and director of the Detroit Studio, teaches the graduate level urban design studio and the architecture component of the junior studio, and coordinates the project, while Anirban Aditya, assistant professor of architecture, teaches the urban component of the junior studio.

The Boston Society of Architects is the sponsor. A number of community development corporations (CDCs), the City of Detroit Planning Department, the MSU Extension Program, residents, and other entities are collaborating. With feedback from these participants and guest jurors, students will develop an architectural proposal for the UAHF lifestyle center. In addition, students will work in teams to develop master plans for the surrounding community.

Improving public health is a major goal for the project. According to a recent report from the Kellogg Foundation, an increasing number of people suffer from obesity-related health problems resulting from the lack of exercise and unhealthy lifestyles. The National Institutes of Health and many other agencies agree that obesity has become a national health epidemic. Studies show that children are increasingly at risk.

Chronic poverty, crime, and other socio-economic issues make the problem worse in low-income neighborhoods. Detroit has been the fattest city in the country for several years, according to one national health-related publication.

This Detroit Studio project includes several goals:
• To educate youth and community residents about the values and importance of healthy food, fitness, and a healthy lifestyle, as well as the negative impact the built environment can have.
• To promote urban agriculture development as a catalyst for community revitalization.
• To conduct research in obesity, food, and fitness.
• To showcase, promote, and market urban agriculture products.
• To create a model for a healthy lifestyle, a healthy work place, fitness, and a cutting-edge research center.

“As architects, we can play an important role in helping to create a built environment that promotes a healthy lifestyle in an earth-friendly setting,” Kim said. “Obesity and fitness issues are complex. They are intertwined with many social, cultural, political, economic, and physical factors.”

In response to these complex challenges, the Junior IDS 3 (Integrated Design Studio 3) Studio and the Graduate Urban Design Studio at the Detroit Studio Community Outreach Program will propose a UAHF lifestyle center on East Warren near Chandler Park on Detroit’s east side.

The most successful student proposals will be submitted to the Boston Society of Architects (BSA) for inclusion in its national publication. Only ten programs across the country have been invited to submit proposals.

Thanksgiving RoboParade Coming Nov. 18

Lawrence Technological University will host the Thanksgiving RoboParade, believed to be the world’s first-ever indoor robot parade for Thanksgiving, on Saturday, Nov. 18, from 9 a.m. to noon in the Buell Management Building.

Students will design fully autonomous robot floats that will follow the parade route and detect other robots in front of them. The robot floats will be fully programmed to stop and start without human help.

The parade will feature robot floats constructed and programmed by middle school and high school students at Lawrence Tech summer camps organized by CJ Chung, associate professor of computer science. Video of the students preparing their robots for the parade can be found at www.robofest.net.

If you would like to volunteer your time at the RoboParade or need additional information, contact Chung at Chung@ltu.edu or 248-204-3504. The event is open to the public and admission is free.

Forensics, Robofest Highlight Science Teachers’ Conference

By LaVetta Appleby, Associate Director Master of Science Education Program

More than 1,000 metropolitan Detroit teachers came to the Lawrence Tech campus on Oct. 21 for the 66th Annual Metropolitan Detroit Science Teachers Association (MDSTA) Fall Conference. “Fueling the Future” was the theme of this year’s conference. More than 100 sessions covered topics such as meeting the science benchmarks, integration of technology, inquiry learning, and classroom curriculum.

Faculty members and staff of Lawrence Tech’s Department of Natural Sciences and other members of the university community participate in this event every year by volunteering, giving logistic support, making presentations, and marketing. This conference provides a venue for showcasing Lawrence Tech programs such as the Master of Science Education (MSE) and Master of Educational Technology (MET).

Julie Zwiesler-Vollick and Jeffery Morrisette, new assistant professors of biology at Lawrence Tech, led a hands-on Termite Tracking activity and a DNA extraction activity. Chemistry lecturer LaVetta Appleby demonstrated how to make strawberry ice cream using liquid nitrogen. CJ Chung, associate professor of computer science, showcased the Robofest program.

Valentina Tobos, director of the MSE/MET programs and Anthony Sky, chair of the Department of Natural Sciences, were both session presenters.

Also presented was Lawrence Tech’s first CSI Forensic Science workshop, which includes accident reconstruction, blood analysis, glass analysis, white powder ID, fingerprints and impressions, DNA techniques, forensic entomology, and legal issues. For more information, visit www.ltu.edu/arts_sciences/master_science_ed/forensic.asp.

The MSE/MET programs offer K-12 teachers a solid and comprehensive understanding of subject matter in science and technology. These programs provide science education courses that are inquiry-based and have a strong hands-on component. Aided by kits of materials developed by course instructors, participants engage in a variety of guided and open-ended projects as the primary means of developing their understanding of the concepts. Participants assess their own science teaching and use the strategies presented to design learning experiences for their own classrooms.

For questions regarding the MET and MSE programs, contact Tobos at v_tobos@ltu.edu or 248-204-3617, or visit www.ltu.edu/arts_sciences/natsci.asp.