

AIGA DESIGN EDUCATORS COMMUNITY

educators.aiga.org

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Julie Spivey, CO-CHAIR

Annabelle Gould, SECRETARY

Troy Abel

Frank Armstrong

Eric Benson

Amy Fidler

Kenneth FitzGerald

Michael Gibson

Lara McCormick

Karen Zimmerman

INITIATIVE FUNDING & DISCRETIONARY BUDGET FOR THE DESIGN EDUCATORS COMMUNITY

AIGA National Board,

For young graphic design students, the years spent in a classroom differ from their early years in a design studio—and that's a good thing. Graphic Design educators craft student experiences that encourage both experimentation and reflection—both inside and outside the constraints of commerce. The purpose of a design classroom is not to mimic the work environment—an old-fashioned apprenticeship would better serve this purpose. Instead educators use this space to teach design skills and methods to students while simultaneously empowering these students to critically engage with larger cultural issues—sustainability, ethics, social justice, etc. Set apart from the pressing deadlines and budget constraints of a typical design job, students and educators contribute to a greater body of theoretical knowledge and vision. This new knowledge then feeds back into commercial practice, slowly redefining the profession as each new group of graduates goes out into the world.

With this understanding of design education in mind, we have enclosed our 2014 AIGA Design Educator proposals for initiative support and general funding. These proposals provide various opportunities to reach and support the endeavors of design educators. AIGA lies at the intersection of the professional and educational contingents of the design community. We are eager to collaborate with you to define how these groups (which already have many members in common) may inform and assist each other.

Proposed initiatives are as follows:

- 1. A Peer-reviewed AIGA Design Education journal.** This journal would publish papers produced at design educator conferences in addition to other juried submissions. Such a scholarly journal will build educator recognition of the AIGA, increase educator membership, and will provide a valuable resource to educators as well as practitioners.
- 2. Design Projects Repository Initiative.** This initiative is an on-line resource for design educators to share assignments and project documentation including learning goals, schedule/deliverables, outcomes (a gallery of final work) and reflections.
- 3. Design Education Community Promotional Materials.** These materials would be distributed at conferences and other events, in addition to a yearly mailing, to raise awareness of the DEC among design educators.
- 4. Funding for Conference Video Archives** to support video documentation of AIGA Design Educator conferences.
- 5. General Requests to Increase Educator Outreach:**
 - A consistent connection between the DEC and the National Board
 - A sponsorship packet specifically focused on the Design Education Community
 - Educator presence in all AIGA national level programming
 - A discretionary budget beyond sponsorship

To find out more about the Design Educators Community, visit our website at educators.aiga.org

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE DESIGN EDUCATORS COMMUNITY

The DEC’s mission is to provide a representative body from diverse institutions that can support designer/educators and design education initiatives within the AIGA. We were founded by AIGA in 2004 to support the unique activities and responsibilities of design educators at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels in a wide variety of institutional settings.

AIGA’S FUTURE EDUCATIONAL VISION

The DEC looks forward to collaborating to develop AIGA’s educational vision and simultaneously, supporting the needs of designer/educators. Educators and students make up a large percentage of AIGA membership. Many students/emerging designer members become professional/sustaining AIGA members because faculty take the initiative to establish and support student chapters. If faculty no longer encourage AIGA membership and student chapters at their institutions, this vast pool of future professional members goes away. Educators must continue to see the value of AIGA both to themselves and their students to continue volunteering their time in this manner. Current DEC initiatives like AIGA Design Educators conferences and the AIGA Design Research Faculty Grant provide crucial support to this community. The initiatives detailed in this package reinforce and expand these existing bridges between education and practice. Supporting these initiatives would communicate the importance of design education to the AIGA members, thereby strengthening the relationship of educators to the AIGA .

In conclusion, we are a representative body that is eager to advocate for AIGA within the student/educator community, but we need some financial and administrative support to do so. AIGA created our group for this purpose. We simply ask for the resources necessary to achieve that purpose.

Sincerely,

The DEC Steering Committee

**1100+ AIGA MEMBERS
CHOSE EDUCATOR
AS THEIR PRIMARY
ATTRIBUTE.**

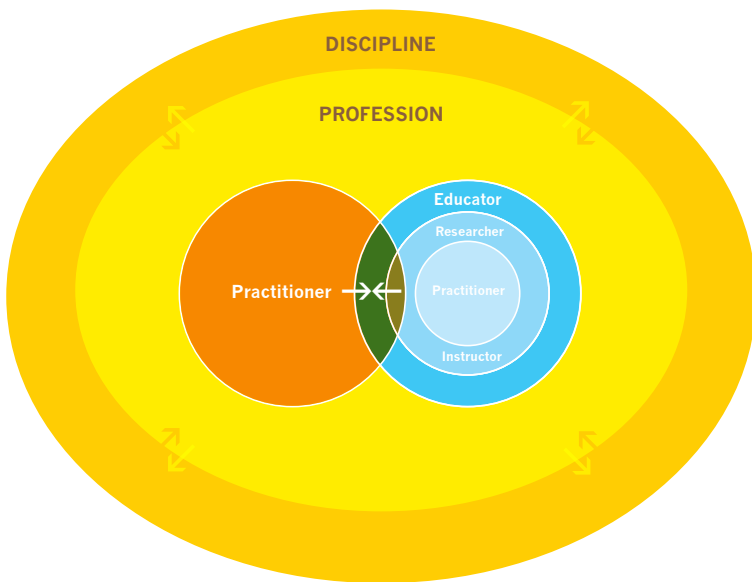
(Note that more than 25% of members chose no attribute.)

**STUDENT MEMBERS
MAKE UP THE
MAJORITY OF
MEMBERSHIP FOR
MANY CHAPTERS.**

There is no data available for member secondary attributes which would likely include the many full-time practitioner/part-time educators who make up a significant portion of the design teaching ranks, especially on urban campuses.

The Atlanta chapter has 50% more student members than professionals, and its **educator** members are the direct connection to those student members who make up more than half of the chapter membership.

[GRAPHIC DESIGN]



Dialogue and Dialectic: A Journal for the Design Community

We propose launching a peer-reviewed journal supported by AIGA that reflects and embodies the DEC's mission.

Current Design Educator Community Conferences produce a rich resource of papers for possible publication. In the past, the best of these papers have been published in special editions of existing design journals (including those published by other design organizations like Icoграда) or only published as part of the host institution's online conference archives.

This journal, *Dialectic*, will serve as a visually engaging forum for the dissemination of knowledge that explores and critically examines a broad spectrum of research efforts undertaken by designers and design educators (often one and the same). A companion online forum, *Dialog*, will receive regular essays, interviews, and case studies from the design educator community for publication.

The current array of journals about graphic design—in print and online—that facilitate the delivery of rigorously vetted knowledge on design research, criticism, history and practice are well-known and respected, but are relatively few (compared to those that exist to support other disciplines), and are not widely read by educators or practitioners in the U.S. The insights offered by the likes of *Visible Language*, *Design Issues*, *Design Studies*, *The International Journal of Design*, *Design and Culture*, *Information Design Journal*, *Iridescent* and *Design Research Quarterly* do not tend to be highly valued by those engaged in practice.

FROM AIGA.ORG:

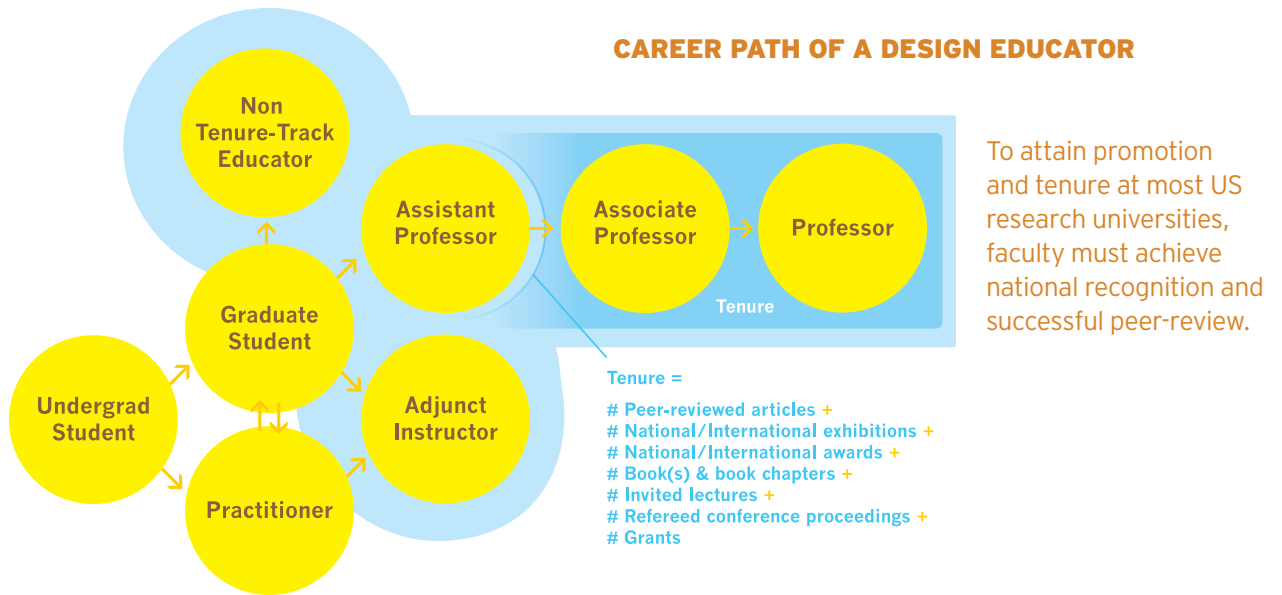
“Through AIGA educators have opportunities to learn new skills, develop design curriculum, get advice on pressing questions and hear insights from peers.”

BENEFITS OF A DEC JOURNAL TO EDUCATORS AND PRACTITIONERS:

- Share critical thinking about approaches to designing and/or teaching design that have been rigorously vetted using peer-review
- Rigorous vetting, combined with the official sanction of the AIGA DEC, will establish and sustain the journal's credibility as a trusted repository of useful and usable information regarding design education and its relation to practice, as well as the emerging arenas of design management and research
- Provide a valuable service to the design community because so much of what is being taught in the over 1,800 institutions of higher learning in the U.S. that teach some form of graphic design is **not** subject to critical scrutiny and assessment
- As of January 2014, there is no primary 'go to resource' for thousands of design educators—many of whom are also practitioners. AIGA could be that main resource.
- Tenure-track educators require publication in peer-reviewed journals as a part of their tenure process. Current avenues for such publication are few for design educators.
- As a professional discipline that must be underpinned by well-facilitated teaching, graphic design needs to provide more venues within which evidence and well-structured arguments—not just the mere assertions or descriptions of claims—are on offer.

THE TENURE & PROMOTION PROCESS IN ACADEMIA

For design educators to become promoted and tenured at most of the highly respected American research universities, they must show some national recognition and be successfully peer-reviewed. Some faculty choose to gain necessary scholarly accolades through prominent exhibitions and awards; however, that strategy alone is rarely a guarantee for promotion and tenure (and opportunities are few, especially for a lone, practicing designer). In conjunction with these honors, the publication route is more widely accepted in academia. In the tenure process, graphic



FROM AIGA.ORG:

“AIGA supports education throughout the arc of a designer’s career, including special programs for educators, a group critical to advancing the profession.”

design educators are not solely reviewed by their peers in the discipline, but by scholars from various disciplines in their institution. A design educator’s tenure dossier might be reviewed, for example, by a committee composed of a musician, economist, molecular biologist, nuclear engineer, and a philosopher, who likely have little understanding of design, but certainly **do** grasp the import and significance of positive peer review and/or accolades from one’s professional organization. This necessity for publication is the pivotal reason why the DEC strongly supports the launch of a peer-reviewed journal and believes it will serve the graphic design educator community most effectively.

JOURNAL ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

The editorial philosophy of *Dialectic* and *Dialog* will challenge a diverse pool of contributing authors to rethink existing conceptual frameworks for understanding the design activity. The aim is for ideas articulated and championed in the pages to fuel the kinds of informed, reflective innovation required to encourage positive evolution of the design discipline as it informs and guides the academy, practice, and the interesting spaces in between. **Ultimately, it is the intention of these journals to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas that is broadly accessible, spans the entire discipline, and bridges gaps in understanding that exist between design theory and practice.**

To reach a broad audience, *Dialectic* will encourage authors to examine how their research operates across a broad spectrum of environments and is affected by unique factors, issues and agents. These environments might range from small classrooms and short-duration course projects to professional design endeavors facilitated on behalf of clients that traverse wide social, technological and economic terrain. Each issue could be specifically themed by the editors. An editorial leadership group comprised of two to three members will serve three-year terms. This structure is common for many scholarly journals and ensures that the philosophical, critical and logistical burden of editorship is borne by a small group rather than an individual. The AIGA and the DEC should work together to identify interested editorial parties.

Our online forum, *Dialog*, will use a rolling cycle that requests critiques, interviews, case studies and essays of 1000-1500 words. *Dialog* is envisioned as timely and responsive to relevant themes.

SCHEDULE WITH MILESTONES

WINTER 2014: Journal proposal presented to AIGA board of directors.

SPRING 2014: Discussion

SUMMER 2014: AIGA approval and decision on budget and scope

FALL 2014: AIGA and DEC target potential editorial leadership and partnerships

WINTER 2015: Editorial leadership decisions made. Call for submissions for *Dialog*

SPRING/SUMMER 2015: Call for submissions for *Dialectic*

SUCCESS METRICS

Metrics below are the most easy to measure:

- *Dialogue* page traffic
- *Dialogue* and *Dialectic* submissions
- *Dialogue* online comments
- *Dialogue* article social media shares
- *Dialogue* article downloads
- Awards and honors received for both journals

Metrics more difficult to measure:

- *Dialectic* articles cited in other academic and online publications
- *Dialectic* articles successfully used for tenure and promotion

FROM AIGA.ORG:

“The future of the design profession is in your hands—and AIGA is here to support you 24/7, with resources, events, networking and inspiration you won’t find anywhere else.”

Design Projects Repository

The Design Projects Repository is an on-line resource for educators to share assignment and project documentation including learning goals, deliverables, outcomes (a gallery) and reflections.

GOALS

- provide educators at all levels with tangible references and inspiration for course planning
- facilitate and promote dialogue between educators from various institutions (*This tool could connect instructors, possibly leading to collaborations or shared resources between classes, institutions or individuals.*)
- present current research and pedagogical methods (*We envision this resource becoming the archive for design education, like the AIGA Design Archives functions for professionals.*)
- forge a stronger relationship between design educators and AIGA (*only AIGA educator members could post projects*).

PROTOTYPE

A working prototype is available at art.washington.edu/aigadpr

Note: This is a series of sample screens. Not all pages are functional.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUPPORT

Despite efforts already invested to architect and visualize this web application, significant resources are necessary to complete the build out and back-end. All work to date has been completed only by Steering Committee member Annabelle Gould, Associate Professor at the University of Washington (UW), and two MDes students, who have since graduated. Support thus far has been provided by UW but the team is not currently equipped or funded to execute the application; thus, **we need support to complete and launch the project.**

FUTURE PLANS

Once the tool is completed, a select group of faculty from a variety of institutions and programs will be invited to submit work to populate the archive. To maintain high standards, it is expected that the DEC will curate submissions to the site. It is also expected that the DEC Steering Committee will be involved with the project on an ongoing basis (curation of content, additional site features, promotion of the tool).

Print Materials to Raise Awareness of the DEC

The Design Educators Community would benefit from printed materials that publicize our initiatives, url and goings-on.

Our first priority would be a postcard that promotes the DEC, explains what the Community is and does, and includes the website url (*many educators have commented that they were unaware the DEC existed*). These materials would be distributed at conferences and used by the committee as the DEC "business card." Buttons distributed at conferences that identify educators would allow them to network and connect more easily. A biannual mailer to promote events, call for papers, call for new members, etc. would offer another valuable opportunity for promotion.

AIGA has recognized approximately 200 student groups in institutions around the U.S. with average memberships of 25 students... At least a quarter of AIGA's members can be proven to be students, with the actual figure looking to be more in the 40% range, if not close to 50%.*

**Numbers from a University of North Texas study led by Michael Gibson. Data is amalgamated from the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the U.S. Department of Education, The American Association of Community Colleges, The US Institute of Education Sciences, the US Department of Labor, and UNT Design Research Center-facilitated data.*

GOALS

The objective of DEC printed materials is increased participation in the Design Educators Community. Publicizing the website will result in more traffic, contributors, comments, and sign ups for the DEC mailing list and monthly newsletter. They will also publicize calls for papers and applications to the committee. The DEC can track the success of the print materials through website visitor statistics, newsletter sign-ups, and conference attendance numbers.

Conference Video Archive

This initiative requests a dedicated budget item to support video documentation of AIGA Design Educator conferences.

While individual, hard copy documents of papers can be acquired for archiving, the often rich, accompanying visual presentations—a substantial amount of conference content—is typically lost. Not unlike the *Head, Heart, Hand* videos just recently released, video documentation of educator conferences would provide a more substantive resource and could include the discussions that frequently follow presentations. This discourse, in addition to formal papers, is valuable intellectual material that deserves preservation. In addition, conferences often feature unscripted roundtables and panel discussions that generate valuable content. While staging the conferences alone is a valuable resource, it is vital that this resource has a longer life than merely two days and is made accessible to educators into the future. For these reasons, we request funding to support future video documentation.

GOALS AND SCHEDULE

Funding will be based on the current three-year cycle of four conferences. The intention is to create an accessible video archive of material presented at conferences that could also be featured on the DEC website. Individual conference organizers will be charged with arranging for the documentation and providing an estimated cost, with a minimum amount provided to each event. Conference organizers will also be charged with acquiring clearances from participants, using agreements to be developed and provided by the DEC. Individual presenters may elect not to be documented. Presenters who consent to documentation will retain copyright of their content. Physical and digital archiving space will need to be determined.

General Requests To Increase Educator Outreach

A Design Educators Component in the AIGA Sponsorship Packet

The DEC requests that AIGA add educator-related content to its sponsorship packet for those sponsors specifically interested in DEC programs and initiatives. Potential sponsors have approached us, but ultimately balked at their inability to specifically target design educators through their sponsorship. The DEC relies too heavily on Adobe for support and wishes to encourage more varied sponsorship. (Adobe sponsorship only supports Design Educators Conferences and no other initiatives.) *Optimal completion date for materials: July 2014*

There are now over 1,800 institutions of higher learning in the U.S. that offer two-to four-year degrees in some form of visual communication/graphic/interaction/advertising design.*

These institutions now graduate between 50,000 and 65,000 students per year.*

These institutions now employ more than 4,000 full-time design educators and more than 10,000 part-time faculty (the majority of the latter are working design professionals)*

* Numbers from a University of North Texas study led by Michael Gibson.

A DEC representative on the AIGA National Board

The DEC requests that a permanent position be assigned for an educator, preferably with prior or ongoing service to the DEC to build better connections between the initiatives spearheaded by DEC and the national initiatives of the AIGA. Laurie Churchman and Louise Sandhaus served on the national board and as chairs of the DEC simultaneously; during their terms we believe communication between the DEC and the parent organization of AIGA to be most effective. Most recently Ruki Ravikumar serves as our liaison. We would like to discuss a succession plan after her term ends in July 2017. A representative would be able to ensure better alignment of initiatives; i.e., for every national level initiative, event or project, this representative would coordinate with the DEC to create simultaneous programming and content specifically for design educators. We envision this position to be similar to the Chapter Presidents' liaison on the national board. We also believe that prior or ongoing service to the DEC is an essential experience for the person appointed to this role, as it seems that not all educators who serve on the board bear the awareness of the mission, initiatives, history or achievements of the DEC.

Educator presence/content in AIGA national level programming

We request educator participation in all AIGA national level programming such as the annual leadership retreat, *Gain* and the biennial national conference. There is need and demand for educator programming at these events and educators are an integral voice in conversations that set priorities for our organization.

A Discretionary Budget Beyond Sponsorship

A discretionary budget beyond sponsorship would ensure that the DEC is a sustainable entity for the life of the organization.

The Community currently has no budget, which inhibits productivity and growth of the organization and ties our hands in undertaking projects to support design educators and design education. A budget could support initiatives like those detailed here, as well as provide dedicated time from staff to assist in the generation of educator content and management of initiatives. To support the community, educators need the rich content promised on the AIGA national site: "Through AIGA educators have opportunities to learn new skills, develop design curriculum, get advice on pressing questions and hear insights from peers." Development, maintenance, and generation of content, in particular, requires time from a dedicated individual to manage and produce it.

The DEC Steering Committee are all volunteers. (This is true of chapters, as well, but we are not a chapter. We represent a larger and more diversely populated community within the larger organization.) We are not able to produce the rich content the Community needs or spearhead any new initiatives in support of design education. What the Steering Committee can provide to AIGA is a representative body of respected design educators to oversee the educational vision of the AIGA. Without the diverse options of such a representative body, this educational vision could easily become myopic.