Learning and Teaching Investment Fund 2011

Final Project Report

Submission date: 17 February 2012

Title of project: The Project Office

Strategic objective(s) addressed:

The Project Office is an innovative learning and teaching development, incorporating community and industry partnership. Located within the University in an ‘office’ or practice based spatial and organizational setting, the Project Office has operated as an entity through which ‘real live’ projects in architecture, design and construction are delivered collaboratively by staff and students as a learning and teaching practice in partnership with external agencies, government and industry. A situated or experiential mode of learning is ideal for built environment vocational and professional disciplines because students benefit from a practitioner and industry context, complemented by university models of integrated scholarship where teaching, practice and research exist simultaneously.

Please refer to attached document for the full report with illustrations.

Project leaders: Melanie Dodd, Leanne Zilka, Gretchen Wilkins, John Cherrey

Contact details:
Mel Dodd: melanie.dodd@rmit.edu.au
Leanne Zilka: Leanne.zilka@rmit.edu.au
Gretchen Wilkins: Gretchen.wilkins@rmit.edu.au
John Cherrey: john.cherrey@rmit.edu.au

Project team members:
- Mel Dodd
- Leanne Zilka
- Gretchen Wilkins
- John Cherrey
- Tarryn Boden
- Susan Massey
1. Executive summary (up to half a page) –

- Provide a summary that describes the project and what was achieved.

This will appear on the RMIT website and the full final report will be linked to the summary.

The Project Office is an innovative learning and teaching development, incorporating community and industry partnership. Located within the University in an ‘office’ or practice based spatial and organizational setting, the Project Office has operated as an entity through which ‘real live’ projects in architecture, design and construction are delivered collaboratively by staff and students as a learning and teaching practice in partnership with external agencies, government and industry. The Project Office proposal has aimed to fundamentally expand work-integrated learning beyond the ‘placement’ model, toward a ‘partnership’ model with industry that extends the capacity of discovery and innovation in learning in a core industry sector related to RMIT University’s Strategic Plan.

The Project Office has been spatially and organizationally sited in Architecture and Design (Building 88 Project Space) and has provided a design office environment of: an office administrator; four work stations; drawing and modelling layout spaces; printing facilities located within the industrial design offices, direct product and material library resources and a client meeting space. As the team includes the School of Architecture and Design library and technical learning and teaching staff, there has been a close and facilitated relationship with the digital fabrication workshop and a fabrication-cutting machine has been located within the project space for use by the students. The Project Office has facilitated a new type of learning and teaching experience where students have undertaken key design studio syllabus through the mechanism of real projects facilitated by the project team in conjunction with the office administrator. These projects have been partnerships with community and industry, and have involved the production of specific tasks and outcomes including: feasibility and research reports with stakeholders and partners, design and materiality testing and trials, manufacturing of prototypes and installation testing. Such partnerships formed have included Vic Urban, City of Greater Dandenong, Capral Aluminium, Dunlop Foams, Austral Plywood, Jamco Sign Services, Monash University, Port Phillip City Council, Lifeskills Victoria, Department of Treasury and Finance, Sustainability Victoria, Antarctica, Centre for Design, and Mornington Shire Council.

2. A list of outcomes

- Provide a brief overview of the project’s outcomes and impact.

List any scholarly output in the form of conference presentations or journal papers.

This will appear on the RMIT website.

Project Office achieved the following project outcomes for 2011. These are detailed and showcased further in the Appendix Book, which is also submitted.

- **King Creek Reserve Project** - Curacoa Drive Entry, Melanie Dodd
- **Tree Sprawl** Exhibition and Publication, Mauro Baracco
- **Urban Bye-Pass** Design Studio, Leanne Zilka, School of Applied Science, Port Phillip City Council
- **Urban Bye-Pass Exhibition**, Port Phillip City Library
- Projects Entry into the **Urban Realities Landscape Urbanism 3 Day Design Challenge**, Susan Massey and Project Office members
- **Work Where I Live** Research Project, Graham Crist, Simon Whibley, Department of Treasury and Finance, Sustainability Victoria, Antarctica, Centre for Design Collaboration: Work Where I Live Symposium with international speakers, Graham Crist, Simon Whibley, Department of
Treasury and Finance

- **Life Skills** Design Elective, Graham Crist and Life Skills at La Trobe University
- Annette LeCuyer and Brian Carter, *Perfect Skin Blemishes and Tattoos* Public Lecture
- **Open Dandenong** Exhibition, Melanie Dodd, Tarryn Boden, Monash University, Vic Urban and City of Greater Dandenong
- **Pop-Up Street** Design Studio, Melanie Dodd and Tarryn Boden, Vic Urban, City of Greater Dandenong, Monash University
- **Three Little Pigs** Design Studio, Gretchen Wilkins, Leanne Zilka, John Cherrey, Capral Aluminium, Dunlop Foams, Austral Plywood, Jamco Sign Services, Laminex
- **Future Proofing Schools** Design Ideas Competition Entry, Gretchen Wilkins, Leanne Zilka, John Cherrey, Tarryn Boden

3. **Project outcomes and impacts**

- List and discuss the outcomes the project was designed to achieve and the outcomes the project has achieved, including any literature review and evidence of the impact the project has had on students.

The Project Office has facilitated a new type of learning and teaching experience through the formation of Government and Industry Partnerships that have run alongside every design studio/elective. The outcomes of these partnerships have allowed the students to produce a design outcome for a real life project. Government/Agency Partnerships formed:

- Department of Treasury and Finance,
- Sustainability Victoria,
- Centre for Design
- Vic Urban,
- City of Greater Dandenong,
- Monash University
- Life Skills Victoria
- Mornington City Council
- Antarctica Pty Ltd,

Industry/Manufacturers Partnerships formed:

- Capral Aluminium,
- Dunlop Foams,
- Austral Plywood,
- Jamco Sign Services,
- Laminex
- Port Phillip City Council,
- School of Applied Science

As the report states in the student evaluations, the impact that these partnerships have had on the students has been their relationship with a real site, real material constraints, a real budget, and a deadline for a live event. When asked if the ‘community and or industry related learning experience had improved their learning capacity and the quality of the outcomes of their work’, 69% of students surveyed agreed with this statement. Additional comments stated that the integration with the local community was ‘a valuable way to generate a design.’ The ‘exposure to fabrication methods and practice methods’ was also seen to have an integral part to the students learning and therefore improved the way they would design in future studios or in practice. Additionally when asked if there had been a value to the framework of the studio...
sites having an actual site, place and partners, 84% of students surveyed strongly agreed with this statement. The ‘direct engagement with the reality’ and ‘logic’ to the studios was seen to be very successful. In addition to this booklet, evidence of these outcomes can be seen on the Project Office website (www.theprojectoffice.com.au). This website was produced as part of the initial application grant and has been regularly updated with new content.

- Describe briefly any issues that may have prevented you achieving all the original outcomes stated in the application.

Issues that prevented Project Office from achieving the original outcomes would have to revolve around the use of the designated ‘office’ space in Building 88. The outcomes initially stated for 10 workstations, printing facilities and meeting room, however as these items were being funded by the School of Architecture and Design, this ended with 4 workstations and a meeting facility located within the assigned project space within Building 88. The students did not fully utilize this space as the 4 workstations were not installed until the beginning of semester 2. Although there were regular visits by students throughout this semester, the poor ventilation and temperature of the room did not prove to be a positive space for students to spend extended amounts of time in. The space was utilized by the Project Manager who has based her working environment at one of these new computers.

- Describe any disciplinary and interdisciplinary linkages that have emerged as a result of the project.

As a result of the Project Office LTIF grant, linkages have emerged with various government and industry partnerships. One such partnership formed by Melanie Dodd and Tarryn Boden has been with the City of Greater Dandenong Place Manager, Jenny Pemberton Webb. The proposed project is still in the development stage but the site is a laneway in Dandenong, and Council will provide $15,000 for implementation by Project Office in 2012. Again, this proposed studio will involve regular community consultation and engagement by the students. This will function as a design studio for Mater of Architecture students in Semester 1, 2012. Following the success of the One Two One and Three Little Pigs Design Studio, the fabrication design studios will continue to function as design studios in 2012. It was due to this success and exhibited furniture from the One Two One studio that allowed Gretchen Wilkins, Leanne Zilka and John Cherrey to produce the ‘Scripted’ paper as part of the 2011 Acadia Conference in Candara. Leanne Zilka has maintained close partnerships with Prof. David Mainwaring from the School of Applied Science (RMIT) and further development of the phosphorescent material as used in the Urban Bye-Pass design studio is currently underway.

4. Dissemination strategies and outputs

- List materials or outcomes that will be made available to the university or groups of stakeholders within the university or sector and provide information about where any project material is available

This publication will be made available to the university. All information contained within this booklet can be found at the Project Office website. For more information on these projects, please go to: www.theprojectoffice.com.au. Final booklets of all design studios produced within the Project Office can be found at the RMIT Architecture website. For more information of this website please go to: www.architecture.rmit.edu.au. Although it was stated that the exhibition would be produced for the end of 2011, this has now been pushed back to the beginning of 2012. The exhibition will expand upon the images produced in this booklet and website, and will also show what is planned for 2012.
• Describe the ways in which the project’s outcomes have been or will be shared across the university, the sector and/or nationally and internationally. For guidance refer to the ALTC Dissemination Framework (url: http://www.altc.edu.au/print/resource%20dissemination%20framework%20altc%202008 )

The project has been shared at the School level through the integration of other projects, students and staff into the Project during the course of the year. Refer to the list of staff and projects above. In addition we have shared the Document Report (attached) with both School Senior Management, and College (Colin Fudge) with a view to discussions on the further elaboration and implementation of the model as a way of developing the Urban Masters Suite – this a suite of Masters Programs in the College of Design and Social Context which directly responds to the VC Strategic Plan for an ‘urban’ focus. The Project Office offers a supportive framework and pedagogic mechanism for setting integrated project teaching with external partners.

Finally Melanie Dodd is an Invited Keynote to the ‘Live Project’ Symposium in May 2012. This is an International Forum for discussing Live Projects in Architectural Education with the intention to create a pedagogic framework. It will take place Thursday 24th - Saturday 26th May 2012 at Oxford Brookes University, Headington Hill Campus. It will be a three-day international symposium by and for live project educators, live-project community participants, live project students, practice architects involved in community co-design, University management involved in community partnership projects, and live project practitioners and participants from associated fields and disciplines. This will disseminate the Project Office outcomes at RMIT to a wide audience internationally.

5. Evaluation of project outcomes

• Provide evaluation outcomes including evidence of the impact of the project and the value it will bring to the university and/or the sector. For guidance refer to the ALTC Evaluation Framework (url: http://www.altc.edu.au/extras/altc-gsep/index.html )

Evaluation outcomes and evidence of the projects achieved for 2011 have been con on a number of levels.

In the Appendix Booklet Part 6 Page 83 there is a summary and analysis of student survey evaluations. These were substantially undertaken through the use of a special survey devised for each class of students undertaking a Project Office design studio. Overall these results reveal that students felt this type of learning was ‘very valuable’ (84%), applicable and appropriate to the real world (100%) and improved their ability to design and operate within the constraints of real work integrated situations (84%). In general most feedback from students was highly positive. A total of 45 students participated in the main projects devised for the LTIF Grant Proposal (Pop_Up Street; Three Little Pigs; Urban Bye Pass) and these were undertaken through the core 24 Credit Point Architecture Design Courses ARCH1330 / ARCH 1333 / ARCH1335 which are part of the Masters of Architecture Program (MC163). However as a result of the extra projects undertaken, the total number of students has probably increased to approximately 60.

The value that these projects will bring the university can be best represented through a summary of the projects, and illustrations, as contained in the Booklet. For example ‘Urban Bye-Pass’ (Semester 1 Design Studio) run by Leanne Zilka and partnered with Port Phillip City Council and RMIT School of Applied Science allowed for one student to further develop their proposal with the council. This outcome shows the impact of teaching, practice and research existing simultaneously. Similarly the Three Little Pigs Design Studio, which was partnered with Capral Aluminium, Dunlop Foams, Jamco Sign Services and Austral Plywood,
has formed strong links between the industry and the university, and this will further be explored in 2012 through design studios that are in the process of planning. It should also be noted that all material was sponsored by these companies and were happy to donate materials for the students to test their fabrication skills with. The value of community and government partnerships has been displayed through the design studio Pop-Up Street. This studio was partnered with Monash University, Vic Urban and City of Greater Dandenong. A continuing partnership has been formed with the City of Greater Dandenong Place Manager, Jenny Pemberton Webb, and a design studio is planned for Semester 1, 2012. In addition to a future studio currently in development, students who participated in Pop-Up Street formed their own partnership with ‘Cornerstone’, a drop in facility in the Centre of Dandenong. Students produced temporary food and seating facilities and worked directly with the clients and volunteers at this centre in order to produce a successful design.

The team run by Project Office in the Urban Realities Landscape Urbanism 3 Design Challenge produced a final design outcome that has been featured in design websites internationally and were fortunate enough to have their design featured on the front cover of Landscape Architecture Australia. This has given further exposure to the event and even further exposure to the success of Project Office’s entry into the competition.

The value of overall situated learning in terms of students’ self-evaluated knowledge and understanding through student feedback systems (CES and specially designed survey) has been implemented and the results from this survey are shown in the back of this booklet. As mentioned previously, although the exhibition was planned for the end of 2011, this has now been extended to the beginning of 2012 and will show new projects and the outcomes produced from 2011.

6. Budget report

- What was the amount of funds approved? $63,020.45
- What was the final amount of funds acquitted? $62,986.11
- Please attach a financial statement. Attached in Book

All financial claims related to your project must be processed against your internal order number before the end of 2011. Claims cannot be accepted in the New Year 2012. Unexpended funds will be retained by the university and unclaimed costs will be borne by your School/College.

A financial statement (in PDF), signed by the team leader and relevant Finance Manager of acquittal of funds must be attached to the report. It should include a statement of income and expenditure against the budget categories specified in the approved project proposal. Please consult your Finance Manager for further information.

7. Appendices

- Include any material that may support your claims of outcomes and impact.
- Attach pictures, presentation material, website links and so on that may be important. In particular, please provide an image that can be used for publications, such as a poster.

Submitting the Final LTIF Project Report

- Please follow the headings listed above.
- Please save the report in Microsoft Word using the following formula: team leader’s surname_College_LTIF2011_finreport.doc (e.g. brown_DSC_LTIF2011_finreport.doc).
- Please include a Table of Contents.
- Please sign the final signature page.
• Submit the final report by close of business, Friday, 17 February 2012 to diana.cousens@rmit.edu.au

Further information
Diana Cousens
Senior Advisor, Awards and Grants
RMIT University
Telephone: 9925 0895
Email: diana.cousens@rmit.edu.au