From the Director of the Illinois School of Architecture

The Illinois School of Architecture long aspired to establish a studio presence in Chicago. That aspiration was finally realized in August 2014 with the opening of the Chicago Studio in the historic Railway Exchange on South Michigan Avenue. The school’s partner in the Chicago Studio venture, VOA Associates, has been exceptionally generous at every turn. Michael Toolis, VOA’s CEO and an Illinois alumnus, worked with Kevin Hinders, the studio’s faculty coordinator and Fall 2014 design professor, and Joy Monice Malnar, Spring 2015 design professor, to create a learning environment in which our students could thrive.

Forming a partnership to create a generative learning environment was just the first step in establishing the Chicago Studio. The true test of its viability came when we asked the Chicago architecture community to embrace the endeavor. And it did. No fewer than 18 firms contributed to the studio’s success by encouraging their designers to participate in the studio’s midterm and final reviews. Fourteen of these firms opened their offices to students in the Chicago Studio cohort so that they could get a sense of the myriad ways creativity and discipline combine to produce innovative design for a range of client types. As well, individual designers carefully mentored our students, often helping students to obtain invaluable summer and post-degree employment opportunities.

Well documented in this book is the extent to which Professor Malnar’s design studio project is enmeshed in the urban fabric of Chicago. The same holds for the project pursued by Professor Hinders’s students. Understanding the complexity and density of this fabric was aided immeasurably by contributions of time and expertise by Brad McConnell, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Planning and Development, City of Chicago, in both semesters, and in the fall by Jon B. DeVries, Director of the Marshall Bennett Institute of Real Estate at Roosevelt University.

Without the unflagging interest of VOA Associates, without access to the best Chicago architectural firms and their designers, without the keen attention of mentors from all walks of professional practice, and without the advice of recognized experts in planning and development, the Chicago Studio would have been little more than a 2,000 square-foot classroom with a very nice view. After a mere year, it is so much more. Thanks, then, to all of the colleagues at VOA—and our many alumni and friends in the city’s firms and institutions—for their assistance in making the Chicago Studio’s inaugural year a resounding success.

Warm regards,
Peter Mortensen
Director
THE CHICAGO STUDIO, SPRING 2015

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STUDENT FEEDBACK
A unique collaboration between the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (ISoA) and VOA Associates Incorporated has yielded a new program: The Chicago Studio. The Chicago Studio physically embeds the classroom studio within the professional office. The result is a unique interaction that fosters a collaborative experience for both students and professionals. The students have the opportunity to watch, listen and learn from the architects working at VOA, enjoying both formal and informal dialogue occurring on a daily basis with the architects. While many architecture schools are located in urban environments, they still seclude the student in a traditional studio classroom, isolated from the professional and sensory experiences of urban life. The ISoA’s Chicago Studio is designed to instruct the students in a professional architecture office, take them into Chicago neighborhoods to tour interesting buildings, and have them engage with current relevant projects.

With our recent success in mind, we intend to devote the next four years of this pilot program to further strengthen our interactions to the mutual benefit of the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and VOA. The opportunities are as boundless as the energy, talent and ideas of our participants. This book documents how this program came to be, its current successes and challenges and the experiences of the students during the Spring 2015 semester. It features each student’s exciting design ideas and thoughts on the value they derived from this new program.

About VOA
Founded in 1969, the global architecture, planning and interior design firm VOA Associates Incorporated believes in a collaborative design approach in its practice. VOA continually seeks out opportunities to interact with and contribute to the community, and academia in particular. VOA architects are currently engaged with academic practice at IIT (VOA’s Chris Groesbeck, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP and Monika Thadhani, AIA teach a Cloud Studio at IIT) and the IUAV University of Venice (Monika Thadhani teaches an architecture workshop in Venice each summer). VOA also participates in the ACE mentorship program. A global firm, VOA has offices in Beijing, Chicago, Highland, Los Angeles, New York, Orlando, São Paulo and Washington, D.C. VOA is a multinational firm that provides the
The ISoA semester in Chicago takes place in The Chicago Studio at 224 S. Michigan Ave. The program was conceived so as to collaborate with governmental officials, non-profit organizations, and professional architects engaged in advancing the built environment in an urban setting. The faculty directs students toward meaningful and exciting design opportunities as well as a creative dialogue with the city’s many constituents who are seeking inventive solutions for their built environment.

Program inception
For a number of years, the ISoA had been interested in launching a studio in Chicago in order to better explore urban design challenges posed in the archetypal metropolis. Former Director David Chasco began the process and diligently sought the budget to put in place a program where students would have a direct and prolonged experience of Chicago. The Chicago Studio program is intended to complement, espe-

About The Illinois School of Architecture
The School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (ISoA) is one of the oldest and largest schools of architecture in the country. The School is committed to developing students with an informed worldview through global and local engagement. It challenges students to tackle the complexity of the world and make a difference. It encourages students to grapple with society’s environmental complexities by engaging real people to solve real problems, delivering innovative and realizable solutions to communities and organizations. Employing evidence-based design and service-learning methodologies, students gain invaluable experience through partnerships both inside and outside the university. Students develop important skills in research, its application in design, community-based design processes, and public interest design making them valued employees or future entrepreneurs.

personal attention of a boutique studio. Engaging in a collaborative design process and immersing ourselves in each client’s culture, we create spaces that tell a meaningful story about the people who bring them to life.
cially for international students, the school’s other study abroad programs in Barcelona and China. It is also intended to provide internship opportunities that can take place during the semester and extend into the summer months. ISoA is grateful to its alumni, who play a leading role in Chicago’s architectural community and have been supportive in helping to establish an internship program that would coincide with the students’ time in the city.

Associate Professor Kevin Hinders established the initial collaboration with the City of Chicago Mayor’s office and Chicago’s Department of Planning and Development. Brad McConnell, Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Planning and Development for the City of Chicago, proposed a few areas of the city for study that could benefit both his office and the students’ education. Students were provided with neighborhood background during a meeting with Abby Sullivan, Aldermanic Aide and Dana Fritz, Chief of Staff of Alderman Deb Mell, 33rd Ward. Studio professor Joy Monice Malnar, AIA developed the project brief.

VOA CEO and Chairman Michael Toolis, AIA, LEED AP became aware of the university’s search for studio space in Chicago. He immediately thought of the portion of VOA’s own space on the 13th floor of its offices in the historic Railway Exchange building at 224 S. Michigan Avenue. Toolis met with Hinders and they toured the space. Toolis, an alumnus of the Architecture program at the University of Illinois himself, felt strongly that hosting students from the program in VOA’s office space would benefit both VOA and the Chicago Studio program. An agreement was reached for the Studio to use a portion of the available space.

In 2014, the School of Architecture announced plans to establish a semester-long Chicago Studio program in Chicago. Arrangements were made for the studio to take up space within VOA Associates Incorporated’s Chicago offices. VOA welcomed the first class for the Fall 2014 semester. For 2015, a dedicated space was developed on the 13th floor for Chicago Studio students.

Occupying a studio in VOA’s Chicago offices, students of the Chicago Studio gain a close-up perspective on how a global design firm operates every day. Students participating in the studio can informally use professional architects and designers of VOA as sounding boards for their design concepts and studio projects. Students can get advice on job hunting in the field and experience in the importance of a good cultural fit between architect and firm.

**Setting**

Chicago is synonymous with iconic architecture. With its modern skyscrapers and historic neighborhoods as well as the influential work of Frank Lloyd Wright, Daniel Burnham, Louis Sul-
livan and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Chicago's built environment is a visually stimulating, living learning laboratory for designers, planners and architects. VOA's Chicago office occupies two floors of the Railway Exchange building on Michigan Avenue, designed by Frederick P. Dinkelberg of D. H. Burnham Company. Architect Daniel Burnham created buildings for the World's Columbia Exposition from his offices on the 14th floor. It is distinguished by its street level two-story enclosed court in a symmetrical Beaux-Arts style, white terracotta sheathed façade and porthole windows on its top floor.

Today, the building is home to the Chicago Architecture Foundation, Goettsch Partners, VOA Associates, Harding Partners, the Chicago offices of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and landscape architecture and planning firm Design Workshop. It's no stretch to call it the center of the architecture industry in Chicago's Loop.

Living
Chicago Studio students are pursuing postgraduate degrees in architecture from the School of Architecture, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign. For the Chicago Studio, they relocate to Chicago. Students live in diverse and lively parts of the city such as Lakeview and Wrigleyville. Here, they spend their weekdays in the studio space, on tours and exploring the city. It’s an immersive experience in designing for a modern city. Typically, the Chicago Studio hosts 12-14 students per semester.
The Chicago Studio is designed to align with the curriculum of the Illinois School of Architecture.

Students in the Chicago Studio participate in four courses of study during their semester in the city: Designing an Experience, Experience the Architecture, Experience the Urban Environment and Experience the Firms.

Professor Kevin Hinders launched the inaugural student project in Fall 2014 which involved the investigation of a 200-acre site in close proximity to the Illinois Medical District and Fulton Market Innovation District. The site includes the United Center and the soon-to-be-completed new Malcom X Community College. The Chicago Studio developed an urban design strategy/proposal for the area which sought to harmonize with the existing structures of the city and anticipate the future needs of residents and visitors while providing a new neighborhood quality which had been sacrificed by social and economic factors over the past fifty years.

For “Designing an Experience,” Professor Malnar’s Spring 2015 studio focused attention on Albany Park
on Chicago’s northwest side, particularly the area near the terminus for the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) Brown Line at the corner of Lawrence and Kimball Avenues. One of America’s most diverse neighborhoods, Albany Park suffers from acute traffic congestion. The City of Chicago continues to look for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) proposals to encourage Albany Park residents to use the CTA train system, walk, and bicycle thereby reducing automobile dependence in the neighborhood.

The Spring 2015 Studio group examined TOD schemes for Chicago’s Albany Park neighborhood. Parcels of land near the station were selected for the design of mixed-use, mid-rise TOD projects that could include ground level retail and rental units comprised largely of studio, one bedroom and two bedroom apartments designed for the affordable housing market.

Two teams of students spent the first half of the semester studying the demographics, history, architecture, culture and transportation issues in the neighborhood and developing master plans for redevelopment and reconfiguration of the neighborhood streetscape.

Over four weeks, students researched, described and analyzed the neighborhood, CTA usage, and the surrounding building site conditions. This included photographing the character and materiality of the neighborhood and creating building site models. Students developed a streetscape design including specified elements such as a CTA station, Wi-Fi kiosk, Divvy bicycle station and neighborhood identity gateway marker.

In the second half of the semester, each member of the student teams developed a detailed design for new architecture in the area to support a smart transit-oriented development program and enhance the unique identity of the neighborhood.

Student designs evolved from research on the neighborhood needs and their direct experience obtained by riding the CTA and walking the neighborhood.

For the Lakefront Kiosk Competition, student competition teams worked with a mentor, developed design concepts for an architecture competition and presented their design for critique.

For “Experience the Architecture,” students paid weekly visits to various noteworthy (ranging from classic to contemporary) architectural projects in Chicago. Students toured buildings including The Poetry Foundation at 61 W Superior St, EnV at 161 W Kinzie St, Coast at 345 E Wacker Dr and Virgin Hotels Chicago at 203 N Wabash Ave. Additionally, students used their free time to explore the city’s neighborhoods, gaining an understanding of Chicago’s urban fabric as residents. Students were inspired by the close-up perspective on the Chicago architecture that they’ve studied in school.

Brian Hammersley’s “Experience the Urban Environment” seminar studied the intersection between meaning, form and experience using Chicago’s urban spaces as the site of investigation. Readings on phenomenology were tied to time spent absorbing the qualities of urban spaces, including the basic physical dimensions, qualities of light, tactility of materials, and the sounds of the space.

On a designated day each week, Chicago Studio students visited and toured the offices of major global architecture firms (HOK, Adrian Smith and Gordon Gill, Skidmore, Owings &
Merrill LLP and others) for “Experience the Firms.” This aspect of the program allowed students to learn about these firms in greater detail—everything from their building type and market specialization to firm size, culture and mission. These firm visits gave students unparalleled perspective on the profession as practiced in Chicago. Architects and designers from these firms were guests on open studio days, offering critiques and advice on project work. Visiting a variety of firms offers students perspective to which they can compare and contrast their VOA experience in terms of culture, projects and operations.

CHICAGO STUDIO CURRICULUM
SPRING 2015

1. Designing an Experience Architectural Design Studio [ARCH 572 – Behavior & Well Being]

   Pedestrian Streetscape –
   4 weeks for research and analysis
   - Pedestrian streetscape with Divvy bicycle station area and bus stops.

   Apartment building –
   4 weeks for schematic design and design development
   - Engage in precedent analysis of affordable housing
   - Provide for the affordable condominium market in size and amenities
   - Learn about the unique conditions in the Albany Park neighborhood

2. Experience the Architecture [ARCH 576 – Tours and Exploration of Chicago]


4. Experience the Firms: Office visits and critiques [ARCH 593 – Professional Integration Seminar]

ALLIANCES AND SUPPORTERS: The Chicago Department of Planning and Development

Chicago Studio students meet with and receive input from representatives of the Chicago Department of Planning and Development in creating their projects. Because of the groundwork set by ISoA’s outreach, the ISoA Urbanism Program now undertakes urban design projects identified by the Mayor’s Office as applied research investigations. Students work with the Chicago Deputy Commissioner for Planning and Development, Brad McConnell to identify the city’s goals and objectives and then determine the strengths and weaknesses inherent in a location. Mr. McConnell serves as client for the semester and encourages an investigation based upon the realities of land ownership and economics.

Roosevelt University The ISoA works with students and faculty from the Marshall Bennett Institute of Real Estate of Roosevelt University which assists the Urban Studio in gaining an understanding of the economic (pro forma, development strategies, etc.) realities of their design work and provides a worthwhile exercise for the Roosevelt Real Estate class.
ISoA Chicago Studio students answered these questions:
1. Where are you from?
2. How did you get interested in architecture?
3. What are you hoping to get out of your time in the Chicago Studio?
4. What’s been your favorite experience in the Chicago Studio thus far?
5. What do you like best about studying in Chicago?
6. What’s your favorite building in Chicago?
7. Where do you see yourself in five years?

My favorite experience has been going to the different firms to see how each works day-to-day, how each is slightly different and has its own specialties.

I like the ease of access to so many resources and great architecture. It’s one thing to learn about these buildings in class, but being able to just walk down the street and actually see and walk through them really changes the way you learn about the architecture.

The Sears [Willis] Tower is my favorite tall building here. It’s iconic and you can’t get a better view than the one from the Skydeck. Wrigley Field is my overall favorite. There’s just so much history, it never gets old and there’s always next year.

In five years I hope to be licensed and working in a firm that focuses on hospitality, mixed-use and residential projects. I want to do real estate development on the side.

I became interested in architecture at a very young age. My father is a home builder in the St. Louis area and always took me to job sites when I was a kid. He would give me floor plans and a hard hat to let me figure out the different home layouts in the early construction phase. I knew I wanted to be an architect. I owe it all to my dad for showing me my passion at a young age and giving me opportunities to further my desire to be an architect.
The main goal for me at the Chicago Studio is to immerse myself in Chicago architecture, in practice, research, and the actual built environment. It will be great to see all the different buildings and to hear from all the different firms that designed them.

My favorite Chicago Studio experiences thus far are the firm visits every Friday morning. It is a great to see each firm’s unique studio culture and hear the different design processes that drive their day-to-day operations.

The best part about studying in Chicago is the ability to work two days a week. Having the opportunity for an internship allows for professional growth.

My favorite building in Chicago is the Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership designed by Krueck and Sexton Architects in 2007. The multi-program spaces are all connected beautifully within the building by a strong play on light and void. It is one of the only buildings that overhangs Michigan Avenue and with its large glass façade it creates a direct viewing corridor of the vibrant street for the people inside.

In five years I will be a licensed architect in a managing position within a firm. I want to have influence over both the design and construction of the building, which may lead me to a hybrid role of both architect and construction manager.

“ANDY” XIAOCHUN FAN
SHAANXI, CHINA
My name is hard to pronounce, so just go by Andy.

I was influenced by my mom, who is a plumbing engineer. I was really amazed by the beautiful architecture in Chicago and wanted to experience living in Chicago to better understand the city. Also, I want to get some professional experience by doing an internship. I’m now an intern at Harding Partners, which is very helpful.

The “Experience the Architecture” seminar every Wednesday morning is really amazing. I also like having the opportunity to meet people from different companies and talk to them about my future career path.

The Rookery Building is my favorite. The interior looks great.

I want to work in an construction or contractor company for one or two years, then move to an architecture company, and get my license within five years. Finally, I want to open my own architecture company.

ANDREW JACOB HOSTETLER
VINCENNES, INDIANA
Over the course of my childhood my family moved many times. Around the age of five or six, I found that the language of architecture was something I could relate to as I moved from place to place. I would repeatedly draw, paint, or construct architecture whether it already existed or was a fragment of my imagination.

It may be hard to believe, but growing up I had never visited Chicago. My understanding of Chicago was Lake Shore Drive, the Kennedy Expressway, and the man-made structures between those vehicular arteries. I knew that if I had not pursued this opportunity I may not have been able to visit and understand Chicago as well as I hoped. Chicago is much more than I could have ever imagined.

Some of my fondest memories have been made by exploring the city. Our seminar classes and individual exploration attempts have been great tools for understanding the city. Even something as simple as taking an Uber ride with friends on the weekends has been a great learning experience.

I enjoy meeting professionals from different firms. Having their input is valuable as we move forward into the profession. We come to understand the various types of projects each firm works on and what their culture is, which is valuable knowledge as we graduate and enter the real world.
I’m going to cheat and say I have two favorite sites in Chicago. Fourth Street Presbyterian Church on Michigan Avenue has an outdoor room, a cloister or garth, that is created between the sanctuary, the manse, and parish house. I also enjoy visiting the Lagunitas Brewery just west of downtown. The interior quality of the brewery taps into multiple senses that make this building successful. It has an entertainment factor with live music each day and the aroma of fresh beer that makes it ideal for a hang with friends.

I plan to be a licensed architect within 7-15 months. Within that time frame I want to become a licensed real estate agent. After attaining those goals I would like to launch my own development company starting with mixed-use developments and moving to high-rise residential in my business plan. The overarching goal would be to become an architect and then a developer and perpetuate my own projects.

LIWEI WANG
DALIAN, CHINA
When I was a child I made a small house for my puppy. I also made some handiwork with my father. I got interested in making things and drawing. Thus I chose architecture in which I can do both.

I hope I can get a better understanding of Chicago in terms of architecture, urban space and the firms.

We visit a firm every Friday. I think that’s the best part. We can learn about the values, services and major projects of the various firms. We can also have chance to visit famous firms like Gensler, SOM, and Perkins & Will.

I like exploring different sites scattered around Chicago. I have had a chance to visit one site several times, at different times on different days, to get a better understanding of it and better data to analyze.

My favorite building is The Rookery, it has metal framing with masonry walls. Even though there are many decorations designed by Frank Lloyd Wright on its exterior, the delicate interior ornament is more interesting. The space has a sequence that makes people feel orderly and stratified.

I’m not quite sure about the future. But I plan to practice for one or two years in US after graduation and then go back to China.

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I’m not quite sure about the future. But I plan to practice for one or two years in US after graduation and then go back to China.
My favorite building is the Auditorium Theatre designed by Adler & Sullivan. I like the way it deals with the public and private space and the relationship between the building and the city. The ornamentation is really beautiful.

Hopefully I can be enrolled into my dream firm and take charge of a project from its design to its construction.

LISA L. WRONSKI
LAGRANGE, IL

I had two main interests growing up: drawing and LEGO. In high school I became really interested in math and took as many classes as I could. When I was applying to college, architecture just seemed like the perfect marriage of creativity and science. I am a first year grad student.

I hope to network as much as possible and to really explore the different areas that I can go into in the architecture field.

I have loved our walking tours of Chicago. I am from a suburb, but there is still so much I have to learn and explore. This course has really opened my eyes and has taken me to places that I didn’t know about previously.

I enjoy learning in an urban setting. As an architecture student, it is really exciting and inspiring to be in the middle of a city’s hustle and bustle.

My newfound favorite building in Chicago is 190 S LaSalle St. in the middle of the Loop. From the cathedral-like lobby to the library on the top floor, it really holds a lot of surprises.

I honestly have no idea where I will be in five years. I love Chicago, but I am eager to explore. I enjoy historic preservation, but I also want to design my own structures. I don’t know where I will be physically, but I know I will be doing creative things.

“JOLIE” ZHOULI XIE
SICHUAN, CHINA

I got involved in architecture for the sake of a boy I secretly admired in high school. He went to architecture school so I did, too.

The studio arrangement is good, it offers a lot of spare time for students who are in their last year to develop our professional careers.

I enjoy visiting practicing firms in the city. It is very helpful that the studio is connected to the city’s professional network. I suggest that the studio have more senior members from these firms participate in studio review and critiques.

I am enjoying being introduced to the latest trends, approaches and technology in practice. My specific interest is in Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) and Building Information Modeling (BIM).

I have no favorite building so far. Getting to experience diverse buildings built in different eras is the most attractive part of Chicago’s architecture.

I am very dedicated to the practicing side of the profession. Getting a job in the city, finishing IDP and obtaining my license are the targets.

“DAVID” JINGCHEN YIN
TONGLING, CHINA

I used to love drawing and making models. I feel architecture is the best of both worlds.

While in the Chicago Studio, I would like to get more experience, get to know some architects here. I enjoy the ability to see amazing architecture and get to know the great streets of the city.

There are all kinds of lectures, events and many places to check out all around the city. The Rookery Building is my favorite Chicago building.

In five years, I will have my first project constructed. Hopefully I will have time to write a book about my travels.
“FISH” WEI YU
ROSEVILLE, MINNESOTA

My name is Fish. I was born in China, and moved to Minnesota with my parents when I was a teenager.

My father owns a construction company, and I have always been interested in buildings. I completed my undergraduate degree in graphic design and I wanted to try something more challenging in design.

I have never lived in a big city such as Chicago and I would like to experience the city before I decide where to start my career after graduation.

I love the history of Chicago, that it is layered with buildings and events from different eras. I love the public transportation with which you can pretty much get anywhere in the city. I love how there is always so much going on in the city; concerts, sports events, fun places to visit.

I can easily access so many of the architecture firms in Chicago. It is important to learn about all these different firms before deciding where I would like to work after graduation.

I like the Spertus Institute located on Michigan Ave. It is very different from the buildings around it. I love the space inside as well, especially the various multi-story atrium spaces.

In five years, I would like to be a project manager, working on high-rises. Hopefully, I will be a licensed architect working in Chicago.
VOA: Where did you study architecture?

Joy: I went to the University of Illinois in Chicago for my Master of Architecture degree. And before that I had a Bachelor’s degree in Interior Design. After graduating, I worked at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill for a number of years. I’m a licensed architect.

VOA: What kind of projects were you working on professionally?

Joy: The big high-rises; everywhere from Chicago to Korea to the Middle East. I worked on incredible large corporate projects and I did presentation work and preliminary design. I worked on condominium apartment buildings during the initial stages as the projects were being developed and the structural engineering was being done. One of the last projects I participated in at Skidmore was with Fazlur Rahman Khan, the renowned structural engineer, and it was a super high-rise. It was one of Adrian Smith’s first super high-rises, so it was pretty exciting time; I was doing the layouts for the condominiums. Every time the structures changed, I had to regenerate a whole series again. And I did the restaurant on top.

VOA: How did you get back into academia?

Joy: By accident. I never intended to go back to academia. When I was at University of Illinois at Chicago, Stanley Tigerman was here and Thomas Beeby was the director, Robert Stern and George Ranalli were there, too. All of these incredible people were here. Stanley told me one day, “If you really want to be good at this, you’re going to have to teach.” And so I thought, “Oh okay, I’ll teach a class.” And I started teaching classes at Mundelein College on the north side. A full time position came up and I got it. Mundelein was purchased by Loyola University in Chicago, so I taught at Loyola for a little while. Then I moved on to University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. So, it was totally by accident. I loved it.

“Tigerman told me, ‘If you really want to be good at this, you’re going to have to teach.’”
VOA: What sort of classes do you specialize in?

Joy: I teach design studios; my area is phenomenology, direct experience of an environment. I have one book called Sensory Design, so many of my classes have been involved in that. I’m also on the Visionary Committee for the Friends of the Park, and we’ve been working on the last four miles of the Chicago lakefront. I was involved in spearheading that project. Many of my student studio projects have been on the lakefront such as working on the South Side where the old steel mill was. The developer is trying to figure out what to do with these half-mile walls on the property that were used to store the ore. The master plan said tear the walls down. But they are beautiful historic walls, you’d just love them. They started to tear them down but the crane broke and they realized it was going to be over $16 million to take down the walls. So, I have students work on design projects showing the developer what can be done with the walls. And of course, it’s not dense but it is high-end housing. I’ve connected that with what I do.

I’ve also done studios with Native American projects. My other book is New Architecture on Indigenous Lands. That comes out of phenomenology; it looks at how different cultures place the sensory systems in a different hierarchal arrangement. I’ve looked at how one culture can think of another culture in a negative manner and many times that’s just because the hierarchy of senses is arranged differently. I’ve had students design a museum for Native Americans on Chicago’s Northerly Island. One year we did a Native American Study Center on the Champaign campus.

The other course I teach is Sensory Response for the Built Environment, which uses my book Sensory Design. I try to get the students to understand how all of the senses need to be designed for, not just vision.

VOA: And how did you find the experience teaching this studio in Chicago?

Joy: Perfect. It’s perfect because it’s direct experience. Every week we go somewhere and talk about the building in a lecture format. It was a great melding of my interests and the classroom, and also my interest in Chicago. I’ve lived here almost 30 years now, so I love Chicago. I took students to some of the typical places that they should see and then to many places that people don’t put on the tourist route but are spectacular.

It was really interesting going to all of the firms every week. Firm presentations were predominately given by our alumni, who are now heads of firms, as is the case at VOA. That was pretty exciting.

Each week after the presentation, students had to write up a summary of what they heard: who the firm is, their culture, their process, and the type of work they did. What was really fascinating was that each student focused on something different. It made me
aware of how unique and individual each of these students are. They all were accurate; no one misread anything, or misheard anything. It’s just that their focus is different. It made me realize how complicated it is to teach because you want students to learn a body of information, but they are all individuals coming from different directions.

I want to establish a foundation and find out who they are and then push them towards what they are interested in. If they get it wrong, sometimes I re-steer them. It was really interesting getting to know them and finding out what their interests are. Sometimes by the time you really get to know a class, they’re gone, so that’s unfortunate. I’d like to have them all back again. Every single student was interesting, worked hard and was enjoyable to be around.

They trusted me to take them to places. We would say ‘Okay, we’re meeting here,’ and we’d show up and they’d say, ‘Whoah, I had no idea that was up on the fortieth floor there. I didn’t realize that was behind the façade on Michigan Avenue.’ I always tried to put places in these field trips that I haven’t seen before, just for my selfish interest. I might read something in the newspaper about a building opening and I would work it into a tour. It’s so much easier being there.

The interaction, with people from VOA just popping in, was wonderful. The portfolio section and participation from VOA was fabulous and the students loved it. With “What You Wished You Knew Then, That You Know Now,” a group of VOA people told students what practicing architecture is really like day-to-day.

VOA came in and critiqued their work. We had alumni come in and critique their work. We were able to connect alumni that had lost each other or didn’t know each other. Just wandering around, seeing what’s going on here at VOA was great for the students. Some of them realized that just sitting down and having lunch was a good way to interact.
Periodic open studio days were scheduled in which Chicago Studio students could receive project critiques from professionals.

These critiques included a mid-review of streetscape and masterplan, an informal critique of design concepts for the Chicago Biennial kiosk competition, portfolio reviews by VOA designers, a final review of apartment building design and a final open house presentation.

VOA’s Mike Toolis, Jess Libby, Clint Moewe, Angie Lee and Shannon Piatek, along with Christine Carlisle and Nolan Sit of Solomon Cordwell Buenz, and Brad McConnell, Deputy Commissioner for Planning and Development, City of Chicago participated in the review of student masterplanning and streetscape design in March. Students were questioned in regard to the source of their traffic and real estate data, asked to think about issues such as stormwater management, connecting transit and public spaces, reinforcing the street wall. Clint Moewe asked the next group about the size and scale of its multipurpose building and appropriate parking ratios. Brad McConnell’s rapid fire questions gave the students an idea of what is expected when working with the Department of Planning and Development.
FIRM VISITS

THE STUDENTS AND PROFESSOR MALNAR WANT TO THANK ALL OF THE FIRMS WHO PARTICIPATED IN REVIEWS AND PRESENTATIONS DURING THE SPRING 2015 SEMESTER.

Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture
Autodesk
Design Workshop
Gensler
Goettsch Partners
Hammersley Architecture Studio
Holabird and Root
Klein & Hoffman
Legat Architects
Mortenson Construction
Nagle Hartray Architecture
Perkins + Will
Ross Barney Architects
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill
Solomon Cordwell Buenz
Studio Gang
Thorton Tomasetti
VOA Associates, Inc.
TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT IN CHICAGO’S ALBANY PARK

CREATE A MASTER PLAN AND ARCHITECTURE FOR TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT IN CHICAGO’S ALBANY PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

PART ONE: RESEARCH, PLANNING AND STREETSCHANGE DESIGN
PART TWO: APARTMENT BUILDING DESIGN
ALBANY PARK:
A DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOOD WITH MANY LANGUAGES
SPOKEN AND CULTURES REPRESENTED

CHALLENGE: TRAFFIC CONGESTION NEAR LAWRENCE
AND KIMBALL AVENUES

CITY MANDATE: ENCOURAGE USE OF CTA LINE,
INCREASE EFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

ARCHITECTURE: OLDER BUILDINGS, SOME
LANDMARKS, PRIMARILY DATING FROM 1900-1930
Team: Redefining Albany Park

This master plan encourages biking and walking. It creates more green space around the Brown Line El station. It puts Albany Park on a “road diet,” eliminating some street parking, moving parking to a multilevel garage and creating 10 feet of space for bikes and pedestrians. It creates an elevated bike lane and includes two Divvy bikeshare stations. It creates a bus hub to lessen traffic build-up at intersection. The group suggested creating pocket spaces and plazas which could host multi-cultural events and festivals.
Tyler David Ammermann  
**An Albany Park Community Destination**  
3301 W Lawrence Ave.

As is typical of the buildings in the area, the entrance is placed on the corner. The entry to this affordable apartment building is marked by a slight setback. The intent is to maintain families in this area, so there is a mix of unit sizes ranging from studios [16] to three bedroom units [4]. This mixed-use building features parking, amenity space and retail. It reduces costs for lower income families by providing only a minimum of ground level parking spaces in the rear.
This 250,554 square foot residential development puts open space and amenities first, with 192 square feet of open space per resident and a 28,000 square feet outdoor terrace area. The building’s 92 units are a mix of studios (416sf), 1BRs (9723sf), 2BRs (1065sf) and 3BRs (1312sf).
Andrew Jacob Hostetler
3355 Lawrence Ave, Urban Station: Village at a Crossroads

Urban Station: Village at the Crossroads is a Transit-Oriented Development that connects the end of the Brown Line to the city of Chicago. The mixed-use development contains 108 residential units, 15,440 square feet of retail and 26 Active Senior Living Units for a total of 146,250 square feet. 3355 Lawrence Avenue is phase 1 of a much broader project that has been designated as Albany Park Transit Oriented Development along Lawrence Avenue.
Featuring 1BR and 2BR units favored by young professionals, this project connects family-oriented Albany Park with Chicago’s dynamism once again. It features ground level retail, extended sidewalks with opportunities for outdoor seating and access to a Divvy bike station in proximity to both Kedzie Avenue and the Kimball El stop. It is designed to complete the street facade on a currently vacant site, to reactivate the street and to increase density in the neighborhood as a whole.
Lisa Wronski
**Rusk Apartments**

Richard Rusk was an entrepreneur who purchased 10 acres of land in 1868 in an area now part of Albany Park. His horse racing track became a popular destination, drawing visitors to the area. Now, Rusk Apartments will attract a diverse group of urban dwellers to the neighborhood, from families that want to live close to school to individuals who take the Brown Line to the Loop. The Rusk Apartment Building is designed to be welcoming to all. The building consists of a ground floor with multiple retail spaces as well as parking for residents. The apartment tower contains five floors and a total of 49 apartment units (1BR to 3BR). Residents will have access to the green roof via the second floor.
Team: Reconnect Albany Park

Reconnect Albany Park’s master plan seeks to make the neighborhood a lively destination by creating a new place for public activity. It proposes a public farmer’s market and outdoor plaza across from the neighborhood El station. The market, along with reinvisioned streetscape, is intended to activate and renew the urban fabric of the area. The plan would also change pavement patterns and texture at intersections, giving the area a pedestrian-friendly feel and connection.
“Andy” Xiaochun Fan

Albany Park Residence

This multi-level residential development features terraced, green patios and a mix of 1BR, 2BR and 3BR units.
Liwei Wang

End of Line, Affordable Housing at Kimball Station
At the end of CTA Brown Line Station, this new condominium featuring retail on its ground and second floors will be an iconic destination serving the entire community.

Outside, a parking lot is replaced with a cultural plaza celebrating the diversity of Albany Park community. Essential paths carve and divide the plaza into several pieces and smaller spaces. Green space is introduced in the rest area while a small stair enhances the corner. The plaza serves as a space for gatherings.

Part of the facade of the building is protected by folding-sliding metal perforated shutters. This protection filters direct sun radiation, while creating an intermediate space to provide privacy and give residents control of their street view.
The design for this mixed-use building on Lawrence Avenue approaches housing for families in Albany Park with flexibility, affordability and sensitivity to the immediate scale and context of its neighbors. It explores the feasibility of four building sizes from 4 floors/12 units to 10 floors/36 units.
Yizhou Wang
Albany Park Climbing Gardens
The five-level, two-section residential development features blocks of color inspired by Mondrian and an extensive exterior green wall in the connecting space. Unit configurations vary from studio to 3BR with retail on the ground floor featuring its own sidewalk parklet/seating area.
“Jolie” Zhouli Xie
Destination Diversity
3303 W Lawrence Avenue

A seven-story development features a range of apartment sizes (studio, 2BR and 3BR) above a culture market with parking in the back. The animated facade reflects the variations of programming needs and symbolizes the ethnic diversity of the neighborhood.
Jingchen Yin
Geode Place
A five-story mixed-use residential building features a unique curving facade that provides bay windows that are typical of Chicago buildings. Amenities include an interior landscaped courtyard that serves as a social lounge. Each floor sets back to allow sunlight to penetrate.
Near the end of the semester-long Chicago Studio, we asked students for feedback on their experience of the program, the classroom space and the city.

**Tyler David Ammermann**

**Best part of semester:** We’re in the city and we have more resources. Being able to walk to the building is great. There are so many professionals here and you can see the projects they’ve designed and developed. In Chicago, there are so many holes-in-the-wall to explore.  

**Project:**  
The first half was a group project. The second half, we started with the building design. Mine is nine stories. I want to keep the history and culture of the area, but modernize it.  

**Being on 13:**  
I think it’s great that we’re in the firm’s space. I’m getting more familiar with it. I’m learning how to look for the next job. It’s more helpful and convenient than Champaign. The opportunities have been fantastic.

**Jake Eilermann**

**Best part of semester:** My favorite experience was the firm visits every Friday morning. It is a great to see how unique each firm’s studio culture is, along with hearing about the different design processes that drive their day-to-day operations.  

**Project:** I thoroughly enjoyed working on the TOD project along the Kimball Brown Line station. This studio allowed for the class to get heavily involved in the pre-design research, which is something that most studios do not allot time for. While we will have shorter time for the actual design of the building, it allows us to create a design that fits within the context of Albany Park and meets the needs for both current residents and incoming residents.

**“Andy” Xiaochun Fan**

**Best part of semester:** I really like the class on Wednesday and Friday mornings. I think the best part is the internship. That’s been really helpful. I’m interning at Harding Partners downstairs. I got the internship about three weeks after I arrived here. I will probably stay there this summer.  

**Project:** For the first half of the semester we were doing research. I’ve never done a project like this before, a TOD project, so it looks good on my resume.  

**Being on 13:** It’s given me a better idea of where I want to be after I graduate. Also, it’s a really nice place.

**Andrew Jacob Hostetler**

**Best part of semester:** The highlight is being able to experience and explore Chicago in all its facets.  

**Project:** The Albany Project involves a lot of research. I think just one of our build-
ings could be a semester long project itself. I think the city’s right that it needs to be a TOD project.

**Being on 13**: I think it’s fantastic. I kind of wish we were more integrated. It’s nice that VOA designers can come down and critique us. The space is awesome with the view of the atrium.

**“Jolie” Zhouli Xie**

**Best part of semester**: I’ve been in Chicago for three years, but I’ve never known the architect or designer of many of these buildings. I like the architectural tours of buildings. In visiting firms, we can get into the firm and listen to their values.

**Project**: We took a lot of time to research the urban environment. We only have a third of the semester to finish the building.

**Being on 13**: I love the VOA building. This is a significant Chicago building. VOA is very friendly to us. It offers us a lot of opportunities for us to refine our resumes and portfolios. You are supporting us.

**“David” Jingchen Yin**

**Best part of semester**: My favorite thing is getting a chance to visit some historic buildings in Chicago. It gives me a chance to walk around on the weekends. There’s a lot of stuff to see.

**Project**: The most interesting thing is the diversity of the neighborhood. There are a lot of historic buildings that are being reused in an interesting way. The whole cultural background is so rich in the region. Different cultural groups have different definitions of public and private and of spatial relations.

**Being on 13**: I think it’s a great opportunity. We get a lot of feedback from architects, which is different from what we get at school. I think it’s very beneficial to get a chance to meet a lot of different people. You get a chance to know what’s going on.

**Yuxuan Wang**

**Best part of semester**: I can go out and explore the city. Since we are actually in the city, we can go explore the city on a human scale and experience it with all of our senses, not just the visual sense. I can touch the buildings, smell the lake, hear the traffic.

**Project**: I like this project because affordable housing is an essential part of every building type. It’s a challenge to meet the user’s needs.

**Being on 13**: I like the environment here. The people and the staff are welcoming. We have good opportunities to talk to them about their progress on various projects at the firm.

**Yizhou Wang**

**Best part of semester**: I enjoyed the opportunity to visit some of the different firms and learn about them. As I move forward in my career, I know what I want to look for. I also learned about housing in Chicago. I was in NYC last semester, so now I can see the difference between NYC and Chicago housing. Chicago is clean and the streets are wider. Alleys are a good thing in Chicago.

**Project**: The city fabric in Chicago is older and more historic. It contains buildings from different eras and a diversity of culture and language. Learning about the city and its architecture is helpful for us young designers.

**Being on 13**: It’s good, it’s connected. I can communicate with VOA and ask questions.

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**“We can go explore the city on a human scale... I can touch the building, smell the lake, hear the traffic.”**
Liwei Wang

Best part of semester: My favorite thing is exploring the city. The studio is a good chance to learn about the architecture of Chicago. In Urbana, there are not too many high-rise buildings. The urban context can be more interesting for architects to learn about.

Project: We worked on a renovation of the streetscape in the first part of the course. In the second part, we did affordable housing. It’s been a good way to learn about Transit Oriented Development. We consider the quality of life for residents, and we design a more walkable streetscape and street furniture. It’s a chance to learn how to reflect the culture. It’s an affordable housing project and the first time I’ve done this type of building.

Being on 13: It’s pretty cool. It makes me feel like I’m really inside VOA, in that we have our own space. It’s comfortable to work here. Because the location is right beside Millennium Park, it’s convenient to other parts of the city. Bringing VOA designers over to review our projects is a good chance to ask architects their perspective. I think that’s helpful. We also get some casual lunch time together when we can discuss our future careers.

“Fish” Wei Yu

Best part of semester: I like how close it is to the city. Champaign is just so far away, it’s hard to get up here for a firm visit. People here want to help young professionals. The networking aspect is great. We always do projects in Chicago, so it makes sense.

Project: I like it a lot more than last semester’s. We get to focus on one building. You can make a lot of changes and details.

Being on 13: I like it here. I visited last semester. I do feel we’re a little bit isolated. It would be fun if we were more integrated. There are pros and cons. When you see somebody in the office, you can walk by and chat with them for two minutes. We don’t have much stuff in the studio. It seems too empty to me.

Lisa Wronski

Best part of semester: The best part has been being in Chicago, the firm tours and the city tours. It’s kind of like a history lesson, a design lesson.

We get special tours. My favorite building was 190 S LaSalle St. The lobby feels like a cathedral. We were able to go to the top, explore and get into things. Part of the top floor is a library, it’s just astounding.

Each Friday morning, we visit a different firm which shows us what kind of setting and atmosphere exists out there. We met someone from Autodesk. It was very eye-opening. You can ask questions in person. I have all these contacts I wouldn’t have made otherwise.

Project: The project is Transit Oriented Development. We met with the alderman, we met with city planners. Some even came out to the reviews to critique us. It’s nice that the site is here. We just commute down. We’re developing two in-depth plans.

Being on 13: Coming here is just great. People from VOA come by and look in. We’ve had portfolio reviews with people from VOA. It’s nice to go and see what everyone is working on and talk to whoever. It’s been very interactive. I think we have some big advantages here.
VOA Associates Incorporated, founded in 1969, is an international design firm with offices located in Chicago, Illinois; Highland, Indiana; Los Angeles, California; New York City, New York; Orlando, Florida; Washington, D.C. and São Paulo, Brazil. We offer comprehensive services for facility programming, master planning, architecture, landscape, sustainability consulting, and interior design.

The firm’s diversified practice is international in scope and includes: college and university facilities, hotels and hospitality related projects, institutional master plans, financial institutions, corporate headquarters and offices, law firms, housing, healthcare facilities, governmental and transportation-related structures.

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