IIDA encourages all Student Members to participate in NeoCon® 2004 June 14-16. Every year students from around the country come to Chicago, IL for the largest design trade show in the world—NeoCon. Located in Chicago’s Merchandise Mart, this year’s NeoCon will be the hot spot for several IIDA hosted events and programs. Whether you’re a professional or student interior designer, NeoCon 2004 will be worth the trip. Sunday, June 13 will kick off the events with IIDA’s Annual Meeting. Monday opens NeoCon with an awesome lineup; Daniel Libeskind (World Trade Center architect) as the Keynote speaker, followed by IIDA’s 10th Anniversary Black & White Ball. Wednesday, June 16 is Student Day, which is filled with special student events and activities. Make your travel arrangement today for NeoCon 2004, June 14-16. To get the lowdown on NeoCon and other student activities, make sure to check out the Especially for Students section on www.iida.org

IIDA Docent Program
The IIDA Docent Program will connect students with professional designers who will accompany them on the show floor. Join design professionals from local firms as they give small groups of students a guided tour of the show floor. The designers will act as mentors, guiding students on how to work a show floor and get the most out of the trade show experience. By walking the showroom floor students will have the opportunity to network with the mentors & learn practices not normally taught in the classroom. Meet at the Herman Miller Showroom, suite 321 at 3pm.

IIDA Panel Discussion “A Day in the Life of a Large Firm”
Industry leaders from Interior Design magazine’s Giant List will speak on their experiences working in a large interior design firm. Speakers from various roles; project manager to librarian, will address their responsibilities and give tips for designers beginning their careers in the industry. Take advantage of this opportunity to have your questions about the A & D community answered by the industry’s top-level professionals. Meet in the Haworth showroom, suite 312 at 1:30 pm.

For more information and NeoCon schedule please visit www.merchandisemart.com.

We value your feedback. If you have comments in regard to anything in this issue of Custom or would like to contribute to an upcoming issue, please contact IIDA Headquarters at Custom@iida.org.
TV producers descended on the CCA San Francisco campus last December to cast interior design and architecture students for Designer Finals, a new series by HGTV (Home and Garden Television). In the series, lucky homeowners get a free room makeover by a student from one of the nation’s top design schools, and students gain real-world experience by designing a room in an actual household.

Fifth-year architecture student Chad DeWitt was the featured designer for the first of four segments featuring CCA students. He designed a home office for a couple in Lafayette, CA. The other students selected for the show were Hae Young Lee, fourth-year student in interior design, who designed a guest house in Concord; Sondra Stoner, third-year student in interior design, who designed a children’s playroom in Concord; and Jeff Barrett, fourth-year student in architecture, who designed a kitchen in San Mateo.

“There was a huge sense of urgency every day; I worked hard, but it was so rewarding,” says Hae Young. “Each time you do anything, you get better at everything.” Would she do it again if given the chance? “I would definitely do another TV makeover. It is exhilarating!”

Unlike other home makeover shows, there were no scary surprises as the students met with the homeowners beforehand to consider the household’s needs and present their plans. Unlike other home makeover shows, there were no scary surprises as the students met with the homeowners to consider the household’s needs and present their plans before starting the project. Students then had two days, a $2,000 budget for materials, and a small crew of handypersons to work their design magic.

“TV is deceptive in that, in reality, things don’t cost $2,000 and don’t happen in two days,” says Chad. “Quality design takes money and time.” The projects required students to be resourceful. For instance, Chad was able to procure the generous donation of a chair from the San Francisco–based company Design Within Reach. With a price tag more than his entire makeover budget, the chair was a big hit with his clients.

Designer Finals premieres in spring or summer 2004. HGTV will likely begin airing segments featuring CCA students in early fall.
Tomorrow’s world will need product innovators, industrial specialists, strategic planners. It’s no longer enough to leave school with drawing and drafting skills, architectural and design knowledge, business and interpersonal skills — you need the expertise to function in a high-tech workplace while incorporating humanistic sensibilities.

“...To help you sort through the crowded field, educators across the United States were asked what makes a best-in-class interior design program."

It all begins with a first class education, but with so many accredited design schools, it’s difficult to choose one when your future is on the line. After all, every program has its own unique strengths and weaknesses — you must decide which will make the difference to your career. To help you sort through the crowded field, educators across the United States were asked what makes a best-in-class interior design program.

BARBARA ANDERSON: You’d be surprised how many students don’t understand what interior design is. Some students only have a vague idea of what the profession offers. We try to be as forthright with our prospective students as we can. Design education has a bit of a problem with lack of fit — what the student expects education to be like and what it really is like. We have to focus on some very basic concepts that students may not even realize are related to what they will be using in the real world.

ANNA MARSHALL-BAKER: An interior design education really is about helping students understand how to think, learn and do. We enable students to become informed citizens who are interested in their world. That way, when they enter the real world, through their experience, they can blossom into interior designers. You shouldn’t compromise the quality of your education. Ultimately, you have to decide what you want to do, where you want to be and find the resources to get there.

FRANKLIN BECKER: Today’s career path is not that clear-cut. Students often start in a design firm doing more traditional work, but because of the critical thinking skills design students bring to a situation, they end up in consulting firms or other firms that require these skills—from interior design to graphic design to entertainment to straight-forward business consulting. Design is a wide-open field in which students apply skills in a novel way.

A design education, if done well, can open up opportunities.

PERSPECTIVE: IDEALLY, WHAT CHARACTERISTICS SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR IN A SCHOOL’S FACULTY?

MARSHALL-BAKER: Good teachers are contemporary, current and well-read with issues that involve the designed environment but also are involved with professional organizations. Through my involvement in the Interior Design Educators Council (IDEC), I get exposed to all sorts of things going on at other schools. Those connections at professional organizations are critically important.

FRANK MORIGI: Too many faculties are just getting panelists their degrees and then teaching. If we can get more people with professional experience to teach, the better a school is going to be.

DENISE GUERIN: An interior designer with a background in architecture or other allied professions brings a richness. Interior design is such an interdisciplinary profession that this kind of experience is invaluable. But, most of all, a faculty must be dedicated to student learning, have the mandatory credentials and really want to teach. Educators must continue to develop the body of knowledge for the profession and continue to learn themselves.

PERSPECTIVE: WHAT SHOULD STUDENTS LOOK FOR IN THE INTERIOR DESIGN CURRICULUM?

ANDERSON: In academia, it’s important to separate out succinct areas of study, but in design, you must integrate as much as possible. Any good program is going to have a student learning focus in the choices they make. If your choices are always made on what will make the best student learning, you can practically guarantee that students will learn what they need to know.

MARSHALL-BAKER: A well-developed Curriculum will begin in the first year with a studio emphasis on design fundamentals and history of interior design, architecture and art. Studio is really about engaging thought. Also, competitions serve as a wonderful measure for programs to understand how the work their students are producing compares with the work of students in other programs. An internship, practicum, or a field or co-op experience is very important to interior design education, and the better programs will have that experience in some form.

SUSAN KIRKMAN: A good curriculum has to have the ability to change with changes in the industry. At the university level, you can only make minor changes every couple of years through a committee.

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In February, I was lucky enough to work as part of a team of students from Rhodec International at the Elle Décor Dining by Design Event in New York. We were the first and only students ever to participate, but what made it truly memorable was the fact that we were working as an international team and had produced our design over the internet.

…”what made it truly memorable was the fact that we were working as an international team and had produced our design over the internet.”

Rhodec International is a distance-learning Interior Design college based in England, with a U.S. office and students in over 100 countries around the world. Our team of six (Donne Booysen, Kelly Garcia, Martina Macgreevy, Claire Pryce, Juliet Racoosin, and myself) consisted of American, English, Irish and South African students, based in Belgium, Mexico, Switzerland, and the States! Therefore our mode of communication during this project was all over the web.

The ‘Dining by Design’ Event, sponsored by Elle Décor and Taittinger champagne, is a prestigious DIFFA (Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS) benefit. Here designers are invited to participate by dressing an 11 foot square space for 10 dinner guests, with the results put on display for public viewing and sold off for a charity dinner and ‘Bubble Blast’ party. It was very exciting to be included in such an event, although a little nerve-racking to know that our challenge would be all the harder because of its virtual nature.

Our starting point was an on-line mood board. This generated much activity and enthusiasm in the form of hundreds of e-mails and many shared sketches and photos. Our group had been selected not only for creative ability, but also for evidence of being team players and effective communicators. It soon became apparent that these were essential skills when working across countries with only a computer to convey our ideas. However, by setting deadlines at the start—and sticking to them—we were quickly able to achieve consensus on the key elements of the design.

A two-hour on-line meeting allowed us to decide the finer points, and then we were able to start sourcing with a vengeance. This again was difficult to do from so far apart, making communication once again key.

To ensure we reached our vision we were in constant contact, seeking agreement on product, all the time checking elements would sit well together in terms of color, texture and scale — making necessary revisions, and updating the budget. This was a hard task, but the mutual trust we had built within our team allowed us to follow this process through to its conclusion. The final design shows just how successful this process turned out to be.

We are so pleased to have had the unique opportunity to participate in this event, and thank the organizers for their generosity. We are above all proud that we have been able to succeed in producing not only a cohesive design, but also one, which received recognition from other designers, and also the press—our design was featured in the New York Daily News (http://www.nydailynews.com/city_life/story/162330p-142345c.html). This has certainly assured us that distance learning is a viable option for studying Interior Design; it just requires a lot of organization, plenty of hard work, much enthusiasm, and a good dose of belief!

(For more information on Rhodec, please contact the US office. Email at UScontact@rhodec.edu, Phone 617-472-4942 or visit the website at www.Rhodec.Edu)
When it comes to interior design education, choosing the “best” program is entirely subjective. After all, a degree is only as good as your own efforts.

Each year, DesignIntelligence and Counsel House Research compile a list of the best U.S. schools and colleges for interior design based on the hiring experiences of leading firms. Respondents are asked to indicate which FIDER-accredited programs (in the past five years) produced graduates most prepared for professional practice.

1. University of Cincinnati
2. Pratt Institute
3. Kansas State University
4. Cornell University
5. University of Oregon
6. California College of the Arts
7. Arizona State University
8. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
9. Auburn University
10. Syracuse University

A really good program has to be able to change with the industry, change with trends and put into practice classes that are needed for the times.

PANELISTS INCLUDE:

BARBARA G. ANDERSON, IIDA, Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Interior Design Program, Kansas State University, College of Human Ecology, Manhattan, Kan.

FRANKLIN BECKER, Ph.D., CoreNet, FIDER, IFMA, Professor and Chair of the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.

DENISE GUERIN, Ph.D., IIDA, ASID, FIDEC, Morse-Alumni Distinguished Professor of Design, Univ. of Minn., Department of Design, Housing and Apparel, Twin Cities Campus, St. Paul, Minn., and Coordinator of www.InformeDesign.umn.edu

SUSAN KIRKMAN, IIDA, ASID, IDEC, NKBA, Vice President of Academics/Dean, Interior Design, Harrington College of Design, Chicago

TOMMY LAMBETH, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Interior Architecture, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, N.C.

ANNA MARSHALL-BAKER, Ph.D., President of Interior Design Educators Council, Indianapolis, and Associate Professor of Interior Architecture, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, N.C.

FRANK MORIGI, ASID, Professor and Head, Interior Design, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y.

IIDA VALUES YOUR INPUT.
What characteristics do you think define a strong interior design program? Email custom@iida.org.
The IIDA Foundation congratulates Tom Nesterak on winning the second annual IIDA Foundation/ Lloy Hack Memorial Essay Competition. Tom spent the day with Jocelyn Stroupe, Associate IIDA, at OWP/P Architects in Chicago, IL. Tom is currently a student at Harrington College of Design in Chicago. Both Tom as well as the mentoring firm will receive $1,000 to help fund educational expenses and student related programs respectively.

The Competition ran conjunction with IIDA’s second annual Mentoring Week, January 16-20, 2004. IIDA Headquarters received over 250 IIDA Student Member requests for mentors, and 80 firms/industry members volunteered to host students. Over 20 students chose to write essays on their mentoring experience.

“The Mentoring experience added a new dimension to our thoughts about the possibilities inherent in a career in interior design and I was excited to continue my education in the ‘real world’. IIDA and OWP/P provided an incredibly valuable service to us through this program.”

— Tom Nesterak, Student Member IIDA.

Mark your calendars for IIDA’s 3rd Annual Mentoring Week, January 24-28, 2005.