

2022

Birdseye View of Whittier Square

OUUDS

Urban Design Studio



Annual Report



Jeremy Banes, Roshita Taylor, Courtney Graham, and Sonu Malla, presenters at the Community Economic Resilience Initiative Symposium

In High Demand

Urban Design Studio students are in high demand! **Following their convocation, all our recent graduates quickly obtained promising placements.** Camila Coronado accepted a position as a designer at Cyntergy, while Autumn Tiller is practicing with Method Group. Jeremy Banes joined the Tulsa Planning Office as an assistant planner. Current students, Roshita Taylor, Elizabeth Carroll, and Dylan Siers also work there. Courtney Graham recently started as Executive Director for Main Street Muskogee. Tyler Duncan and Sonu Malla serve as graduate assistants at the studio doing research and creative projects. We appreciate the support of employers in both the private and public sector that hire our outstanding graduates and provide internships for our promising students.

Employment inquiries continue to exceed the supply of students in the program. The future for urban design professionals is bright. Cities need urbanists as they grow and deal with challenging issues like affordable housing, climate change, social justice, and economic equity.



2022 Urban Design Graduates

L to R: Jeremy Banes, Camila Coronado, and Autumn Tiller

Students envision a series of public spaces for events and activities in Sweeney Switch



Studio Projects

Harrah - Sweeney Switch

In 2021, the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) initiated the Community Economic Resiliency Initiative (CERI) to **offer municipalities the opportunity to develop plans that model strategic investment, sustainable economic recovery, and long-term resiliency** in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. ACOG partnered with the University of Oklahoma Institute for Quality Communities (IQC) and the Oklahoma Main Street Center to collaborate in shaping the program and providing services to communities selected to participate in CERI. Through a competitive application process, three cities were selected. One of those selected, the **City of Harrah sought a plan for its downtown, known as Sweeney Switch**. Urban Design Studio faculty Dave Boeck and Shawn Schaefer were selected to be IQC Community Engagement Fellows to lead a team of students in a service-learning effort to help Harrah achieve its goals.

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 and Wynn Gochenour
Proprietors, Lumber Shack

Tammy Herzog
President, Harrah Friends of the Park

George Jacobs
Manager, Lumber Shack

Cary Lacefield DO
Family Care Center of Harrah

Lewis Moore
City Manager

Greg Schrempp
Church Avenue Spirits

Hon. Cass Smith
Vice Mayor and Ward 4 Councilor

Hon. Danny Trent
Mayor

Hon. Paul Wiegart
Ward 3 Councilor



Sonu Malla assists stakeholders Tracy Qualls, Greg Schrempp, and Eddy Gochehour during the design workshop at the Lumber Shack

Community Engagement Strategy



As part of an extensive community engagement pyramid **to reach as many levels of Harrah citizens as possible**, students arranged eight public stakeholder meetings, visited Sweeney Switch eleven times, marched in the Harrah Day parade, conducted visual preference surveys, participated in a placemaking event, organized a downtown design workshop, and launched a website to share their work.

The studio also wishes to recognize the following project contributors:

*Paul Blessington
Harrah Public Schools*

*Ron Frantz
Institute for Quality Communities*

*Shane Hampton
Institute for Quality Communities*

*Kathy Helm-Fry and
Samatha Barnes
Harrah History Center*

*Bill Lisby
Harrah Planning Commission*

*Matthew Weaver
Former Community and Economic
Development Director, ACOG*

*The Staff of
the Lumber Shack*



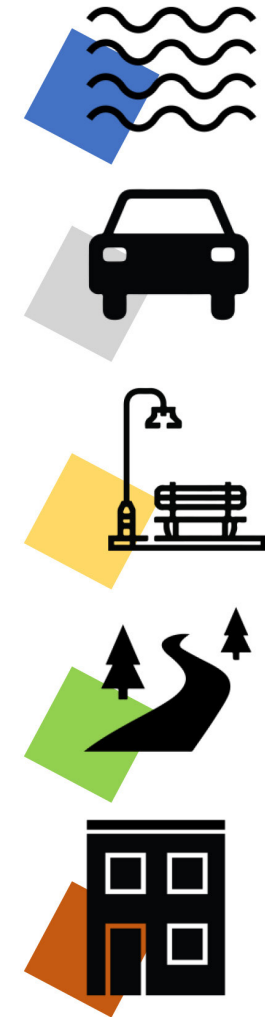


View of Town Creek with proposed berm, wetland plantings, boardwalk, and compensatory flood storage

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

- Remove downtown Harrah from the regulatory floodplain using natural barriers and compensatory storage
- Devise a parking strategy primarily using on-street angled parking
- Calm traffic and improve the streetscapes of Church Avenue, Main Street, and Tim Holt Drive
- Connect downtown with the parks, schools, and neighborhoods by expanding trails.
- Encourage mixed-use downtown development of vacant lots and rehabilitation of older buildings

The students prepared a technical report, presented their recommendations to Harrah citizens, and shared the results alongside similar proposals for Guthrie and El Reno at the CERI symposium in Oklahoma City in May.





Professor Laura Harjo describes the Ftchahassee tribal town model to visitors at the exhibit

Mvskoke Creek Tribal Town Futurity

The Urban Design Studio had the great honor to join a team of designers and scholars led by Native American Studies professor Laura Harjo to create an exhibit entitled ***Spatial Storytelling Using Emergent Technologies: Mvskoke Creek Tribal Town Futurity***. The exhibit opened last April in the Gould Hall gallery. The exhibit surfaces knowledge about Mvskoke tribal towns and presents the knowledge in a range of experiences: 3-D models of the towns and their terrain, sounds and images of nature, illustrations of activities within the tribal towns, and visions to carry on futurity of tribal town practices in a new iteration of community. Graduate assistants Jeremy Banes, Courtney Graham, Sonu Malla, and Roshita Taylor built two scale models depicting historic tribal towns in Alabama. **The models reconstruct indigenous planning techniques representing tribal sovereignty, Mvskoke knowledge, and collective power.** The models were constructed with additive and subtractive rapid prototyping tools and combined with overhead digital projections.

The studio wishes to recognize the following project collaborators:

Laura Harjo PhD
Chair, Native American Studies

Angela Person PhD
Architecture Faculty

Chris Morrey
Architecture Faculty

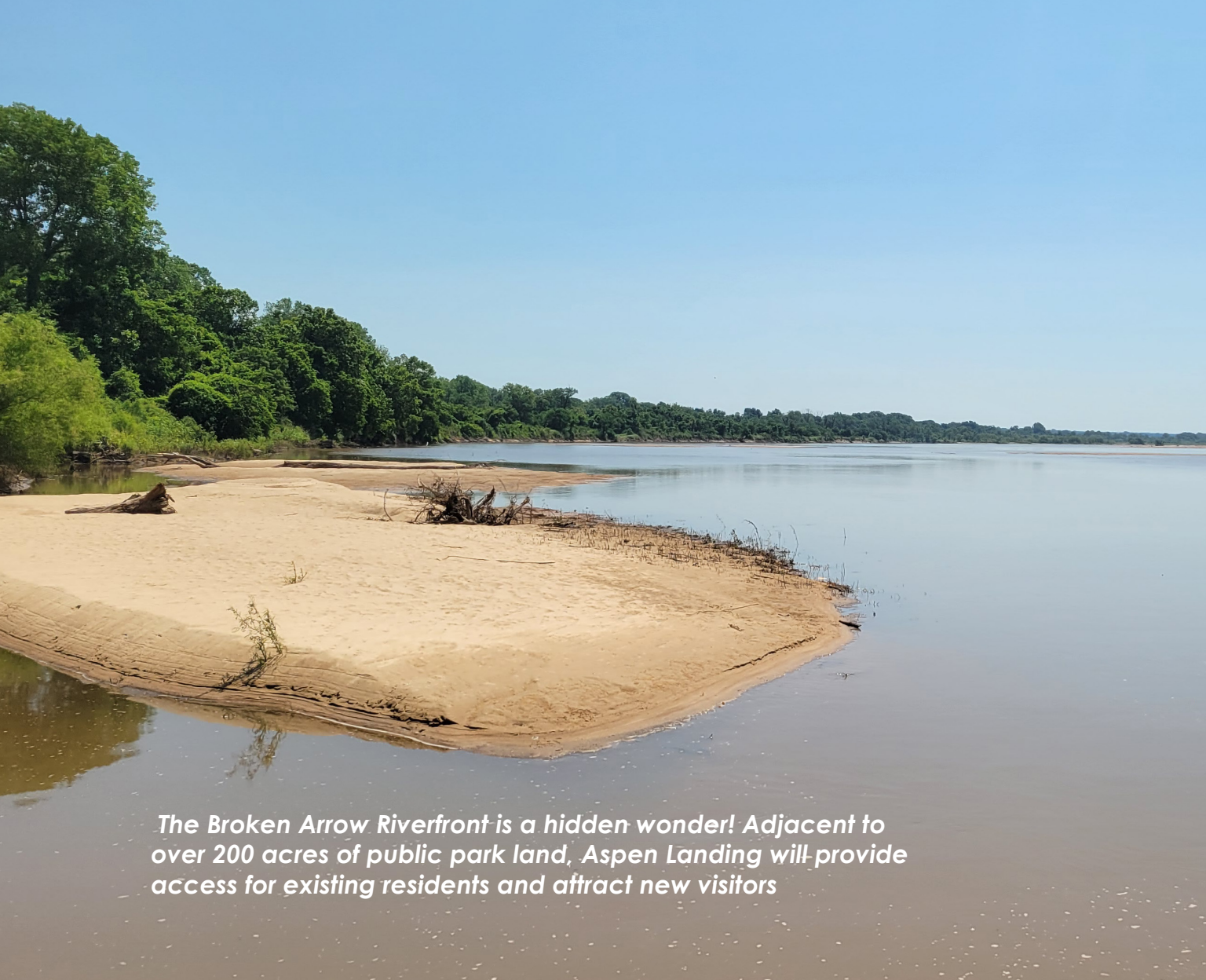
Felipe Flores Garzon
PhD Student and Fellow,
Center for Peace and Development

Jerry Puckett, Matthew
Reed, and Peter Tran
Gibbs College of Architecture Staff

Dustin Barham, Danny
Bolton, and Danny Caranoc
OU-Tulsa Operations Paint Shop

Lena Wind
Mvskoke Tribal Community

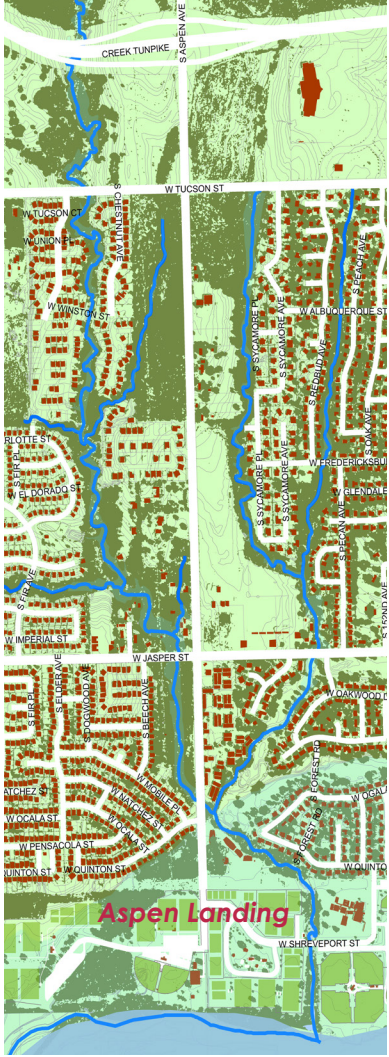
Janet Ward PhD
Social Sciences, Humanities, & Arts
Seed Grant Program, University of
Oklahoma Office of the Vice-
President for Research and
Partnerships

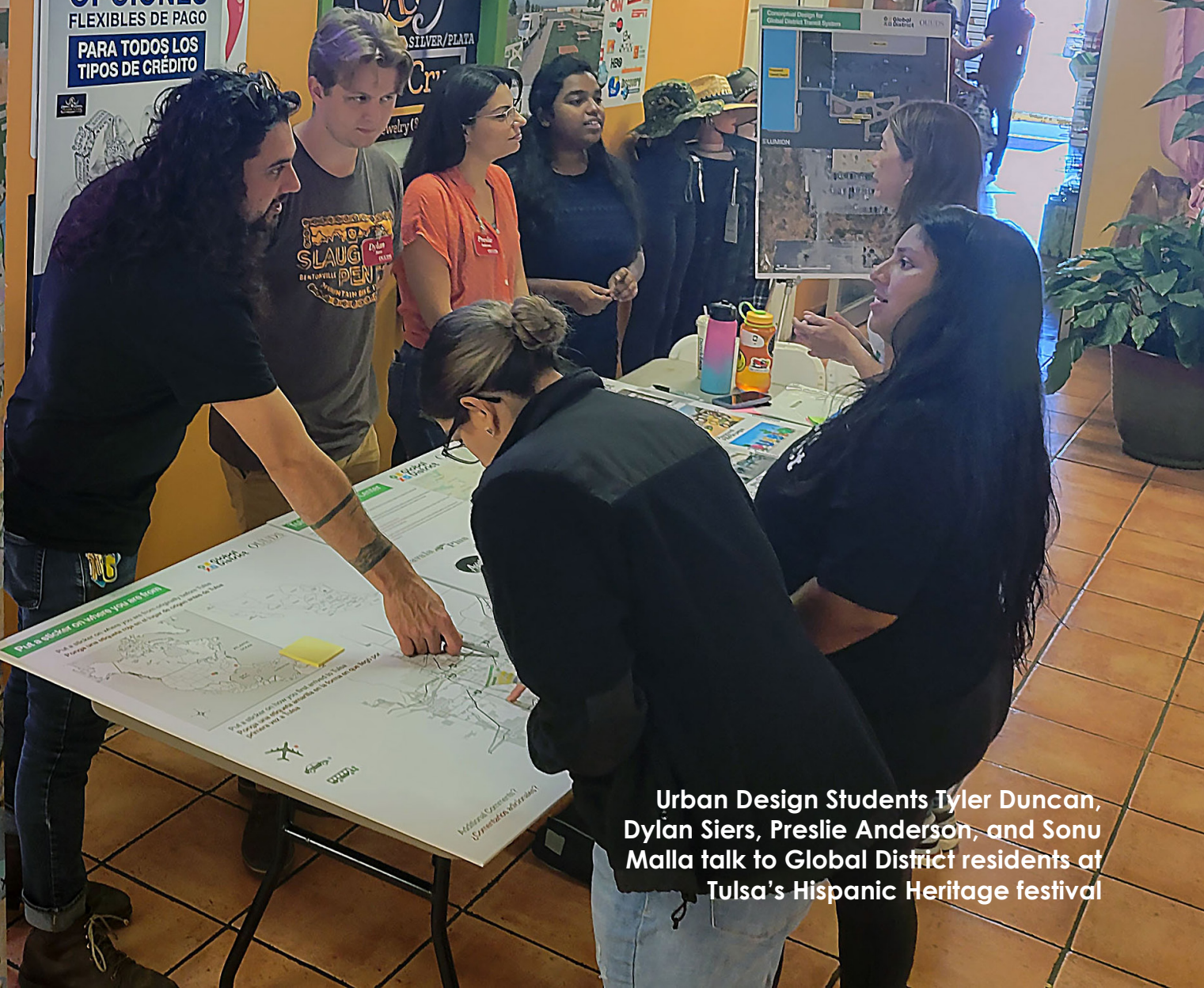


The Broken Arrow Riverfront is a hidden wonder! Adjacent to over 200 acres of public park land, Aspen Landing will provide access for existing residents and attract new visitors

Aspen Landing

Growing rapidly over the last fifty years, Broken Arrow is now the fourth largest city in Oklahoma. As it grows, Broken Arrow is reconsidering its suburban roots and is exploring a more walkable, mixed-use, urban future. An often overlooked fact about Broken Arrow is that like Tulsa, **it is a river city with miles of waterfront.** Long-time Broken Arrow city planner Farhad Daroga, AICP has witnessed much of Broken Arrow's rapid growth and has been instrumental in introducing alternatives to the suburban model of planning and urban design. He has now turned his gaze to the Arkansas River and has asked us to help him **develop a vision for a new recreational attraction at Aspen Landing** that will provide access and views to the river, introduce new entertainment and recreation activities to the Indian Springs Sports Complex, connect to existing pedestrian and cycling paths, and transform Aspen Avenue into an urban boulevard. Aspen Landing has the potential to become a major destination in the city, joining the Rose District as a unique and significant urban place.





Urban Design Students Tyler Duncan, Dylan Siers, Preslie Anderson, and Sonu Malla talk to Global District residents at Tulsa's Hispanic Heritage festival

Placemaking

Students under the guidance of urban design faculty Paulina Baeza and City of Tulsa planner John Tankard recently visited the Hispanic Heritage Festival in Tulsa's Global District. The students conducted a visual preference survey to learn more about international travel connections in the district. **The students are working with Tulsa's Global District and the Tulsa Planning Office to understand how the area is served by buses traveling between Mexico, Tulsa, and other American cities.** The Tulsa Global District is a Main Street America Affiliate, which makes the district a part of a national network of more than 1,200 neighborhoods and communities who share both a commitment to creating high-quality places and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. **The students shared designs for a bus depot and plaza at Plaza Santa Cecilia.** They hope to provide refined design renderings and estimates to accompany grant applications to fund the project early next year.



Tulsa police officers share insights, while completing the visual preference survey



The pop-up plaza created during the St. Patrick's placemaking event tested design concepts for Sweeney Switch



Camila Coronado's vision to transform a mini-storage facility adjacent to Whittier Square into a pedestrian alley with food stalls

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:

- ➔ Partnering with Kendall Whittier Main Street, Camila Coronado's professional project is **helping business owners, residents, and visitors imagine taking Whittier Square to the next level of public space**. Perhaps known to some as Tulsa's prettiest parking lot, the square now hosts a range of outdoor events, including the weekly Tulsa Farmers Market. Based on extensive community outreach, her design features a courtyard arrangement that retains some parking for weekday use. Improvements include pavilions for the market, a flexible stage and seating area, public art, an arcade for food vendors, new signage and branding, and new streetscaping with an emphasis on accessibility and pedestrian safety.

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

Shawn Schaefer, Chair

*Dave Boeck AIA
Associate Professor of Architecture*

*Francesco Cianfarani PhD
Assistant Professor of Architecture*

*Shideh Shadravan PhD
Associate Professor of Architecture*



Kendall-Whittier Main Street Community Engagement Coordinator Sydney Alison demonstrates the need for accessibility improvements



Autumn Tiller shares her designs with Crosbie Heights

→ For her professional project, Autumn Tiller partnered with Emily Scott at the Tulsa Planning Office to **develop missing middle housing prototypes to demonstrate possibilities created by the new neighborhood infill zoning overlay**. She created four prototype designs for owners of vacant lots in Crosbie Heights. She shared her designs with residents at Vibrant Neighborhoods meetings.



A motor court repurposed by Jeremy Banes for co-housing

→ Jeremy Banes applied **a comprehensive approach to providing affordable housing through co-housing**. His project demonstrates the adaptive reuse of struggling building types like motels and hotels into intentional, owner-occupied communities of residents sharing daily chores and responsibilities. Special thanks to mentor Suzie Sharp from Heartwood Commons.

Three students started their projects this fall:

→ **Realizing a project from the studio's 2017 Downtown Muskogee Plan**, Courtney

Graham is partnering with the City of Muskogee and Muskogee Main Street to activate Hunt's Green. After the fire and demolition of the historic Hunt's Department Store, the vacant lot on Broadway has been used for community events like Boonanza, Goat Yoga, and the Christmas Parade, but it has not yet seen any permanent design improvements.

→ Sonu Malla has teamed up with the Downtown Tulsa Partnership to search for ways to **improve four bridges crossing the railroad that divides downtown**. This project complements the ongoing facelift for the Center of the Universe on the Boston Avenue Bridge.

→ As newly appointed staff for the Tulsa Arts Commission, Roshita Taylor hopes to promote public art in the city and beyond. She is **cataloging all the murals in the downtown area and creating a website showcasing them with maps, photographs, and thematic descriptions**. She hopes to enhance the art work using a walking tour, QR Codes, and interactive multimedia.



The Jackie Robinson mural in the Greenwood District





**Dr. Joshua Gentjes talks with
Emergency Department staff
at Hillcrest Hospital**

Community Health and Environmental Design Initiative

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 from the Gibbs College of Architecture and the School of Community of Medicine are analyzing qualitative data from interviews with Hillcrest Hospital staff and administrators **examining how they transformed their emergency department to cope with the coronavirus pandemic.**
- ➔ Professor Schaefer delivered his lecture on environmental determinants of health to the **School of Community Medicine Summer Institute** for the twelfth time, sharing the podium with Dr. Syeachie Dennis to take a deep dive into how land use, housing, and transportation inequities contribute to disparate health outcomes.

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

Michael Birkes AIA
CHED Coordinator

Dave Boeck AIA
Architecture

Bo Burns MD
School of Community Medicine

Joshua Gentjes MD
School of Community Medicine

Brandon Konigskecht MD
School of Community Medicine

Xiaobo Quan PhD
Architecture





OU Team Chosen to Determine Oklahoma's Need for Affordable Housing

A multidisciplinary team of OU researchers from the Christopher C. Gibbs College of Architecture and the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering of the Gallogly College of Engineering has been selected by the Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) to create the Oklahoma State Housing Needs Assessment. **The \$925,000 grant** will fund the development of a searchable geodatabase and web portal that will be used by policymakers to allocate funds in the most efficient and equitable way to promote affordable housing in the communities with greatest need. It will also be used by housing developers, lenders, and real estate professionals to identify housing locations and develop market analyses for affordable housing projects. **The research and development team is led by Shawn Michael Schaefer AIA, AICP, Director of the Urban Design Studio, Shane Hampton, AICP, Director of the Institute for Quality Communities, Francesco Cianfarani, PhD, Assistant Professor of Architecture, and Joe Havlicek, PhD, and Ron Barnes, PhD, Co-Directors of the Center for Intelligent Transportation Systems.** The team hopes to launch the web portal in early 2024. Special thanks to former Professional and Community Advisory Board member Chip Ard of JLL Resources for his instrumental role in helping us obtain the grant.

Program Notes

Administratively, it has been quite a busy year:

The Gibbs College of Architecture has started a consolidation process to streamline its operations and better serve its students, faculty, and staff. The first move will **merge the Urban Design Studio with the closely related divisions of Regional and City Planning and Landscape Architecture, and the Environmental Design Program.** The latter is a growing undergraduate degree program that is a natural feeder for the three graduate degrees.

The studio **updated its five-year strategic plan** to reflect the college's consolidation and align with OU's *Lead On, University Strategic Plan*. The studio's strategic plan has four main strategies:

- ➔ Strengthen ties with the Gibbs College of Architecture in Norman.
- ➔ Improve student recruitment to maintain a stable enrollment of 12 to 15 students.
- ➔ Take advantage of new opportunities at OU-Tulsa, like the new Polytechnic Institute.
- ➔ Update the Urban Design curriculum with an emphasis on green reconstruction.

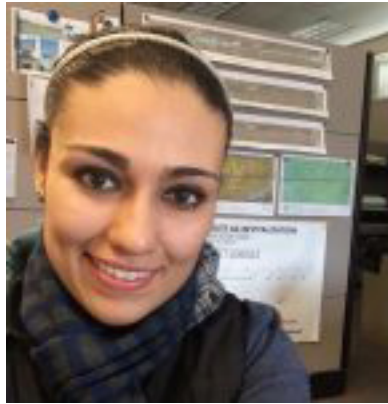
Director Schaefer has worked closely with the OU-Tulsa communications team to completely **overhaul the Urban Design Studio website** to focus on prospective students, applications, and admissions. The new site will launch in January at: <https://www.ou.edu/tulsa/urbandesign>.

The Master of Urban Design program also **submitted its seven-year academic program review** with the rest of the college in September.

Noteworthy



Carly Weinreb Finer



Paulina Baeza

- The Urban Design Studio **welcomed Carly Weinreb Finer to the Professional and Community Advisory Board.** Carly is Real Estate Development Manager at Charney Properties and Capital Homes. She is a graduate of Columbia University's Master of Real Estate Development program.
- Congratulations, to studio faculty **Paulina Baeza, 2017**, on her promotion to Principal Planner of the Tulsa Planning Office (TPO). **Samiul Haque, 2021**, also moved up to fill the Urban Planner position at TPO. His classmate, **Alex O'Connell, 2021**, joined the City of Claremore team as Assistant Planner after **Chris Paulsen, 2020**, moved to the Metro Nashville Planning Department. **Jamie Pierson, 2019**, also made a move to TSW Planning and Landscape Architecture.
- Director Schaefer visited **Dee Maxey's ninth grade class at Riverfield Country Day School** in January to review the students' proposals for making their campus more sustainable.

- **2022 graduate Autumn Tiller** finished her Albert Schweitzer Fellowship and was honored at a ceremony held at the University of Tulsa in May.
- We liked them so much, we decided to keep them around! **Urban design faculty fellows, Dave Boeck AIA, Francesco Cianfarani PhD, and Shideh Shadravan PhD**, were reappointed for another two years. They mentor students, serve on professional project juries, and conduct urban design research and creative activity.
- Last, but not least, **many thanks to the Oklahoma Chapter of the American Planning Association and OKAPA President Dawn Warrick AICP** for sponsoring study breaks for urban design students each semester. The informal gatherings bring together students and practicing planners to share some food and conversation. These are great opportunities for students to learn about the planning profession and make connections for the future.



Tulsa Health Department Director Bruce Dart PhD congratulates Autumn Tiller



Urban Design Fellows

People



Urban Design Founder Robert Lawton Jones was inducted into the inaugural class of the Gibbs College of Architecture Hall of Fame in October. Past Chair of the Professional and Community Advisory Board Dawn Warrick presents a stele to commemorate the honor to Bob's daughter Jayme Gergely and son Mark Jones at the induction ceremony.

Professional and Community Advisory Board

Michael Birkes AIA
Principal, Michael Birkes Architecture

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

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

Carly Weinreb Finer
Real Estate Development Manager, Charney Properties

John Griffin CNU, Chair
Urban Designer, Selser Schaefer Architects

Tony Lombardi
Principal Broker, Frisbie Lombardi Commercial Real Estate

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

Tom Wallace PE, SE
Founder, Wallace Engineering

Dawn Warrick AICP
Associate Urban Planner, Freese and Nichols, Inc.

Faculty

Shawn Schaefer AIA, AICP
Paulina Baeza
Michael Birkes AIA
Jennifer Griffin RA
Nick Lombardi CCIM
Lou Reynolds JD
Greg Warren PLA

Graduate Students

Preslie Watkins Anderson
Jeremy Banes
Elizabeth Carroll
Camila Coronado
Tyler Duncan
Courtney Graham
Soujanya "Sonu" Malla
Dylan Siers
Roshita Taylor
Autumn Tiller

Professor Schaefer visited France and Italy in September studying timeless urban design and sustainable planning practices



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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<https://www.ou.edu/tulsa/urban-design/>

The University of Oklahoma is an Equal Opportunity Institution.

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 the State of Oklahoma.

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