'Signature Search'

News of Note

College of Architecture hiring 16 professors as part of ongoing faculty reinvestment pla

s part of his ongoing initiative to elevate faculty, Texas A&M Pres nounced plans in September 2003 for the iversity to hire 447 new tenured or tenure-track faculty over an ght-year period. The faculty reinvestment plan, he said, is aimed at proving the university's student-faculty ratio, enhancing the facu proving the educational experience for Texas A&M students. ermore, he said, the effort will allow the university to enhance cor ntration on specific areas of research and scholarship that promise nificantly advance the university's contributions and reputation

Inder the plan, the Texas A&M College of Architecture will gain 10 w faculty members. To fill these positions, J. Thomas Regan, dean he college, established a "Signature Search" process aimed at ider g and selecting promising scholars who can significantly contrib one or more of the college's three signature areas of emphasis pility, visualization and health facility design.

Last fall, the college hired these four new signature faculty:

Charles H. Culp Energy efficiency specialist

Charles H. Culp, associate director of the Energy Systems Laboratory at the Texas Engineering Experiment Station is an expert in energy efficiency for high-performance buildings. He came as an associate professor to the



epartment of Architecture from a visiting professor pos in mechanical engineering at A&M's Dwight Look College of naineerina. A licensed

ngineer and older of 11

U.S. patents, Culp has over 25 years of academic and professional experience in engineering, research, teaching, and management. His work at the Energy Systems Lab (ESL) focuses on energy efficiency codes simulation, building energy efficiency measures, and the development of measurement and verification (M&V) for energy efficiency solutions.

As one of the principal investigators on the ESL team, Culp assists the state of Texas with a variety of initiatives related to Senate Bill 5, a sweeping legislation that in 2001 established new energy-efficiency mea sures for buildings aimed at reducing energy consumption and improving air quality.

Culp earned a doctorate in solid state physics from Iowa State University in 1975, with a minor in electrical engineering. He also holds a bachelo of science in physics, earned with highest honors at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology in Socorro, N.M.

D. Kirk Hamilton Health facility design innovator

D. Kirk Hamilton, an acclaimed innovator in the field of health-care architecture, is an associate professor in the college of architecture. A distinguished scholar and fellow in both the American College of Healthcare Architects and the American Institute of Architects, Hamilton is a founding principal and head of the consulting division of Watkins Hamilton Ross

Architects, Inc., a design firm headguartered in Houston, Texas. As faculty fellow at A&M's Center

for Health Systems and Design, Hamilton is interested in evidence-based design for health care; especially the relationship of facility design to measurable organizational performance. He recently completed a master

of science in

organizationa development from Pepperdine University and holds a bachelor of architecture from the University of Texas Hamilton has more than 30 years of

experience in health facility design. He is past president of the American College of Healthcare Architects and the AIA Academy of Architecture for

A prolific writer, he has published numerous articles on health-care design, evidence-based practice, and organizational performance. He has authored and edited three books on health facility design and is currently working on two new books.

Chanam Lee Researching healthy communities

Chanam Lee, an assistant professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning, earned a master's degree in land-

scape architec ture at Texas A&M University She recently completed a doctorate in urban design and planning at the University of Washington where she also taught under-

graduate courses in environmental planning. There, she earned the Faculty Medal Award recognizing "exceptional work in theory and research and promise for continuing intellectual leadership in the profession."

Through her research and professional endeavors, Lee seeks to "identify the primary attributes of healthy.

activity-friendly communities." She mploys a broad, interdisciplinary approach, focusing on ways the form and design of the built environment influence, and are influenced, by its inhabitants.

Her doctoral dissertation concentrated on the use, form, and design aspects of the built environment as it relates to walking and physical activity for health and transportation purposes.

In a related project, Lee evaluated the "walkability and bikeability" of selected communities and helped develop evidence-based environmental audit instruments for assessing "walkability." Her work has been widely circulated in peer-reviewed iournals and invited presentations. She has worked professionally as a olanning consultant, a graphic artist. and a landscape architect.

She holds a bachelor in landscape architecture from Kyungpook National University in Korea and has a Certificate in Health System's and Design from Texas A&M. She is also a faculty fellow with A&M's Center for Health Systems and Design.

3-D modeling expert

modeling for visualization and recent graduate of A&M's doctoral program in architecture, recently joined the Sciences faculty. His interests include Texas A&M University and a bachelor ndian Institute of Technology.

Srinivasan's doctoral dissertation "Modeling High-Genus Surfaces." dealt with algorithms and tools for easy modeling of objects with a large number of holes and handles. He developed a 3-D mesh modeling package, "TopMod," that is currently being used in the Viz Lab.

Srinivasan's work has been featured at the annual AMC-SIGGRAPH conferences and his research has been published and widely presented in peer-reviewed venues around the world

He recently received funding to

develop a digi-

tal model of the

D-Day landing

site at Pointe d

Hoc on France's

Normandy

coast. The vi-

sualization will

aid a multidisci-



plinary historic preservation project led by faculty at the A&M's Historic Resourc-

es Imaging Lab. For his research initiatives during the 2003-04 academic year, Srinivasan earned the George W Kunze Prize, presented annually by the Texas A&M Office of Graduate Studies to a graduate student who has excelled in scholarship and service.

College ranks 3rd in awarding of professional degrees to Hispanics

The Texas A&M College of Architecture ranks third, nationally, in the awarding of professional degrees in architecture to Hispanics, according to an article appearing in the May 2004 issue of "Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education." Additionally, the magazine lists the university among the nation's top 20 colleges for Hispanics and sixth in the awarding of doctoral degrees to

The College of Architecture's success in attracting and retaining Hispanic students can be attributed, in part, to its "personal touch," suggests Guillermo Vasquez de Velasco, the college's associate dean for outreach.

"I believe the key to our success in this area can be found in the individual relationship that our faculty establishes with each student, and in the fact that

"We are a big school that has not lost its personal touch. For Hispanic students that is a critical issue." - Guillermo Vasquez de Velasco, associate dean for outreach

we have achieved a critical mass of Latin American students who provide a robust peer support system within our student population," Vasquez de Velasco aid. "We are a big school that has not lost its personal touch. For Hispanic students that is a critical issue."

As coordinator of the Las Americas Digital Research Network, Vasquez de Velasco has substantially contributed to the college's outreach into Latin America. Headquartered in the College of Architecture, the network facilitates communication between many of the top design schools in the western hemi- class

sphere. Network participants include institutions in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia. Costa Rica. Guatemala. Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. Additionally, through its Center for Housing and Urban Development and its management of the Colonias Program for the state of Texas. Vasquez de Velasco said the college has a relatively high profile in the predominately Hispanic Rio Grande Valley. Last fall, the College of Architecture experienced a 26 percent increase in Hispanic enrollment in its freshman

Texas A&M construction science team drafts new home building and performance standards for state of Texas

adopted a set of standards that will — for the first time in Texas - detail how the components of a newly built home should perform under warranty. Faculty from the Department of Construction Science at Texas A&M's College of Architecture assisted with the development and review of the new standards.

"I believe the commission chose us to create the standards because A&M has a reputation for having the largest and most comprehensive construction science department in the state." said Joe Horlen, assistant professor of construction science and co-principal investigator for the project, which was funded by a \$45.000 grant from the commission

The TRCC is a relatively new state agency created by the 78th A&M team examined existing guidelines, including those es-Legislature to provide a neutral dispute resolution process for tablished by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban De-Texas homeowners and the residential construction

industry. The commission also provide: ongoing education for homeowners and builders. House Bill 730, which established the commission, requires Texas homebuilders and remodelers to register with the state, mandates the registration of new homes and renovation projects exceeding

\$20,000, and provides for the adoption of limited war ranties to which the new performance standards will be applied.

The rules on warranties and building and performance standards will apply to home builders and remodelers who do interior renovations exceeding \$20,000 or that change the size of the home's living space and will be effective for construction that begins after June 1, 2005. The warranties will be one year for workmanship and materials; two years for plumbing, electrical, heating and air conditioning delivery systems and 10 years for major structural components of the home

"These landmark standards are key to the Texas Residential Construction Commission's goal for all home buyers in our state to be satisfied. confident homeowners," said Stephen Thomas, executive director of the commission. "Homeowners will know what performance to expect from their new home or remodeling project, while builders will be able to both assure and improve the quality of construc-

"These standards are also important." he continued, "because they will be applied by the Texas Residential Construction Commission when it considers disputes between the two parties under the new state-sponsored inspection and dispute resolution process."

In developing the standards, Horlen said the

The Texas Residential Construction Commission on Jan. 12 "I believe these standards will give homeown ers a sense of security, that their biggest lifetime investment is protected by regulations intended to address, if not preempt, problems sypically seen in residential construction."

- Debra Ellis, lecturer, co-principal investigator

velopment and the International Residential Code. They also analyzed complaints filed with the TRCC to identify areas

> "This has been a great opportunity for the Department of Construction Science to showcase its relevance, expertise and dedication to the construction industry," said, Debra Ellis, a department lecturer who served with Horlen as co-principal investigator on the A&M

standards will give homeowners a sense of security, that their biggest lifetime investment is protected

by regulations intended to address, if not preempt, problems typically seen in residential construction. Other construction science faculty playing an inte-

gral role in the standards project were John Bryant, who examined plumbing, heating, air conditioning and ventilation system requirements, and Skip Coody, who worked on structural components guidelines. One graduate and four undergraduate students also contributed to the project.

TRCC awarded the A&M team with a \$30,000 grant to develop a checklist and maintenance manual for homeowners that, Horlen said, will ultimately be assessable online through an interactive Web site.

> The A&M team has also submitted a proposal to the TRCC for developing certification procedures for the agency's continuing education and certification courses

"The relationship between the construction science department and the TRCC has been mutually beneficial and it appears that it will continue for some time," Horlen said. "The research we have performed is directly in line with the classes we teach and it complements my research agenda. At the same time, we are providing a valuable service to the state of Texas."

Vinod Srinivasan

Vinod Srinivasan, a specialist in 3-D Master of Science in Visualization topological modeling; visualization applications for architecture, engineering, and science; gaming simula tions; and educational software development. He holds a master of science in aerospace engineering from in aerospace engineering from the

that were not covered or in need of improvement. residential standards team. "I believe these

In addition to the residential standards initiative, the

More than symbol, it's an experience...



Bonfire Memorial designed to elicit viewer participation

The construction of the Aggie Bonfire along with the design team. Memorial was more than just the creation of an object — it was the creation of a shared experience, said Robert L. Shemwell '82, lead architect of the design team responsible for the memorial. "This is one of the very unique things about this memorial — it requires active participation. You inhabit it. It doesn't

become complete without you there," said Shemwell, a principal with the San Antonio-based Overland Partners Inc during a program, "The Story of the Bonfire Memorial," held at Rudder Auditorium the eve of the memorial's Nov. 18, 2004 dedication.

The multimedia presentation provided insight into the process of designing and building the memorial, including the evolution of the design concept, various unique design and construction innovations and the symbolic elements of the memorial.

Comprised of three main elements Fradition Plaza, History Walk and Spirit Ring — the Bonfire Memorial hon ors the lives and dedication of the 12 Aggies killed and the 27 injured in the tragic collapse of the 1999 Bonfire.

Shemwell said the project had three design objectives: commemoration of the tragedy, celebration of unity and reflection of the Bonfire history.

The memorial could not have reached its full potential without the participation of the families of the lost Aggies. the designer explained. The families, he continued, were the key to putting a lot allowing themselves to be vulnerable

Selected from nearly 200 entries in a year-long international competition coordinated by George Rogers and Chang-Shan Huang, members of the landscape architecture and urban planning faculty at Texas A&M's College of Architecture, the memorial design was the unanimous choice of a jury whose members included leading design professionals, family representatives and Texas A&M student, faculty and alumni esentatives

Some of the unique design challenges of constructing the memorial, Shemwell explained, was to develop a simplistic form of design that said what needed to be said and nothing more. The memorial also had to address two seemingly opposite scale issues. It had to be large enough not to be consumed by the vastness of the Polo Fields, where it stands, yet still remain approachable and encourage participation of its visitors, he added

"The memorial," he said, "requires visitors to invest themselves in it completely."

George Rogers, co-chairman of the Bonfire memorial committee, also spoke at the event, noting, "The Bonfire Memorial helps us understand how the darkest day in Aggie History has become one of our most extraordinary

"The Bonfire Memorial is a story of innovation and leadership, teamwork and commitment, dedication to excellence of power and authority in the design by and the Aggie community ... in short, it is like the Aggie Spirit itself."





nental design major Jam n Hand, and the other 11 Aggies who per hed in the Nov. 18, 1999 Bonfire collapse ar he portal walls of the new Bonfire Memor



ation, including details on the ov. 18. 2004 Bonfire Memorial dedication a inks to the Bonfire Memorial Web site can be nd in the online edition of archone. at

http://archone.tamu.edu

complete stories and more pictures online

arch**one.tamu.edu**



ditor's note: The articles and news

priefs about the Texas A&M College of

stories and photos available online at:

http://archone.tamu.edu

architecture appearing in this publi

cation are but a small sample of the

U.S. Surgeon General visits

'The Campus Remembered'

The recent historic documentation of the forme home of Sam Houston's widow, Margaret, earned second place honors in the 2004 Charles E. Peterson Prize competition. It was the 15th historical documentation by an A&M student to be honored in the competition which annually recognizes the best set of measured drawings prepared by students to Historic American Building Survey (HABS) standards.

'Legacy of a Seer'



Class Acts

— emergency medical facili- Who's doin' what? Catch up with your old College of Architecture classmates online by reading the Spring 2005 former student roundup.

essential function of space and structure in achieving greatness'

The U.S. Surgeon General

visited the Texas A&M cam-

amine architecture student

ies created by transforming

existing structures, such as

notels, convention centers

event of a disaster that over

whelms existing facilities.

or public schools, in the

designs for "Surge Hospitals"

ous last December to ex-

Noting that the buildings at Texas A&M University have shaped the institution's history and will shape its future Texas A&M President

Robert M. Gates formally accepted the designations of 16 buildings throughout campus that have been determined culturally and architecturally significant as part of "The Campus Remembered" project. The project is an effort by the College of Architecture's Historic Resources Imaging Laboratory to preserve and appreciate the physical history of the state's oldest public university.

College expands outreach initiatives

Architecture professor Guillermo Vasquez de Velasco, the Texas A&M College of Architecture's new associate dean for outreach, is working to expand international programs for students and faculty and to develop new continuing education and distance learning initiatives.







orchone.

Another Peterson Prize



Charles Gordone, the late playwright, A&M professor and proponent of racial unity, was honored at an October 2004 Stark Gallerv exhibit featuring 12 portraits by architecture professor Robert Schiff hauer and a sculpture by professor emeritus John Walker





Bonfire Memorial dedicated

With the sun breaking free from heavy, gray clouds shortly before the start of ceremonies, more than 0,000 Aggies and Texas A&M supporters joined ogether at the site of the tragic 1999 Bonfire colapse to mark the Nov. 18, 2004 dedication of the ewly constructed Aggie Bonfire Memorial, five years to the day of the accident in which 12 Aggies vere killed and 27 more injured

The construction of the Aggie Bonfire Memoria was more than just the creation of an object — it was the creation of a shared experience, said Rob ert L. Shemwell '82, lead architect of the memorial design team and principal with the San Antonio pased Overland Partners, Inc. "One of the very inique things about this memorial," he continued t requires active participation. You inhabit it. It doesn't become complete without you there." More details inside and online

SUSTAINING CHINA:

College forges partnership with **Tsinghua University**

More details inside and online.



COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE @ TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

"arch**one.**," a newsletter serving the College of Architecture at Texas A&M University, highlights news and feature stories posted in detail online at http://archone.tamu.edu.

Readers may sign-up online to receive regular story updates via e-mail. http://archweb.tamu.edu/College/ news/subscribe.htm

Address changes, photos, news and comments should be e-mailed to newsletter@archone.tamu.edu.

JPCOMING EVENTS:

- 2005 HRIL Symposium 6th Annual Historic Preservation Symposium set for Feb. 19, 2005
- Distinguished Lecture March 8, 2005 lecture to examine historic resource documentation
- 100 Years of Aggie architecture April 2nd Open House launches college's centennial celebration

Details online at http://archone.tamu.edu

'Architecture Ranch' takes shape



ns are quickly taking shape for the construction of a new \$850,000 ility at the "Architecture Ranch" — the College of Architecture's new 16re prototype research facility located at Texas A&M's Riverside Campu new, multiuse facility includes classroom and studio space, as well as high-tech wood/metal shop and a voluminous indoor-outdoor area to cilitate large-scale building projects

More details inside and online



Forster Ndubisi: new head of the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning.

Head Start

Interdisciplinary background guides Ndubisi's leadership of Department of Landscape Architecture & Urban Planning

t the end of his first semester as head of the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning at Texas A&M University, Forster Ndubisi (en·doo·bee·see) received two e-mails underscoring his primary reason for accepting the College of Architecture post last fall. Two graduate students from his department, the e-mails informed him, had recently earned highly competitive honors — one, a \$7,500 fellowship from the Hideo Sasaki Foundation, and the other, a \$20,000 dissertation grant from Active Living Research, a program sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

"Awards on this caliber reflect the guality of our faculty, as well as the guality of our students," noted Ndubisi, who previously served seven years as professor and director of the Interdisciplinary Design Institute at Washington State University - Spokane. "It takes good faculty to get these kinds of results, even if you have good students

According to Ndubisi, the Texas A&M College of Architecture boasts

reflect the complexity and depth of the built environment disciplines. As a result, he said, the college offers a rich. multifaceted environment, and his new department, with five degree programs serving four distinct disciplines landscape architecture, urban planning, land development, and urban and regional science — "is almost like a college by itself."

an extraordinary faculty who together

The department's programs, he said, "provide a good mix," complementing his background in ecology, planning, landscape architecture and interdisciplinary collaboration

Prior to his job at WSU-Spokane, for nine years Ndubisi had a joint appointment at the University of Georgia. He taught at the School of Environmental Design, where he was tenured in 1992; and he served as city and regional planner for the Institute of Community and Area Development where he conducted applied research and provided consultation services in design and growth management for Georgia communities

In 1982, Ndubisi earned a master's legree in landscape architecture fror niversity of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. He completed his doctoral studie n regional planning and resource de lopment in 1987 at the University of aterloo, also in Ontario.

With its academic diversity, A&M's landscape architecture and urban planning department also facilitates Ndubisi's desire to foster communi cation between design disciplines through collaborative projects and interdisciplinary teaching and research - a passion that has fueled his career.

"One person can no longer do everything," he said. "We have to acknowledge this and work collaboratively with others to solve problems the whole is created from smaller

A native of Nigeria, Ndubisi is the son of two schoolteachers who instilled in him a zeal for learning that baid off early on when he finished high chool at the age of 16. His father, who earned a doctorate in education from Columbia University, also served as hairman of the education commission or the state of Anambra, in Nigeria. adly, he died on the same day that Idubisi interviewed for the department head position at A&M.

Ndubisi first became interested in uman relationships with the built and natural environments as a young man, uring family trips to Europe.

"It occurred to me that there was a bstantial difference in the quality of ne built environment between Nige ria and England," he recalled. "In Lagos, there was environmental degradation, disorganization and inadequate infrastructure and land use policies basically, the carrying capacity of

ment was exceeded.

While completing his undergradue studies in ecology and zoology at ne University of Ibadan in Nigeria, he found a course catalogue outlining the naster's program in landscape architecture at Guelph University in Ontario.

"It mentioned the ability to cretively weave knowledge from the arts and sciences in addressing design and planning issues, and an intense desire to enhance the guality of people's lives in the built and natural environments," Ndubisi recalled. "The field seemed to cement all of the things that I wanted to do'

It was while studying at Guelph that Ndubisi observed a problem with cultural bias that ultimately laid the foundation for his graduate studies in culture-informed design and planning. "There are certain assumptions

about design principles that are, in reality, culturally dependent," he explained. "That was what got me interested in the link between culture and design, and the design and planning mplications of these differences."

Cultural bias was evident in a rural outreach project Ndubisi worked on while at Guelph for the Oiibwa Indians in Northern Ontario. The project involved the development of a new Ojibwa community. A firm from Toronto had drawn up what many considered a fabulous design, but the Ojibwa rejected the plan

"It was turned down, in part, be cause it violated many aspects of their way of life," he explained, "In a sub-

"One person can no longer do everything We have to acknowledge this and work collaboratively with others to solve problems — the whole is created from smaller parts."

division, you divide the lots and assign specific functions for each space. That violated the Ojibwa's sense of space. Traditionally, they were a hunting and trapping society used to expanses of space."

Working closely with the Ojibwa, Ndubisi developed a solution that ad dressed these cultural issues.

You have to embrace the culture and use it as a basis of design," he explained, "so that the place created is lodged in their sense of time and place."

The Ojibwa project formed the basis of Ndubisi's master's thesis, the first in landscape architecture to earn distinction at Guelph. It also earned a Merit Award from the American Society of Landscape Ai chitects. Additionally, Ndubisi's research in cross-cultural design established a participatory theme that would later inform Ndubisi's doctoral work and ultimately echo throughout his career in his research, teaching and management style.

His initial success with the Oiibwa precipitated a number of consulting jobs on culture-informed design projects throughout Ontario, which in turn helped fund his doctoral studies in planning at the University of Waterloo

As a doctoral student. Ndubisi's focus switched from design to cross-cultural planning. He theorized that there were differences and similarities of conseguence in the value orientation of American Indian communities, and those of the onsultants who worked with them.

Again, Ndubisi's dissertation, "Variations in Value Orientations: Implications for Guiding Community Decision Behavior in Cross-Cultural Settings," was the first doctoral work to earn distinction at Waterloo's School of Urban and Regional Plannin

After earning his doctorate Ndubisi accepted a dual appointment at the University of Georgia where, in the School of nvironmental Design, he taught courses in environmental analysis and led studios in urban design, planning, landscape architecture and community design. At the same time, he worked with the university's Institute of Community and Area Development (ICAD), a program that helps Georgia communities anticipate and plan for growth.

"The position offered everything I was looking for," he said, "an opportunity to teach, research and consult."

During his nine years as city and regional planner for the institute, Ndubisi participated with his students on a number of projects significant to Georgia communities. His growing interest in participatory planning and multidisciplinary problem solving led him in 1997 to accept the directorship of the newly established Interdisciplinary Design Institute at Washington State University - Spokane.

The institute was created to foster collaborative learning, research and community service projects involving the four built environment disciplines taught at

Washington State — architecture, interior to the topics of land use planning and design, landscape architecture, and construction management.

"The four programs were located in three departments on two campuses." Ndubisi said, illustrating the challenges he faced in building an interdisciplinary culture at the new institute. "I had to find a dynamic balance between disciplinary and interdisciplinary orientations. Even though I had the authority to allocate esources, academic authority was lodged in the academic departments at the Pullman campus. To be effective. I had to be a facilitator. It was an ongoing. evolving process."

As the institute's first director. Ndubisi emphasized the examination of realworld problems within an interdisciplin ary context, creative achievement by faculty and students and service to the arger community.

"Real life projects, as opposed to abstract projects, provide the best opportunity for a pedagogical approach to nterdisciplinary design, interaction and learning. Additionally," he said, "they tend to attract a great deal of media attention which enhances the visibility of the pro-

Under Ndubisi's direction, the design institute grew from six to 18 full-time and eight adjunct faculty and its program offerings expanded to include four new graduate degrees: a master of science in andscape architecture, a master of arts in interior design, a master of science in architecture with options in design theory and design-build, and a doctorate of design, which was the second such degree in the nation. The institute also established an articulated bachelor'smaster's degree in interior design and dual degree program guidelines for the design disciplines.

Throughout his career, Ndubisi expanded his involvement in a number of organizations. He served as president of the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture, a position encompassing a three-year term as vice president, president and past president. He also served on the Landscape Architecture Accrediting Board and the Council of Landscape Architecture Registration Board. Additionally, he served on the Landscape

"I am very excited about the opportunity we have to build on the department's diversity strength and quality...I want to maximize our competitiveness and position us as ustained leaders in all of our programs.

Architecture Foundation Board and the American Society of Landscape Architects, where he has served on numerous upport committees His energy level is evidenced in his pro-

lific scholarly output. In addition to numerous articles, papers and book chapters, Ndubisi has authored or co-authored three books. His latest, and perhaps most important book, "Ecological Planning: A Historical and Comparative Account published in 2002 by Johns Hopkins Uni versity Press, has been widely acclaimed for its refreshing and innovative approach landscape architecture. Ndubisi's work on ecological planning earned the only Honor Award in Research presented in 1999 by the American Society of Landscape Architects. In 2003, his book earned the Certificate of Merit Award from the ASLA's Vashington Chapter.

"The author's goals are on target, for no other book sets the ideas of landscape planning into a set of developing concepts within a historical context; writes Sally Schauman of Duke University in her review of Ndubisi's book. "There are few books on landscape planning in general and none to my knowledge that attempt both a complete overview and a comparative analysis. Ndubisi's approach is sound in every way. This book is long overdue"

Ndubisi's highly acclaimed book, combined with his stellar career and high visibility in a variety of professional organizations has made him a much sought after faculty member. When he accepted the department head position at Texas A&M last summer, he was a semi-finalist for three different dean-level posts.

The A&M position was especially ap pealing, Ndubisi said, because of the university's national reputation as a major research institute. Additionally, the A&M job put him at the helm of an urban planning program, a discipline that was missing from the line-up at the Interdisciplinary Design Institute His first semester as head of the De-

and long-term plans.

On the marker board in his office, is a diagram with three overlapping circles representing the disciplines comprising his department. The space where the circles intersect, he said, represent areas of commonality between the disciplines. This, he said, is the area that he hopes to expand "I am very excited, Ndubisi added

"about the opportunity we have to build on the department's diversity, and the strength and guality of our faculty and students. I want to maximize our competitiveness and position us as sustained leaders in all of our programs."

Sustaining China

partment of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning has been a busy one, focused primarily on developing short-

Texas A&M College of Architecture collaborating with China's Tsinghua University to promote healthy cities

he faculty at Texas A&M's College of Architecture have a great deal in common with their academic counterparts at Tsinghua University in Beijing, China — especially their desire to positively transform beleaguered urban environments, and to design and construct modern, healthy cities with promising, sustainable futures.

two institutions recently entered into a collaborative agreement aimed at advancing mutually beneficial educational and research initiatives in the areas of sustainability and health-care architec-

"With one quarter of the world's pop lation and the fastest growing economy in the history of the world, China is facing unprecedented conditions and challenges," said J. Thomas Regan, dean of the College of Architecture. His comments, simulcast in both English and Chinese, were delivered last summer in you undertake, with imagination and Beijing, at a conference on healthy cities commitment, the formidable task of

Building on this common ground, the of Architecture and the Architecture Design & Research Institute of Tsinghua

"Because the world has become totally interdependent, China's chal lenges become challenges for the rest of us." Regan continued in his opening remarks at the event which was attended by Chinese government leaders design professionals and faculty from Tsinghua and Texas A&M universities. "We welcome the opportunity to share our knowledge with you and to begin a dialogue and working relationship as co-sponsored by the Texas A&M College transforming your cities from their his-

3

The Oriental Pearl Tower in Pudong Park as seen from the Huangpu River in Lujiazui, Shanghai.

toric nobility into modern healthy communities."

Joining Regan at the Beijing event, and a related tour of Chinese cities that included Shenzhen and Shanghai, was a delegation of College of Architecture faculty who also presented at the conference

The gathering, originally slated for the previous summer, was postponed by a nationwide outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS. According to the conference organizer, Chang-Shan Huang, associate professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning at Texas A&M, the epidemic, while unfortunate,



The Auditorium. located at the heart of the oldest area of Tsinghua University's Beijing campus and com pleted in 1920, is patterned after the University of Virginia's Rotunda, designed by Thomas Jefferson.

went far to raise awareness of the impor- tracted a record number of Chinese tance of many of the topics, like healthcare architecture, that were eventually ored at last summer's conference

The event also attracted a great deal of attention from the Chinese news media which reported on the proceedings in newspapers and on television news casts. Additionally, details of the conference were featured in a special edition of the Chinese magazine, Healthy Communities, the third co-sponsor of the event.

"The faculty presentations were very well received," said Huang, "The conference," he added, "was the largest ever sored by Tsinghua's Architecture Design & Research Institute and it atgovernment officials, including the vice minister of construction and many of his associates.

The Healthy Cities in China Con ference was the first of many such exchanges called for in the new collaborative agreement between the two universities. Other areas of cooperation include a faculty exchange program, ioint research and publication initiatives, and design team partnerships on projects maximizing the strengths of both institutions. The agreement specifically outlines five areas for collaboration: evidenced-based design methodology. landscape architecture, the planning

ARCHITECTURE RANCH Prototype research facility to help Aggies invent the future

construction of a new \$850,000 facility at the "Architecture Ranch" — the Colege of Architecture's new 16-acre prootype research facility located at Texas A&M's Riverside Campus.

Preliminary designs for the new puilding, drawn by architecture profes or Taeg Nishimoto and based on input rom college faculty, call for a multius structure incorporating classroom and tudio facilities, as well as high-tech wood and metal shops and a voluminous indoor-outdoor area that can acilitate large-scale building projects The building will be situated on the outheast corner of the site.

The college plans to use the ranch as a testing ground for college research nitiatives and to support student proiects in construction, design, planning, andscape architecture and art. The

Plans are quickly taking shape for the proposed facility and its potential for advancing knowledge have generated a great deal of enthusiasm throughout the college, says Tom Regan, dean of the College of Architecture, and one of the project's chief proponents.

"For many years, faculty in A&M's College of Agriculture have developed new strategies in their research laboratories ing plants and animals, and then tested these new ideas on experi mental farms," Regan said.

"Likewise, in our research studios and laboratories, College of Architecture faculty are developing advanced strate gies for design, construction, and build ing-use. Now our new Built-Environment Research Facility — also known as the Architecture Ranch — will give our faculty and students, in collab with the professions and industries, the

imental prototypes and to test emerging concepts," Regan continued, "This new facility will significantly advance our planning, design, and construction research, and it will encourage research and teaching opportunities for our faculty and students that few colleges of architecture eniov.

In Nishimoto's preliminary design, the ranch's metal-fabricated building is articulated into two parts, separated by a 6.000-square-foot grass-covered courtyard. The smaller 3,000-square-foot section, housing classrooms and offices, will be located north of the courtyard The larger structure, tentatively sized at 10,000 square feet and located south of the courtvard will accommodate the wood and metal shops, an open construction area and a second-floo mezzanine, all liberally bathed in natuopportunity to construct full-size exper- ral light from a row of north-facing win- ing at the south end where the louvers



This aerial view of the college's 16-acre site at Texas A&M's Riverside Campus shows the footprint, on the bottom, right, of the proposed multiuse facility. The treelined rder of the existing baseball diamond i also clearly visible on the left.

dows and sky lights.

The roof extends from the high south side of the shop, providing an additional 6.000 square feet of outdoor covered workspace that is further shaded from direct sunlight by a series of louvers that run laterally across the top half of the south side. Two large roll-up doors con nect the covered outdoor area to the indoor workspace, and a third bay door opens to the west

The building's roof slopes gradually upward from north to south, culminatare located. On the western side, a overed walkway bridges the courtyard, ing the classroom and workshop to

The design incorporates concepts developed last year at a daylong faculty charrette examining potential uses for the Riverside Campus site. The three charrette teams agreed that the initial tructure should facilitate mixed use allow for future development and estab lish an iconic quality through a strong isual identity. The charrette also iden d a need for a meaningful outdoordoor relationship

"The idea for the design came from a collective sense of making the building ustainable," Nishimoto explained. "Fron that came the building's north-south orientation, the big covered area on the south side, the use of northern light, and the use of different volumes for workshop and class space."

The design process also embraced the charrette teams' desire to use the ranch for activities not readily facilitated at the Langford Architecture Center on main campus. For instance, the building pro vides wide open covered space that can facilitate a variety of activities, such as construction projects, that wouldn't b possible on the main campus.

"Visitors approaching the building from the Riverside Campus' main en trance will see students working, build

and design of healthy cities and comties, health-care architecture and ritical regionalism in architecture and indscape architecture.

According to the U.S. Central Intelnce Agency's World Fact Book Web ite, the economic output of China has more than guadrupled since economic eforms were initiated in 1978 by former of current concern to China," said the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping. "Meaed on a purchasing power parity basis," the Web site says, "China in 2003 stood as the second-largest economy in the world after the United States."

This unprecedented growth has not been without consequence. At an in ternational conference examining U.S. China relations held last year at Texas A&M University, a roundtable discussion sustainable community planning, esign and construction identified chal lenges facing China in these fields. It was this conversation that identified potential areas for collaboration that were later adopted in the agreement between the College of Architecture at Texas A&M and the Architecture Design & Research

Institute at Tsinghua University. According to a white paper summa rizing the roundtable discussion, "the pressures inherent in accommodating such rapid urbanization raise concerns over [China's] long-term sustainability and pose substantial challenges in infrastructure and transportation planning affordable housing, engineering and construction standards and manage ment, appropriate community design

and social and economic equity issues As Regan reported in his opening ments in Beijing, the College of Architecture at Texas A&M is uniquely suited to tackle many of these pressing

"We are able to research and analyze the impact and future of growth in key areas, such as popula tion growth, increased urbanization, industrialization and balanced economic growth, quality of life, and environmental challenges — all areas dean

In orchestrating the healthy cities conference, Huang called upon faculty whose research reflected the broad range of topics related to sustainable urbanization and health-care architecture

- George Mann, the Ronald L. Skaggs professor of Health Facilities Design, discussed the architecture-fo health program at the College of Architecture, one of the top two programs of its kind in the United
- Don Sweeny, associate professo in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning made a presentation on the history and concepts of healthy city/healthy communities movements in North American and Europe;
- Roger Ulrich, professor of architec ture, presented in a pre-recorded video his research on the health impacts of urban nature;
- Ron Skaggs, an adjunct professor of architecture and CEO of HKS, one of the leading design and constructio firms in the United States, discussed current trends in and the future of health-care facility design in the United States:
- Chang-Shan Huang's presentation focused on the evidence-based de-



Members of the College of Architecture delegation who traveled to China last summer — Lillian Woo, Dean Thomas Regan and professors George Mann, Ronald Skaggs and Chang-Shan Huang — examine architectural models of a residential development in Shenzhen, China.

sign approach to healthy communities, using recent projects in the U.S. and China as examples

- Atef Sharkawy, a professor and coordinator of the of the Master of Science in Land Development program in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning, presented case studies demonstra ing the economic rewards inherent in designing and building healthy
- Jody Naderi, an assistant professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning, showed how well designed pedes trian environments can enhance

- spiritual and mental health; and George Rogers, a professor in the
- Department of Landscape Archited ture and Urban Planning, discussed sustainable decision processes related to planning healthy com munitie

At the conclusion of the Beijing onference, the A&M delegation agreed that continued Sino-U.S ollaboration in the areas of sustai able community planning, design, and construction promises to be efit both countries by enhancing academic research and education and better informing governmental policy-making

ing and constructing," he said. "The covered area showcases student activities and what we're about."

Adding to the structure's iconic char acter is a fence that runs parallel along the eastern side of the structure. The fence, Nishimoto said, gives the building a ranch-like look and feel, while separ ing the courtyard from the road.

'The louvers and fence are the ele ments that make the building unique Nishimoto said.

The grass-covered courtyard nestled between the two sections, will be oper to the west and fenced on the east. It separates the "clean" space that includes classrooms, labs and studios, from the "dirty" space that includes the shops and construction bays.

"The courtvard is an area for stu dents and faculty to come together to collaborate on designs and proj ects and criticize each other's work, Nishimoto explained. "Students wil literally be sweating away together out there and their collaborations, in this case, will be rewarded with a tar gible product."

Nishimoto stressed that his design is still in the preliminary stages and thus subiect to the modifications and budget constraints usually er countered in the building process. A design-build contract will be negotiated through Texas A&M's Physical Plant Department, and Nishimoto will serve as the college's repre on the project.

"This facility will significantly advance our" research and encourage opportunities that few colleges of architecture enjoy."

facilitat

— J. Thomas Regan, dean

"The ranch concept is really guite extraordinary," Nishimoto said. "Many architecture schools have embraced the transition to a virtual world where, with the latest digital technology, almost anything can be visualized. Our ranch will expand this ppment into the tangible realm allowing us the ability to actually construct and test many of these ideas. Because of the College of Architecture's unique composition, with programs in architecture, planning landscape architecture and constru tion science, it is uniquely suited for the sort of multidisciplinary collabo ration that the ranch is designed to

