



Tulane University Architecture School Uses Autodesk Building Design Tools to Teach Students Practical Realities of Design and Construction

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Autodesk Revit and Autodesk Architectural Studio Allow Design Studio to Cover More Ground; Students Learn and Apply New Digital Tools Quickly

Autodesk, Inc. (Nasdaq:ADSK), the world's leading design and digital content creation company, today announced that Tulane University School of Architecture is using Autodesk(R) Revit(R) and Autodesk(R) Architectural Studio to teach fourth- and fifth-year architectural students about the real-world problems of designing and constructing buildings. Using Architectural Studio, a visual communication and presentation tool for architects and other design professionals, students can quickly formulate early design concepts and digitally present and share their work. With Revit, a powerful building design and documentation system, students are better able to examine development economics, cost estimating, and mechanical and structural issues as well as formal design problems. Because the learning curve for both design tools is short, students in the Master of Architecture program come away from the course with broader knowledge and more experience in resolving issues that occur in actual professional practice.

"In architecture school, students tend to work with freehand drawing, and can become very skilled at imagining what could be--but their experience of the design process is limited to the conceptual level," said Professor Ronald Filson, FAIA, who introduced the Autodesk building design tools into his design studio starting last fall. "Using a building information modeling tool like Revit confronts students with the materiality of a building, the practical problems of designing a constructible building." Filson is not only a professor of architecture and dean emeritus at Tulane University, but also a practicing architect using Revit in his in New Orleans practice.

Students Introduced to Real-World Challenges

Although students using Revit enter information in the familiar language of drawing and sketching, the software stores and manages all building information as a database, and tracks the relationships between building components. This method forces students to think about the building as a whole. Practical issues cannot be glossed over, as with a freehand drawing. For instance, Revit makes it readily apparent if a column on one floor isn't going to line up with the column on the floor above, or if the walls aren't thick enough to provide support given the material selected. Revit also tracks information about the cost of materials and building components, which helps students to think about the economic decisions required in real-world design.

Course Able to Teach More

With Revit, the design studio can cover more ground. In the past, students worked in plan and section until the semester was nearly over. Now Revit lets them also work with perspectives, renderings, and 3D models throughout the whole course. Students are able to develop their projects more thoroughly, learning to integrate mechanical components and structural systems into the design. In Fall 2002, Filson's students used Revit to design a 5,000-square-foot technology center for a branch library. Architectural Studio was employed for initial analysis and as a presentation tool. For the Winter 2003 semester, Filson is assigning students to design a combined art gallery/residence.

Intuitive Interface Speeds Application

Even though few had previous experience with CAD or other design programs, students learned Autodesk Revit and Autodesk Architectural Studio quickly, because both tools rely on an intuitive, easy-to-use interface. Within a couple of weeks, students had mastered all the basic elements of both programs. Some students even explored the more advanced options, creating family groups for building components. For the Winter 2003 semester, Filson has planned the course to move more quickly in the initial weeks, because he knows students will pick up the program easily.

Tulane University's access to Autodesk design software was provided through the Autodesk Comprehensive Education Solution (ACES) program, a one-year subscription which is designed to reduce the complexity and costs of managing design software on a campus, allowing schools to stay current with Autodesk's most popular software.

"At first, some students and faculty members who sat in on the class were skeptical, wondering if the technology would limit students' creativity, because they were choosing among elements and objects rather than drawing everything from scratch," Filson commented. "But by the end, everyone saw that Revit offered an infinite range of options for all aspects of a building, while enabling students to grapple with real constraints and make real decisions. One colleague of mine is already planning to use Revit in his design studio during the coming summer session."

About Tulane University School of Architecture

Architectural education began at Tulane University in 1894 and since 1907 the School of Architecture has offered NAAB accredited professional degree programs in architecture and, more recently, advanced graduate study in both architecture and preservation. Today the School, located in New Orleans, is composed of over 300 students and approximately 35 faculty members. One of 11 academic units, the School is part of an internationally renowned private research institution ranked among the top 50 universities in the US. Design education at Tulane is particularly focused on innovative and sensitive additions to existing urban contexts through the use of the City of New Orleans as a laboratory for study.

About Autodesk

Founded in 1982, Autodesk, Inc., is the world's leading design software and digital content company. The company serves a diverse portfolio of markets, including building design, geographic information systems, manufacturing, digital media, and wireless data services. By delivering tools that

foster innovation and creativity, Autodesk helps customers create, use and leverage their digital design data. For more information about the company, see <http://www.autodesk.com>.

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