

Meeting of The IA Education Committee

Date: Friday 26th March 2010

Venue: Morrison Hotel

*In Attendance: Emer Tubridy – Senior College Dun Laoghaire
 Shane Connolly – Dublin Institute of Design
 Michael Roulston – Institute of Technology Sligo
 Gavin Lynch – Institute of Technology Sligo
 John McDonald – Griffith College Dublin
 Barry Sheehan – Dublin Institute of Technology
 John Gibson – Interiors Association
 Michelle Hetherington – Interiors Association*

| ITEM | DESCRIPTION | ACTION |
|------------|---|--------|
| 0.0 | Course Accreditation | |
| | Various modes of course accreditation are in existence which hampers the ability to provide a transparent and clear outline of all available courses and their relationship to one another. | |
| | Emer pointed out that it's very difficult for course graduates to translate credits between colleges in Ireland but that it's often easier to do this between Ireland & the UK. | |
| | Shane said there is no level playing field between colleges in Ireland – for example some students get into 2 nd year and others into 3 rd year even though they have the same qualification. It's hard to encourage students to continuing their studies as a result. | |
| | Barry felt that an interview is still the optimum way of evaluating a student who is transferring from one course to the other as portfolio's can often give a false representation of the students ability. Barry also said that it would be hugely beneficial if the lines of communication were to open up between course directors so that a reference could be provided when a student wishes to transfer. The IA is to develop and circulate a contact list of course directors to the members of the IA education Committee. | IA |
| | These issues are also applicable to students wishing to further their studies abroad, especially in colleges such as Kingston Polytechnic, Delft & Eindhoven, etc. | |
| | Long term objective is to develop a transparent accreditation system and foster links between course directors in one forum. | |
| 0.0 | Technology & Professional Practice | |
| | Barry did MA in professional practice which is a reasonably new course available to design graduates. | |
| | It was suggested that Professional Practice could be offered as a module or a post graduate course prior to designers being awarded membership of their respective institutes / associations. | |
| | We discussed the requirement of the ECIA Umbrella and how to make this work for Irish designers. ECIA have a programme of recognition which is strict and does not necessarily match the | |

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| current thinking in Ireland vis-a-vis course content. The ECIA makes Interior Architecture sound very similar to architecture. | |
| It was noted that the Interior Architecture course in Aberdeen was dropped as it was becoming too close to the pure architecture course and it was felt that doubling up was occurring. In order to avoid this, interior architecture should have clearer definitions. | |
| Michael stated that interior architecture should be more about the refurbishment & conservation of existing building stock as opposed to new builds. It was broadly agreed around the table that a differentiation like this should be established. | |
| It was suggested that an article defining the difference between architecture & interior architecture should be written & posted on the IA forum? It would certainly help students who are looking into doing architecture or interior architecture. | IA committee |
| RIBA are currently examining the course in Sligo IT (Lorraine Farrelly of Portsmouth college = RIBA mentor) in order to consider awarding it recognition (RIBA Part 1), which would be a giant step forward for interior architecture in Ireland. Michael & Gavin to provide updates as they happen. | Michael & Gavin |
| Note – if someone with RIBA Part 2 looks for membership of the RIAI they will get it. | |
| Definition of Professional Titles (Interior Designer, etc.) | |
| Emer requested that we don't forget Interior Designers and the unique skill that they provide within the construction industry. It is important that we look at all areas of interior design and show how they relate to each other. | |
| It was suggested that the colleges should comment on the IA's definition of the terms Interior Designer, Interior Architect, Interior stylist. | All Course Directors |
| We need to create clarity for students as well as employers as it is confusing for both and lack of clear guidelines is causing the industry to be sidelined. | |
| Each College needs to answer the following questions in a return e-mail: Course Title? Classification system (e.g. HETAC)? What are the main modules / subjects covered? Unique Selling Point of this course? Duration? How many students in each year? Who do you collaborate with in terms of associated colleges? | All Course Directors |
| The Hunt Report is due to be published in October 2010 – we need to discuss at autumn meeting and formulate a response (3 rd level + fee's) | |
| Re-Skilling, True Modularisation & End-of-Year Shows | |

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Shane suggested the need for looking at re-skilling courses, especially for people who are currently unemployed and feel out of the loop. | |
| Sustainable Design & Universal Design are big subjects for CPD's. It was suggested that the IA could take on a bigger role in training in this area. Note: The Carlow course in Sustainable Design is not being funded anymore. | IA Committee |
| Circulate information in relation to the end of year shows in each course so that interested parties can attend. IA should gather this information & put it on their website. All course directors to forward this information to info@theinteriorsassociation.ie when available. | All Course Directors IA |
| The concept of True Modularisation was discussed as a mode of development between courses and maybe eventually between colleges. | |
| Using You Tube as a means of modularised education was also discussed. | |
| | |
| Personal Goals | |
| Emer would like feedback to find out what students need and to be involved in streaming the education system. Also not to forget interior designers in this process and for the IA to develop downloadable contracts. | |
| Shane is interested to find out what other colleges are doing to advise students about continuing their education and wants to become more aware of what other colleges are offering so that he can inform his own students of the options going further. | |
| Michael is keen to promote design in the west – it's getting a reputation now and he wants to build on that by fostering links with other major colleges, etc. | |
| Gavin feels that his courses are 10 years in the making (meandered) and that this is the moment for our industry – architecture is atrophying – the interiors industry needs to be supported to enable growth & communication. | |
| John would like a brief description of all courses on offer; maybe a blog on the courses (outlining the DNA of each course) providing a centralised place to find this information. John suggested that the IA might foster this element and that it could be marketed at Higher Options fairs to 2 nd level students. | |
| Barry would like a study of past graduates? How do they fare once they finish their respective courses? How many get employment (only one of his graduates got a job this year)? How many further their education? Also, Barry felt that IA & IDI are too small. Someone needs to bring the organisations together so that we can make a meaningful difference. Amalgamation is a potential way forward to gain strength and make a real difference. | |

It was suggested that we meet on a quarterly basis – date to be agreed.