

2021

OUUDS  
Urban Design Studio

Annual Report



*Pedestrian bridge and swimming hole  
on the Gorge Waterway, Victoria BC*



*Despite the social distancing and masking, convocation was a joyous occasion!*

## Celebrate

It would be pure denial not to admit that 2021 has been a challenging year. The continuing tragedy of the pandemic has tested us all, but there has still been much to celebrate! **Demand for urban designers in private practice and public planning offices is stronger than ever.** Congratulations to our graduating class, they have all started new careers working in Arkansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, and Texas. Studio alumni also continue to thrive with several promoted to planning director positions in nearby cities and towns. Meanwhile, our current **students have devised ways to use technology and outdoor events to return to community engagement activities.** This would not be possible without the steadfast support from our community partners and university administration. For the first time ever, all of our students received scholarships, research assistantships, or internships to further their education. They also helped the studio fulfill its mission to press forward with a variety of service-learning design projects, research grants, and placemaking efforts. Thank you!



2021 Urban Design Graduates



Urban Design students Courtney Graham and Roshita Taylor enjoy the parade during Harrah Days



**Chown Place team, from left to right, Autumn Tiller, Lahari Peluri, Camila Coronado, and Jeremy Banes**

## Studio Projects

### Chown Place Leaves the Nest

Last spring, **students from the studio had the unique opportunity to work on an international project using remote community engagement techniques.** Thanks to affiliate faculty Kristina Leach, they were able to meet regularly with members of the not-for-profit Gorge View Society and the Burnside-Gorge Community Association in Victoria, British Columbia to devise an urban design vision for Chown Place. Currently an affordable, senior housing community with 108 single-story apartments, the 20-year vision for Chown Place anticipates 300 to 400 dwelling units for a mixture of household types. **The drastic change in density challenged the students to integrate the new housing into the surrounding single-family neighborhood.** In addition to consulting with the stakeholders, the students had the opportunity to collaborate with architect Barry Cosgrove from Number 10 Architects, City of Victoria planners, and civil engineers at the District of Saanich.



*Students created a kit of model parts that they could manipulate during design experimentation. The models were shared at work sessions with stakeholders using a hand held webcam.*

## Overview of Chown Place



The students **devised five Big Moves for the final design scheme:**

- ➔ Improve circulation by realigning the main entrance, creating a loop in the center of the campus, and connecting neighborhood destinations with trails.
- ➔ Create a biophilic sanctuary and park for the grove of Garry Oaks at Chown Place with a community center, boardwalks, and gardens.
- ➔ Provide a gradient of housing types surrounding courtyards to accommodate the expanding number and type of households.
- ➔ Use green roofs, terraces, passive homes, and other sustainable design principles to reduce energy consumption.
- ➔ Integrate new activities in mixed-use buildings along Harriet Road to provide convenience goods and services to Burnside-Gorge.

The students were extolled by the Gorge View Society trustees in May for their work and for providing a learning opportunity for the board.

**The studio wishes to recognize the members of the stakeholder committee:**

*David King*  
Chairperson, Gorge View Society

*Liz Bartley*  
Administrative Assistant  
Gorge View Society

*Joseph Calenda MCIP*  
Gorge View Society  
Board of Trustees

*Kristina Leach PhD*  
Gorge View Society  
Board of Trustees

*Minh Ngo*  
Visual Strategist

*Adrian Shewchuk*  
Atelier Design Build

*Avery Stetski*  
President, Burnside-Gorge  
Community Association

**Also special thanks to:**

*Barry Cosgrove MRAIC*  
Number 10 Architectural Group

*Steve Hutchinson*  
Victoria Transportation Planner

*David Williams*  
Saanich Engineering Supervisor



Gorge Waterway Swimming Hole

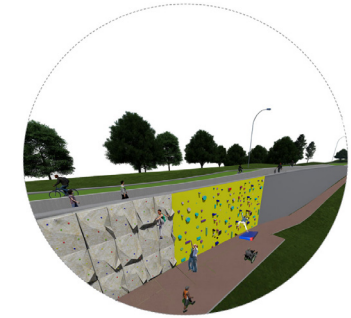
In addition to addressing Gorge View Society's main objectives, **the Chown Place project produced a number of innovations, or as the students referred to them, bonus content!**

- The first grew from the need to relocate existing residents from buildings being removed to allow for new construction. The students proposed using prefabricated, accessory dwelling units, or garden suites as they are known in Canada, to provide flexible, extra capacity. The garden suites would be offered to nearby homeowners that would share the rent with the Gorge View Society. The homeowners provide the land, while the society leases, manages, and maintains the units. Originally intended as a temporary phasing solution, stakeholders soon recognized that it might be an additional mechanism for them to provide sorely needed affordable housing. **The garden suites fit into the scale of the neighborhood, can be built in small increments, and bring benefits to suite residents, homeowners, and the society.** A survey done by the students quickly identified over 320 potential lots within a five-minute walk to Chown Place.
- The students gained a new skill from stakeholder Minh Ngo, the visual scribe. She **introduced them to the art of graphic facilitation**, allowing them to provide illustrated infographics for stakeholder meetings.
- Lastly, the students proposed **a new pedestrian/cycling bridge over the Gorge Waterway connecting Burnside-Gorge with West Victoria.** Extending from Harriet Road, the new cable-stayed span terminates at a new swimming hole and terrace attached to Arm Street Park.



*Urban design students with architecture students from OU-Norman visit the TCC Center for Creativity during their tour of the Cathedral District in downtown Tulsa*

## Maple Ridge Great Streets



After almost a year of delay due to the pandemic, **the studio delivered its recommendations to the Maple Ridge Neighborhood Association.** The report featured a connection from downtown Tulsa to the Gathering Place using the Cincinnati Avenue overpass. **Students, from Andrés Cavieres and Xiaobo Quan's studio** built on this feature with their own project for the Cathedral District.



**Urban design students Roshita Taylor, Jeremy Banes, and Courtney Graham invite citizens to provide input about Sweeney Switch at Harrah Days in September**

## Sweeney Switch

For its fall project, the studio has joined the Institute for Quality Communities team to revitalize three communities in Central Oklahoma. **Funded through a grant from the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments or ACOG**, our part of the project is to partner with the fast-growing city of Harrah. Propelled by the completion of the Kickapoo Turnpike, which connects Harrah to Tinker Air Force Base and downtown Oklahoma City, the city wishes to improve its downtown, branded as Sweeney Switch. The effort so far has focused on community engagement and environmental research to prepare for the design phase next spring. The students have enjoyed getting to know the community by participating in two festivals: *Harrah Days* and *Christmas in the Park*, where **they offered citizens the opportunity to provide input and complete a visual preference survey**. They also learned how to organize and facilitate public meetings at four stakeholder sessions. The team has also launched a project website, and invited citizens to participate in a Photovoice activity.

**The studio wishes to recognize the members of the stakeholder committee:**

Tracy Qualls  
Chairperson, City of Harrah  
Director of Economic Development

Hon. Tom Barron  
Ward 2 Councilor

Cathey Byerley  
Main Street Community Garden

Eddy Gochenour  
Proprietor, Lumber Shack

Tammy Herzog  
President, Harrah Friends of the Park

George Jacobs  
Manager, Lumber Shack

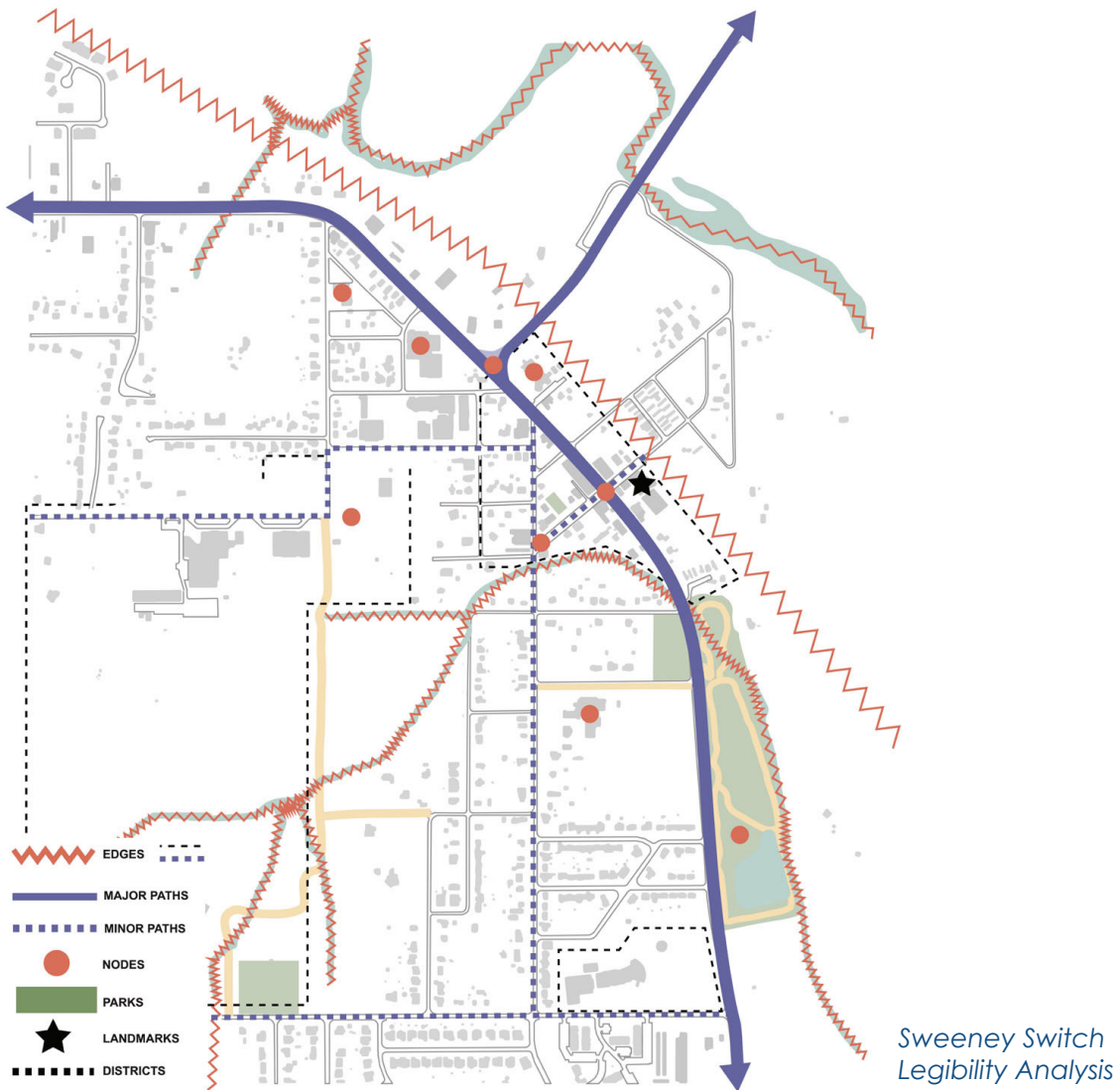
Cary Lacefield DO  
Family Care Center of Harrah

Greg Schrempp  
Church Avenue Spirits

Hon. Cass Smith  
Vice Mayor and Ward 4 Councilor

Hon. Danny Trent  
Mayor

Hon. Paul Wiegart  
Ward 3 Councilor



After digesting the research, analysis, and community engagement findings, the urban design students **identified a range of challenges and design opportunities** they must address during the design phase:

- ➔ Solving the flooding issue in Sweeney Switch by **removing downtown from the regulatory floodplain** and providing compensatory storage upstream.
- ➔ Connecting Sweeney Switch to the many parks, schools, and churches already arrayed along the extensive trail system.
- ➔ **Creating a destination district** with adequate parking while maintaining a walkable environment not dominated by cars.
- ➔ Developing architectural guidelines to **maintain Harrah's small town character.**
- ➔ Exploring ways to fund improvements and support programming, maintenance, and management of the downtown district.

**The studio also wishes to recognize the following project collaborators:**

Dave Boeck AIA  
Associate Professor of Architecture

Ron Frantz  
Institute for Quality Communities

Shane Hampton  
Institute for Quality Communities

Vanessa Morrison  
Institute for Quality Communities

John Harrington  
Water Resources Director, ACOG

Hannah Nolen  
Transit and Environmental  
Projects Coordinator, ACOG

Matthew Weaver  
Community and Economic  
Development Director, ACOG







Officials cut the ribbon at the opening of the AARP Fitlot in B.S. Roberts Park

## Placemaking

The studio continues to support local placemaking efforts, especially to improve community health:

- ➔ Greenwood Main Street Executive Director Bill White announced the **opening of the new outdoor fitness center in B.S. Roberts Park**. Funded by a grant from AARP, the Fitlot was proposed during the studio's Growing Greenwood project in 2019.
- ➔ **Progress continues at Chapman Green. Up with Trees planted 37 new trees** as part of the Clarity Parks grant obtained by aHHa Tulsa and supported by the Project for Public Spaces. A pergola designed by studio students Virginia Paiva and Samiul Haque has been fabricated and fundraising has started to have it erected.
- ➔ Collaborating with School of Community Medicine students, the Society of Urban Design Students has **provided designs for a community garden** at the OU-Tulsa campus.



Urban design students enjoy the new plantings at Chapman Green



Produce from the OU-Tulsa growing garden can be used to demonstrate healthy living



**Participants and facilitators at the Junior Real Estate Ambassadors Institute celebrate their accomplishments!**

*Virginia Paiva's biophilic transformation  
of the Jenks pedestrian bridge*



## Professional Projects

The professional project is the capstone experience for the Master of Urban Design degree. Students are encouraged to select projects combining research and creative activity. The following projects were completed this year:

→ **Coinciding with the centennial commemoration of the tragic Greenwood Race Massacre**, Alex O'Connell's project focused on ways to reconnect the north and south sides of the district severed by the construction of Interstate 244.

→ For her professional project, Virginia Paiva's **interest in biophilia and neuroscience led to an experiment measuring people's physiological and psychological responses to urban spaces designed with nature**. She collected data from over twenty participants by showing them a control group of typical urban spaces and a treatment group of images transformed by biophilic design principles.

**The studio wishes to recognize the faculty serving on our Professional Project Committees:**

*Shawn Schaefer, Chair*

*Dave Boeck  
Associate Professor of Architecture*

*Francesco Cianfarani PhD  
Assistant Professor of Architecture*

*Shideh Shadravan PhD  
Associate Professor of Architecture*

*Martha Schultz  
City of Tulsa Planner (Retired)*

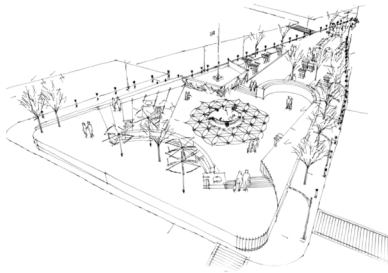


*Alex O'Connell's gateway for reconnecting Greenwood*



Sherry Smith presents her design to the City of Coweta

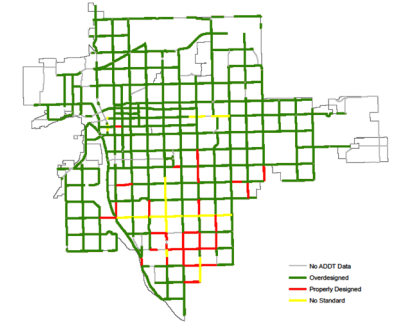
- Sherri Smith partnered with the City of Coweta to **design Cottonwood Acres, a new municipal park**. She received input from over 400 residents during the programming and development of her design. She presented her project to the City of Coweta Council in May.
- Lahari Peluri focused her efforts on **The Plaza of the Americas** in downtown Tulsa. She consulted with Maggie Hoey at the Downtown Tulsa Partnership to discuss management and programming at the small parks and plazas scattered downtown. Her proposal for the neglected triangle of land features a vibrant space with public art and activities on three tiers.
- Samiul Haque began his project **examining Post-COVID streets** by analyzing Tulsa's traffic volumes during the shutdown at the start of the pandemic. He soon discovered that arterial streets are significantly oversized for cars, leaving out space for pedestrians, cycling, and transit. He proposed unifying and simplifying Tulsa's street design standards and guidelines.



Plaza of the Americas

Three students started their projects this fall:

- Both Autumn Tiller and Jeremy Banes have a profound interest in affordable, owner-occupied housing. Working with Tulsa Planning Office, Autumn is **developing missing middle housing prototypes for the Crosbie Heights neighborhood** and other locations in the new infill housing overlay district. Jeremy is **exploring co-housing models for converting vacant and underutilized hotels and motels**. He has selected a motel on historic Route 66 as a test project.
- Camila Coronado has **started a partnership with Kendall-Whittier Main Street on an effort to envision a better Whittier Square**. Now used as a parking lot, the square also hosts the Tulsa Farmers' Market, and a number of other community events. She has hosted a booth at several gatherings to collect ideas from the neighbors. She has also visited over thirty businesses and institutions in her quest to understand the needs and desires for her transformation of the square.



Post-COVID Streets



Camila Coronado promotes her Photovoice activity at a Whittier Square event



**CHED is grateful to faculty from many disciplines contributing to its efforts:**

Michael Birkes AIA  
CHED Coordinator

Dave Boeck AIA  
Architecture

Mary Isaacson PhD  
Occupational Therapy

Mia Kile  
Interior Design

Julie Miller-Cribbs PhD  
Social Work

Xiaobo Quan PhD  
Architecture

Ken Randall PhD  
Physical Therapy

# Research and Creativity

## Community Health and Environmental Design Initiative

In its tenth year of operation, the CHED is a community resource promoting health and wellness through better environmental design of buildings, neighborhoods and cities. Our motto is **Better Health by Design**.

- CHED researchers published *A Structural Model of High Crime Neighborhoods as a Driver of Toxic Stress Leading to Asthma Diagnoses Among Children of a Large Medical Practice* in the **Health and Place** journal.
- Professor Schaefer delivered his lecture on environmental determinants of health to the **School of Community Medicine Summer Institute** once again. He teamed up with Dr. Syeachie Dennis to take a deep dive into how the inequities contributing to disparate health outcomes are related to land use, housing, and transportation.

- New architecture faculty Xiaobo Quan is teaming up with the CHED on a study to **examine how hospital emergency rooms were physically transformed to cope with the coronavirus pandemic**. Doctors Bo Burns and Joshua Gentges from the School of Community Medicine Emergency Medicine Residency program will be co-investigators. The project is scheduled to kick off in the spring of 2022.
- Congratulations to Autumn Tiller! **She was named the studio's first Albert Schweitzer Fellow this summer**. Schweitzer fellows implement a 200-hour community service project as part of their fellowship. Autumn is **partnering with Youth Services of Tulsa to introduce disadvantaged youth to career opportunities in the design, planning, and construction fields**. She has developed a curriculum of lessons and activities that she shares with the youth each month.



Autumn Tiller, Schweitzer Fellow



REAI junior ambassadors and facilitators generate concepts for the removal of Interstate 244

## Junior Real Estate Ambassadors Institute

The Urban Design Studio was honored to participate in the Junior Real Estate Ambassadors Institute in July. The two-day course **introduced youth from Tulsa's urban communities to real estate as a means to commerce, wealth generation, and empowerment.** The studio teamed with the Tulsa Planning Office and TYPros to facilitate three groups of youth challenged to **imagine the future of Greenwood after the removal of Interstate 244.** The urban design students developed some of their ideas further with Professor Greg Warren in the Landscape Architecture for Urban Design class this fall.



*The studio wishes to thank the following collaborators for their assistance:*

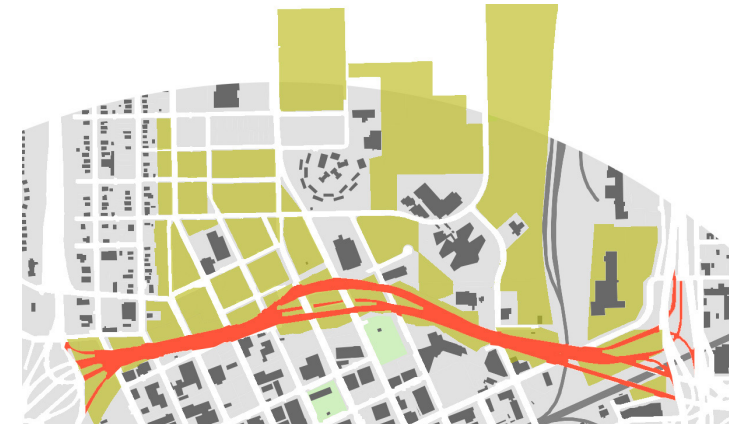
Aszurdee Sadé  
Executive Director, REAI

Paulina Baeza  
Tulsa Planning Office

Alex O'Connell  
Tulsa Planning Office

John Tankard  
Tulsa Planning Office

Jamie Pierson  
TYPros Urbanist Crew



## Muscogee Tribal Town Futurity Spatial Storytelling with Emergent Technology

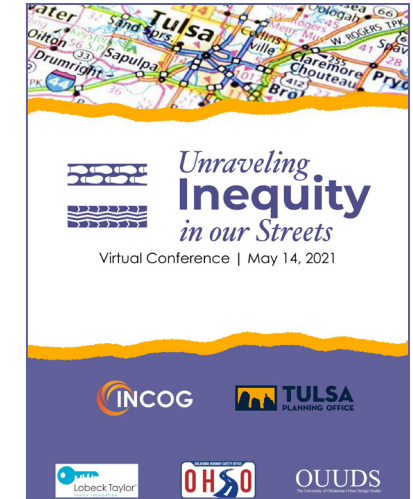
Director Schaefer and the studio's graduate research assistants have joined Native American Studies Professor Laura Harjo and Architecture Professor Angela Person on a project to narrate the Muscogee people's tribal homelands in Alabama using spatial analysis and visualization technologies. **The students are designing and building digital and physical models depicting past, present, and future tribal towns** for an exhibit next spring or summer. The effort is being funded with a Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts seed grant from the OU Vice President for Research and Partnerships.



## Events

The studio has also been involved in a number of exciting events this year:

- In May, the studio was a **presenting sponsor of the *Unraveling Inequity in Our Streets*** virtual conference. National and local speakers focused on our responsibility to **make all streets safe for all races, ages, genders, and levels of ability, as well as all forms of transportation.**
- In October, Professor Schaefer joined Social Work Professor Chan Hellman to **present their work on collective hope and the downtown Muskogee plan at the Oklahoma Arts Conference.**
- During October and November, Professor Schaefer completed the ***Designing Streets for Kids*** training offered by the **National Association of City Transportation Officials.** He was joined by Institute for Quality Communities Director Shane Hampton and studio alumni Paulina Baeza, Samiul Haque, Daniel Jeffries, Alex O'Connell, and Jamie Pierson.





Lou Reynolds JD  
Partner, Eller and Detrich

## Noteworthy

- The Urban Design Studio **welcomed Lou Reynolds to the faculty** in 2021. Lou shared his knowledge and experience from over thirty years experience practicing land use and real estate law in our legal framework class. The class was also shared remotely with students in Norman.
- The Studio's **Community and Professional Advisory Board added Katy O'Meilia** to its ranks. Katy is a licensed landscape architect and senior associate planner at TSW Planners, Architects, and Landscape Architects.
- Professor Schaefer was featured by **ULI Oklahoma** in a member spotlight in March.
- The studio is now offering elective courses to students from the Rainbolt College of Education pursuing the new **Master of Arts in Childhood Well-Being**. The students will be taking Sociology of Housing in the spring, and Geographic Information Systems for Land Use Planning next fall.



**SHAWN SCHAEFER AIA, AICP**  
Director | The University of Oklahoma Urban Design Studio



"The Urban Land Institute Oklahoma has provided wonderful learning opportunities for our students, including project site visits, events featuring expert speakers, and networking opportunities with members from the design, construction, and development community."



ULI Member Spotlight  
featuring Professor Schaefer

- It was good job hunting for our spring 2021 graduates with all five starting new positions. **Lahari Peluri** joined Norris Design in Denver as an Urban Designer. **Sherry Smith** became an historic preservation planner for the City of Fayetteville, Arkansas. **Samiul Haque and Alex O'Connell** are now assistant planners at Tulsa Planning Office, and **Virginia Paiva** is doing optional practical training with Pistil Consortium.
- It has also been a successful year for some of our recent alumni. **Jessi Stringer, 2020**, was named planning director for the City of Collinsville in April. **Chris Paulsen, 2020**, is the new planning director in Catoosa. Congratulations to them both!
- Last, but not least, Jenks planning director **Marcaé Hilton, 2011**, has started offering weekly walking tours to city residents to allow them to better appreciate the pedestrian point of view. She hopes to **improve walkability and raise awareness of the importance of good architecture and urban design**.



Welcoming the first cohort of students to the Childhood Well-Being program



Jessi Stringer



Marcaé Hilton



# People



Urban Design Studio Professional and Community Advisory Board members meet via Zoom.

## Professional and Community Advisory Board

Owen 'Chip' Ard MAI  
Executive VP, JLL Valuation and Advisory Services

Michael Birkes AIA  
Principal, Michael Birkes Architecture

Tom Costner MD  
Director of Palliative Care, St. Francis Health System

Farhad Daroga AICP  
Director of Special Projects, City of Broken Arrow

Paul Dentiste AICP, FIBA  
Consultant

John Griffin CNU  
Urban Designer, Selser Schaefer Architects

Tony Lombardi  
Principal Broker, Frisbie Lombardi Commercial Real Estate

Katy O'Meilia PLA, LEED AP  
Senior Associate, TSW Planners, Landscape Architects

Tom Wallace PE  
President, Wallace Engineering

Dawn Warrick AICP, Chair  
Urban Planner, Freese and Nichols

## Faculty

Shawn Schaefer AIA, AICP  
Paulina Baeza

Michael Birkes AIA  
Nimish Dharmadhikari PhD

Jennifer Griffin RA  
Nick Lombardi CCIM

Lou Reynolds JD  
Greg Warren PLA

## Graduate Students

Jeremy Banes  
Camila Coronado

Samiul Haque  
Alex O'Connell

Courtney Graham  
Virginia Paiva

Lahari Peluri  
Sherry Smith

Roshita Taylor  
Autumn Tiller

## In Memoriam



*Christopher C. Gibbs*

The Urban Design Studio community was saddened in November to learn of the death of the college's namesake, Christopher C. Gibbs. Mr. Gibbs was known for his success in the housing construction and development industry. He provided homes for over fifteen thousand families during his career. The generosity of Mr. Gibbs and his wife Ania has doubled our college's endowment, expanding research and providing learning opportunities to students. All programs in the college, no matter how large or how small, have been impacted by this transformation. The Urban Design Studio, for instance, now appoints two Gibbs' Urban Design Fellows, and provides two to four Gibbs' scholarships to graduate students every year. We appreciate all that Mr. Gibbs has done for the college, and we wish to offer our condolences to the Gibbs Family for their loss.

## Contact Us

The Urban Design Studio is always looking for promising students and interested community partners for its programs and projects. Please contact us for more information:

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Urban Design Studio  
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<https://architecture.ou.edu/urban-design/>

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The University of Oklahoma Urban Design Studio is founded on its three-part mission: to **train urban design professionals** through graduate programs in urban design and real estate, to **advance understanding of the city** through research and creative activity, and to **engage in community design** projects benefiting Tulsa and Northeast Oklahoma.

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