

INTERIO:SCOPE

A look into the world of interior design at MSU through faculty, students, and alumni.

ISSUE 1: Spring 2025

LinkedIn: [MSU_SPDC](#)



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MSU Interior Design Earns Full CIDA Accreditation — Again!

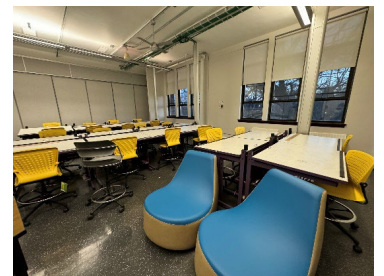


We are proud to announce that the Interior Design Program at Michigan State University has officially been awarded full accreditation by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA) for a six-year term, effective April 2025.

Established in 1935, our program first received CIDA accreditation in 1975 and has been continuously accredited for 50

years. This renewal marks a significant milestone and reaffirms our program's commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and professional readiness in interior design education.

→ *Continued on page 7 with accreditation highlights and studio visit photos.*



ID Studios Receive Major Upgrades

As of Fall 2024, all four Interior Design studios in the Human Ecology Building underwent a complete renovation to enhance student learning and creativity. Each studio now features innovative dual-purpose drawing tables, lounge seating, and fresh color palettes designed to foster inspiration and collaboration.

→ *Continued on page 6 with studio highlights and photos.*

MESSAGE FROM

ID Director and Alumni Board Director

Welcome MSU Interior Design Community,

We are thrilled to present the inaugural edition of our newsletter, designed to connect alumni, faculty, current students, and community supporters. Our goal is to create a vibrant platform where we can share a wealth of information and celebrate achievements within our community.

In each issue, you will find topics such as:

- ❑ **Program News and Updates:** Keeping you informed about the latest developments in our Interior Design program.
- ❑ **Faculty Highlights:** Celebrating the work and contributions of our esteemed faculty members.
- ❑ **Student Projects:** Displaying the creative and impactful projects undertaken by our students.
- ❑ **Student Organization Activities:** Featuring the dynamic events and initiatives led by our student group.
- ❑ **Project Profiles:** Showcasing innovative and inspiring projects from our talented alumni across different market segments.
- ❑ **Career Highlights and Paths:** Highlighting the diverse journeys and accolades of our graduates.
- ❑ **Design Trends:** Exploring current trends in practice and education within the field of interior design.
- ❑ **Sponsorship and Donation Highlights:** Acknowledging the generous contributions that help fund our projects and initiatives.

We hope you enjoy the submissions in the following pages and consider contributing your own work in future editions. Our aim is to release a bi-annual digital issue, ensuring you stay connected and informed.

Finally, many thank you to students Lauren Reiss and Emily Vlietstra for their hard work in formatting and editing this newsletter. We would like to thank all who submitted a piece of this issue. And finally thank you to those reading this for being a part of our community. Together, we can continue to inspire and innovate in the world of interior design.

Go Green!

Sincerely,

Dr. Linda Nubani & Dawn Cenowa



Linda Nubani, Ph.D.

Associate Professor and
Director of Interior Design
Program



Dawn Cenowa, CDT

Class of 2010
Account Executive, Client
Specifications
Sherwin Williams

School Update from SPDC Director

The School of Planning, Design and Construction (SPDC) at MSU draws strength from the interdisciplinary nature of our four distinct yet interconnected programs: Construction Management, Interior Design, Landscape Architecture, and Urban and Regional Planning. These accredited programs collectively offered nine degrees to nearly 700 undergraduate and graduate students this academic year. As a unified school, our mission is **to advance knowledge, prepare innovative leaders, and support the practice of planning, design, and construction**. Built environment disciplines are rapidly growing in scale and societal relevance, making SPDC's vision to **collaborate in creating sustainable and healthy built, natural, and virtual environments** increasingly impactful. Our 80% enrollment growth since 2017 and 96% job placement rate reflect sustained excellence in these academic fields and industries.

To strengthen SPDC's spirit of unity, we hosted our first ever joint career fair in February of 2025, broadening career opportunities for students of all programs. The school's Residential Competition Team, though traditionally the domain of the construction industry, increasingly features students from all programs – including Interior Design. These are just two examples of how the interconnectivity of our programs allows SPDC to produce tomorrow's leaders and innovators in the built environment disciplines.

Since joining MSU in 2017, I've had the privilege of working closely with SPDC's Interior Design (ID) faculty and students and am proud to include ID among our programs. This year, SPDC faculty identified four Core Areas of Scholarly Research: (1) [Climate-Resilient Communities & Adaptation](#), (2) [Housing Innovation & Community Development](#), (3) [Healthy Environments for Human Well-Being](#), and (4) [Environmental & Social Impact](#). Interior Design is integral to these areas, exemplified through faculty research on human well-being, creative projects using technologies like Virtual Reality, and the [Crime Prevention through Environmental Design \(CPTED\)](#) program's efforts to raise awareness about the role of design in promoting safety, equity, and health.

My pride in our ID program and optimism for its future were affirmed by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation's (CIDA) recommendation for full accreditation in Spring 2025, following their site visit in Fall 2024. Our faculty demonstrated strong dedication to the process under Program Director Dr. Linda Nubani's leadership. The site visit team praised our program and school's sense of belonging and shared community spirit, underscoring the strength of our ID program in delivering top-tier educational opportunities to current and future students. I sincerely thank all alumni and board members whose ongoing support made this achievement possible.

Our ID faculty and students celebrated several accomplishments this year. Prof. Kristy Kellom, ID alum and instructor, received [MSU's 2024 AT&T Excellence in Teaching with Technology Award](#). Faculty like Prof. Laura Winter, M.S., NCIDQ – who chairs the school's Student Engagement & Enrichment Committee and actively participates in SPDC's award-winning [partnership with the Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources](#) – continue to inspire our students. Our ID student, Lauren Reiss, was awarded the 2024 Professional Women in Building Scholarship, recognizing her talent and dedication. This academic year, our program allocated \$42,200 in scholarships, directly supporting the success and growth of our talented students. We are deeply grateful to our donors, whose generosity eases financial burdens and opens doors to new opportunities. Thank you for your continued support and belief in the potential of our future leaders.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the Interior Design alumni whose support makes such efforts possible and especially the Interior Design Alumni Advisory Board, whose organization and coordination is vital to the program's continued achievement. In the near century of its existence, the ID program at MSU has built a glowing reputation as a world leader, and to me, there is no doubt that the future of this program, as well as the school, continues to shine bright.

Thank you and Go Green!

Dr. Jun-Hyun Kim



Dr. Jun-Hyun Kim

SPDC School Director and
Professor

2024-25 ID Advisory Board

The Michigan State University Interior Design Advisory Board, established on April 19, 2019, serves to provide strategic advice and support for the MSU Interior Design Program. The board's contributions encompass a range of activities, including advising program faculty, mentoring students through portfolio reviews, and offering financial support to meet the program's needs.

Board Chairs:



President: Tracey Treiber Johnston IIDA, LEED AP

Class of 1992
Senior Interior Designer
Progressive Companies



Vice President: Laura Saltsman NCIDQ, LEED AP, WELL AP, Fitwell Ambassador

Class of 2000
Design Application Specialist
Steelcase



Treasure: Darcy Pace, NCIDQ, LEED AP

Class of 1997
Design Principal
Pace Howe Design



Secretary: Jill Joseph, MBA, CHID, NCIDQ, LEED AP, EDAC

Class of 1983
Manager, Health A&D Strategy
Kimball International

Board Directors:



Carol Schneider, IIDA, LEED AP ID+C, NCIDQ, CID

Class of 2011
Associate, Interior Designer
Gensler



Dawn Cenowa, CDT

Class of 2010
Account Executive,
Client Specifications
Sherwin Williams



Katherine Chappelle IIDA, EDAC

Class of 1995
Regional Practice
Director, Vice
President of HKS



Valerie Wright, LEED AP

Class of 1989
President/CEO of
Diekema Hamann
Architect, Inc.

We are excited to introduce the 2025-2026 board in our next issue. For those interested in learning more about board positions or supporting board activities within the Interior Design program, please contact:
Dawn Cenowa
Dawn.m.cenowa@sherwin.com



Patricia Kammer

Class of 1988
Principle Design
Researcher
Steelcase



SYMBIOTE

Durable, Designer-Approved Furniture for Technical Spaces



Free extension available on



Healthcare



Aerospace



Biotech



Security



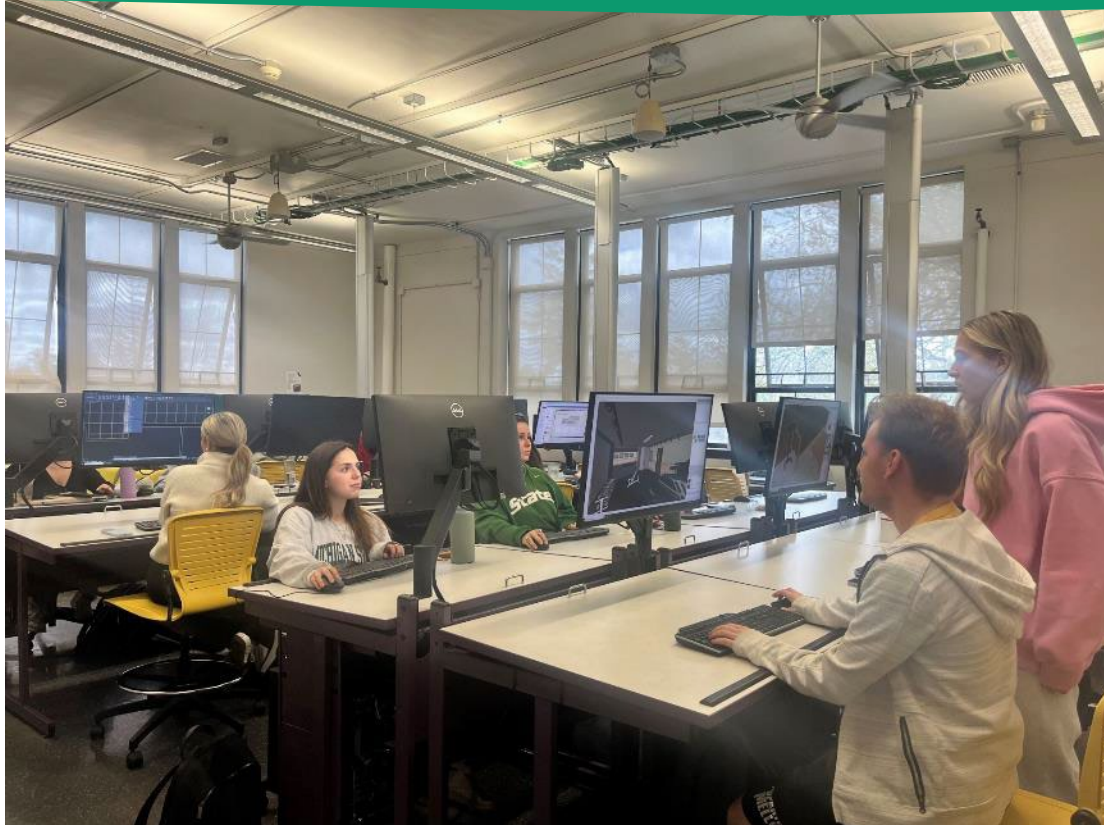
Workplace



Tech



Interior Design Studios Receive Major Upgrades (continued)



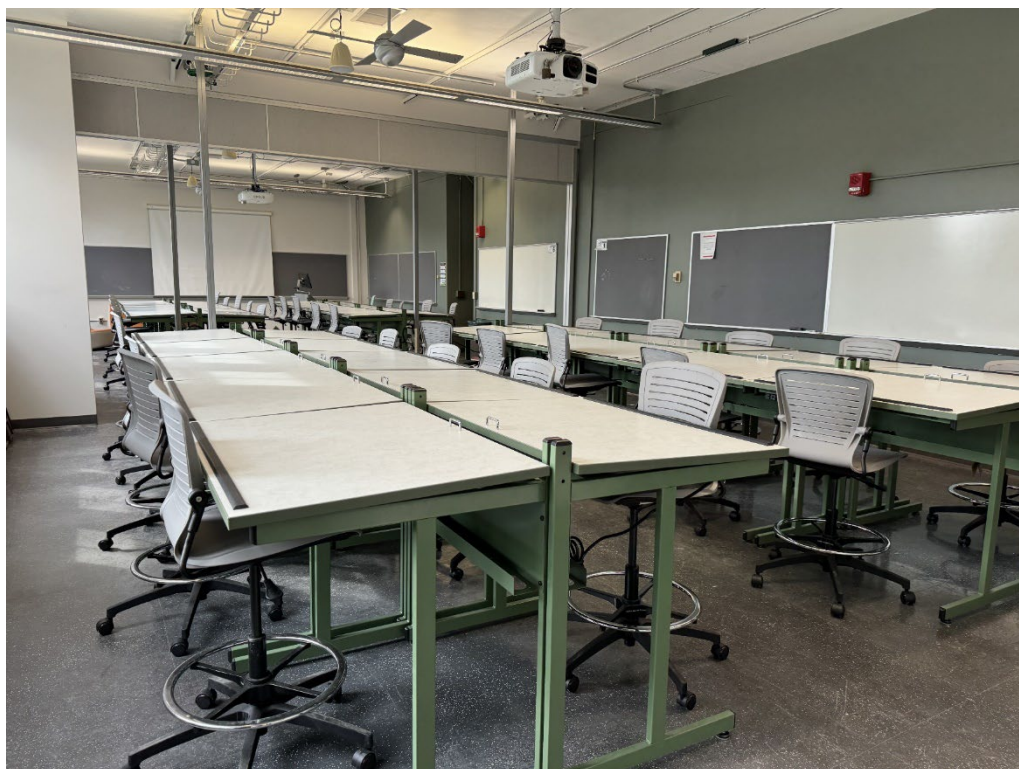
Two studios were custom designed from the ground up — including the metal legs, table trim, surfaces, chairs and lounge seats — to reflect a green and white MSU-inspired theme. The other two studios showcase a vibrant purple and yellow scheme, each tailored to energize the studio environment. This renovation was made possible by securing over \$560,000 in A&I and TLE grant funding awarded by MSU CANR.

Highlights from the newly renovated Interior Design studios

All drawing tables — furnished by Computer Comforts Inc. — are equipped with power and data access through minitraps installed underneath, providing students with flexible and convenient workstations. A key highlight of this renovation is the transformation of the fourth-year senior capstone studio into a hybrid studio-lab environment, where each station includes both a computer and a drawing table to support workflows for both hand-drawing and digital production.

Additional upgrades include new tech carts, and TVs have replaced traditional projection screens, enhancing presentations and collaborative design work.

This successful renovation, which took two years to complete, was made possible thanks to the Interior Design faculty, who dedicated significant effort to preparing design drawings, selecting materials and finishes, and overseeing the progress of the work.



To sustain this momentum, continued support is essential. The Interior Design Enrichment Fund (RN031202-IDENR) plays a critical role in helping us maintain cutting-edge software, upgrade digital tools, and enhance studio resources. We invite you to join us in preparing the next generation of design leaders by supporting the technology that powers their success. See page 29 for details.

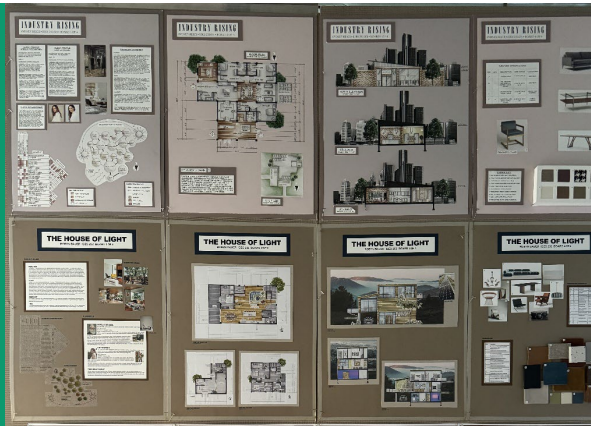
MSU Interior Design Earns Full CIDA Accreditation (continued)

The CIDA Accreditation Commission recognized the program for achieving **all sixteen accreditation standards**, which reflect the evolving demands of interior design practice. These include critical thinking, professional values, historical and theoretical context, and technical proficiency. Their review confirms that our graduates are well-prepared to enter the field with the core competencies required to thrive.

This achievement reflects the **enormous dedication of our faculty, students, and alumni**, who contributed time, projects, feedback, and hard work toward preparing for this visit. Your commitment ensures that MSU continues to offer a nationally recognized, high-quality education for future interior designers.



Snapshots of the Interior Design Gallery and student work displays during the Fall 2024 CIDA accreditation visit.



Poster displays
showcased student
work across all
academic years during
the CIDA visit in
September 2024





Sidney Mendenhall
IDSO President

IDSO President Letter

First, I want to express how truly honored I am to be part of such a remarkable organization. IDSO has been more than just a platform for students to connect and learn; it has been a space that nurtures personal growth. Among the many gifts IDSO has offered me—friendships, community, and invaluable experiences the most profound has been the courage it instilled in me. It gave me the confidence to step into a leadership role, to embrace new challenges, and to push beyond my comfort zoned discoveries I may never have made without this supportive environment.

What I find most inspiring about IDSO is how it unites people and fosters a genuine sense of belonging. I am deeply grateful for the time I've spent with IDSO, and I am excited to see how the organization continues to grow and inspire future generations of designers.

Support IDSO! Donations of prizes, catering, supplies, or cash are appreciated. Contact the ID Director for account info and details.



IDSO Meet & Greet

IDSO's annual Meet & Greet event was a night to remember! Held on October 1, 2024, this first event of the year featured MSU alumna and Interior Design Advisory Board Vice President **Laura Saltsman** as our guest speaker.

From an incredibly insightful guest speaker and amazing conversations to a delicious catered dinner and generously donated prizes, this event was nothing short of successful. We sincerely thank the interior design program and our donors for making this event possible every year. It is such a fun way to bring ID students and faculty together and build lasting connections.



Student Organic Farm Volunteer Event

Members of IDSO spent a sunny Friday afternoon in September harvesting organic crops at the MSU Student Organic Farm. We helped harvest crops for MSU's dining halls and Allen Neighborhood's CSA, bringing in a whopping 150 lbs. of carrots! It was not only a great bonding experience, but it felt good to step in and help such an amazing cause.



Girl Scouts X Professional Women in Building Grand Rapids (PWBGR) Volunteer Event

Two of IDSOs board members participated in the “She Builds” event down in Grand Rapids in supporting girls in their future careers as women in design and construction fields. Girl Scouts of all ages came together for a day of problem solving and using their skills to create and learn more about the different professions available. Girl Scouts rotated through four activities of bridge building, space planning a house, wooden bench building, and piggy bank construction. PWB girl scouts is looking for more interior design student participation next year along with inclusion of IDSO in more of their events.

All photos of girl scouts were approved with a written waiver distributed by PWB before event occurred.



Taylor Davis Shares Her First-Year Experience

Applying to the Interior Design Program at Michigan State University was definitely stressful—but also one of the most rewarding experiences I’ve ever had. The pressure came from knowing how much was riding on the decision, but looking back, all the work I produced made it completely worth it.

I remember starting each project thinking, “There’s no way I can do this,” but every time, I ended up proud of what I created. Throughout the year, I focused on bringing variety to my designs to show my range and willingness to take on any challenge. I designed a farmhouse, a coastal cottage, and a Moroccan/Art Deco-inspired restaurant—completely outside of my comfort zone, yet it turned out to be my favorite project.

The Interior Design Program has helped me push beyond my limits and prove to both my professors and myself what I’m truly capable of.



Taylor Davis

First Year Student

IDSO Freshman Representative



IDES 142

Restaurant Final Project Board 1



IDES 142

Restaurant Final Project Board 2



Final Submission

Final Submission of first year projects



IDSO 1st Year Representative Experience

Going into freshman year, I knew I wanted to be a part of IDSO and eventually serve on the board. I didn’t even realize there was a first-year representative position. But I understood the value of getting involved early and building connections. After receiving the role, I took every opportunity to help-sharing event updates, supporting prospective student events, and pitching in wherever I could. One of the best parts has been forming relationships with upper-division students. Having their guidance and support as a first-year student has meant a lot. It’s also been incredibly rewarding to give back to a program I truly love. IDSO is more than a student organization. It’s a close-knit, supportive community. If you’re thinking about joining, I highly recommend it. You won’t regret it!



CM & ID Team Up for 2025 Commercial Construction Competition

For the fourth year, the Construction Management program assembled a student team to compete in the 2025 Commercial Construction Management Competition (CMC), hosted by the Associated Builders and Contractors of America. This national event drew teams from 34 universities to respond to a mock request for proposals.

The project: a 3-building Health & Wellness Hub for MiraCosta College in Oceanside, CA. Teams created mock companies and professional proposals including a full cost estimate, schedule, project management, safety, and quality control plans. The CMC involves three phases: baseline proposal (Step 1), a 5-hour response to new addenda (Step 2), and finalist presentations (Step 3). ID

students Lauren Reiss and Emily Vlietstra joined 30 CM peers to create visuals, plans, templates, and proposal materials. Lauren Reiss, Interior Design Student, also competed in Step 2 as part of the travel team.

Though the SPDC team didn't advance to Step 3, they placed 12th overall. The CMC offers students hands-on insight into how firms win projects—and prepares them for real-world design and construction careers. Planning for 2026 is already underway.

Special thanks to Robert M. Aydukovic, Program Director of CM and Graduate Certificate Program Coordinator in SPDC, who organized and led this year's competition effort. With over 36 years



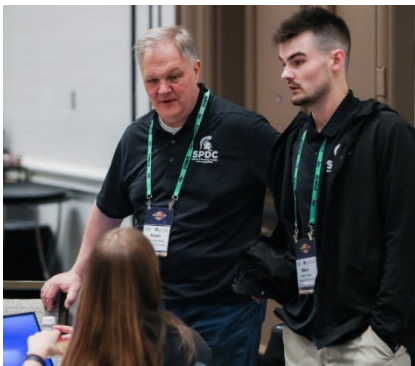
Student Spotlight Lauren Reiss

As a student of the Interior Design program it was so interesting learning about the contract side of the built environment through the ABC Construction Management Competition!

I got to mingle with others in SPDC and get to know other faculty better whilst expanding on my networking skills and knowledge of construction.

I encourage all those who have the chance to branch out and learn from other experiences!

of experience spanning construction, real estate, economic development, and higher education, Aydukovic brings unmatched expertise and mentorship to students preparing for real-world success.



FACULTY PROFILE



Kristy Kellom

Class of 2007
Interior Design Instructor

BACKGROUND

Spartan alum here! I am a graduate of our MSU ID program, with a master's degree in Environmental Design (interior focus), and am currently progressing in doctoral studies within the School of Planning, Design, and Construction

PASSIONS

Leveraging technology for architectural visualization and problem-solving is my niche interest in built environment applications. Using tools like BIM, VR, and other immersive tools allow us to redefine design thinking. Additionally, unrelenting thoughts and questions about safe spaces in education led me toward research in crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) and community well-being.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Most recently I served as co-chair of MSU's Digital Scholarship Lab (DSL) Advisory Board and was invited as a reviewer with the Educator Developers Network. My course collaboration with MSU's Digital Scholarship Lab was recognized by the [AT&T Excellence in Teaching](#) with Technology Award, which engaged students with multiple forms of immersive/virtual reality to improve learning outcomes. Additionally, I was honored with an SPDC Outstanding Instructor Award in 2024, selected with input by students.

Visualization Experiences

"I want this class to be longer," I overheard a third-year student say at the end of a class in November. How many college students wish for more time in class? This still makes me

smile and reflects the positive attitudes and motivation that define our ID students. The learning process is often challenging but full of moments of joy in discovery. When MSU's Digital Scholarship Lab (DSL) opened, I was part of the first group to use the new 360-panoramic lab. Technologies like VR and this 360-lab allow students to experience environments more realistically than traditional renderings. I saw an opportunity to extend our Revit course's workflow by adding immersive visualization experiences.

About two months into the course, after developing 2D plans and 3D models, students step inside their project's virtual environment to explore the space beyond flat computer screens. A collaboration with the DSL team makes this possible. The 360-panoramic lab allows multiple users to share a fully immersive experience and offers innovative spaces for experimentation, supporting our program's advancement as technology in the built environment evolves rapidly. We are the first CIDA-accredited interior design program to integrate this type of 360 facility into teaching.

The industry increasingly uses immersive technologies for client communication. By providing undergraduates with this exposure, we prepare them for relevant careers through creative, tech-enhanced learning. Students often carry this inspiration into their own designs, visible in capstone projects, competitions, and professional work.



Students testing 3D models in VR. Left to right: Sonjai Taylor, Adrienne Wright, Evan Dytyniak, Kayse Diebel.



360 Panoramic Room at MSU Digital Scholarship Lab

FACULTY PROFILE



Jisun Lee

Assistant Professor in
Interior Design

The Integration of AI in Student Research and Design Projects

I teach Senior Capstone Design, Interior Design Presentation and Media, and an elective on Virtual Reality Applications in Interior Design. My teaching philosophy centers on inspiring students to reach their goals and become leaders in design innovation. By integrating technologies like 3D modeling, VR, AR, and AI, I ensure students are prepared for current industry demands. Beyond technical instruction, I emphasize creative application of these tools to meet design objectives. In Spring 2025, taught VR/AR applications in design and research, and developed content introducing ethical and effective AI use in interior design. Students explore emerging technologies through practical projects, including generating inspirational images via iterative Generative AI prompts—encouraging innovation and adaptability in an evolving industry.

Top Row: Student's AI-generated work —
"Winery located in Napa Valley with a view
of the vineyard."

Bottom Row: Bottom Row: "A hotel lobby in
Portland, Oregon featuring a luxurious,
timeless design style inspired by Oregon's
natural landscape."

BACKGROUND

I am an Assistant Professor of Interior Design at MSU. I joined the program in 2022 after earning my Ph.D. in Interior Architecture and Built Environment at Yonsei University, South Korea. Before joining MSU, I worked as a postdoctoral researcher in Human Centered Design (Formerly Design and Environmental Analysis) at Cornell University and practiced interior design for over 15 years across diverse sectors, including hospitality, retail, workplace, and residential design.

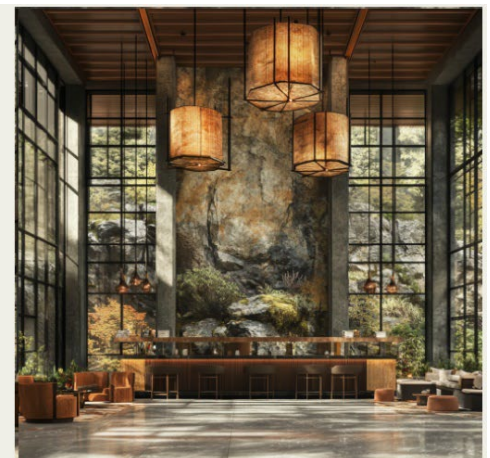
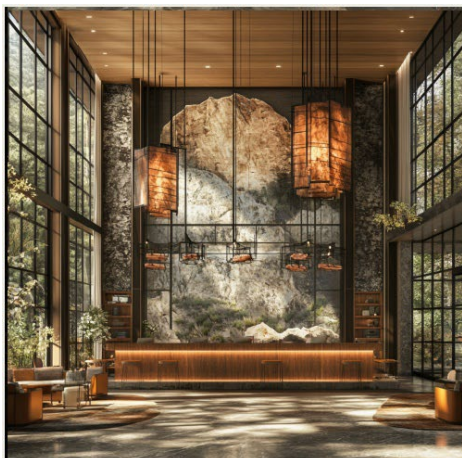
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I am passionate about teaching students how to leverage new design technologies, such as VR and artificial intelligence (AI), to develop creative and innovative design solutions. My efforts to foster an innovative teaching and learning environment have been recognized through two recent grants awarded by the **Catalyst Innovation Program Funds by the MSU Center for Teaching and Learning Innovation**, supporting VR, AR, and generative AI applications in interior design.

This support validates my commitment to integrating cutting-edge technologies into design education. Currently, I am also working on incorporating physiological data, including eye-tracking and galvanic skin response, into evaluations of nature's effects in hospitality environments. It is exciting to explore how individuals' visual attention and bio-reactions differ and how these differences connect to human behaviors.

PASSION

My work focuses on advancing human health and well-being by enhancing the healing properties of built environments, particularly in healthcare and hospitality contexts. I aim to propose design attributes that improve accessibility and inclusivity and foster nature connections that promote healing. I integrate emerging technologies, such as virtual reality (VR) and biosensors, into design evaluations to measure users' emotional, psychological, and behavioral responses to environmental design elements.



FACULTY PROFILE



Eunsil Lee

Class of 1992
Associate Professor in Interior
Design

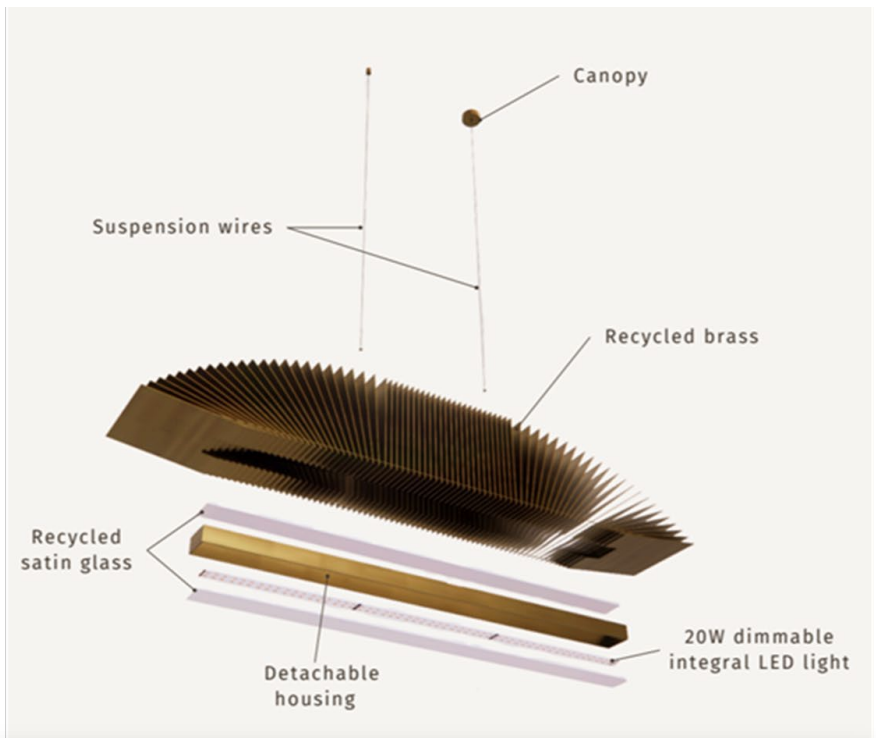
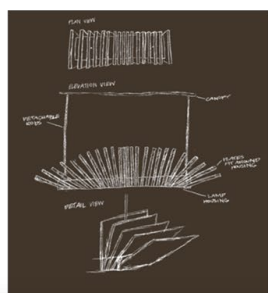
BACKGROUND

I'm Eunsil Lee, and it's been 17 incredible years since I first joined MSU as a faculty member in 2008, after completing both my bachelor's degree in Interior Design and my PhD in Human Environment and Design Management here. Over the years, I've had the pleasure of teaching various courses, from first-year studio to senior synthesis and lighting design classes. Each year brings new challenges, growth, and, of course, a lot of creativity.

Currently, I'm teaching the Interior Design Lighting course, which is a blast! In this class, we dive into everything from lighting systems to indoor environmental quality, and students gain hands-on experience with exciting projects like the Robert Bruce Thompson (RBT) lighting fixture design competition. Last fall, for example, my students designed a lighting fixture for a bakery counter in an internet café. The goal was to make the baked goods look delicious while providing the perfect lighting for the transaction area. I love seeing the new ideas and solutions students come up with each year. (See the images of the project below).

One of the most challenging aspects of our program is the upper-division admission review. We only have space to admit 20 students into the upper division each year, so it's tough to see so many talented students not make the cut. I truly hope that, one day, we'll have more resources to expand and offer more students the opportunity to experience the high-quality design education we're known for here at MSU.

Despite these challenges, it's incredibly fulfilling to watch my students grow and evolve. I've seen so many of them go from dreaming of being HGTV interior decorators to confidently presenting their thesis projects at the senior showcase. Knowing that I've played a part in shaping their journey and helping them develop the skills they need to succeed in the design world is deeply rewarding. I'm truly grateful for the opportunity to teach and mentor these amazing future designers at MSU. It's an honor to be part of their journey, and I can't wait to see what they create next!



IDES 350 Lighting Project by Corinne DiFalco – Fall 2024

FACULTY PROFILE

I graduated with a BA in Interior Design from MSU in 2009. I received a MS from Illinois State University in 2012 in Family and Consumer Sciences with an emphasis in Interior Design. After completing my MS, I returned to East Lansing to work as a residential designer and started teaching part time for the MSUID program. In 2019, I made the jump; I left practicing interior design to become a full-time faculty member at MSU.

Some of the most impactful moments for me as an interior design student were site visits, meeting professionals, and working on real projects. Drawing from my experience as a local designer, I've expanded these opportunities through field trips and community-based experiential learning for 2nd through 4th year students. Getting students into real-world settings with clients and existing spaces remains one of my top goals as an instructor. I teach all levels in the Interior Design program—1st year hand drafting, 2nd year specifications, 3rd and 4th year studios, and professional practice courses. There were many highlights this year, but if I had to pick a few:



In Fall 2024, I introduced an experiential learning project for the first time in the second-year Specifications and Workroom Practices course. While third- and fourth-year students often engage in real-world projects, this was a new and valuable opportunity for our second-year cohort. For the final project, students partnered with DBI Lansing to propose renovations for their client experience space. They conducted site visits, researched the company, selected finishes and furniture, wrote prescriptive specifications, and created floor plans for DBI's Design Showroom. To complement the project, we visited Haworth, where students joined an office and manufacturing tour, participated in a designer panel, and held work sessions. A big thank you to both **Haworth and DBI**—your partnership helped create an impactful learning experience for our students!

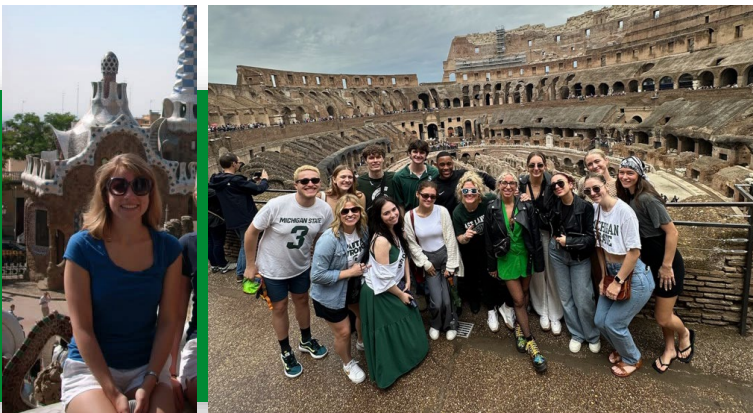


Laura Winter, NCIDQ

Class of 2009
Interior Design Teaching
Specialist



Another highlight this year was launching a pilot material rental program for first-year students in Interior Design Drafting (hand drafting). As many of you may remember, drafting supplies can be expensive and make the program cost prohibitive for some. This initiative aims to make our program more economically accessible. Over 60% of first-year students participated, and I hope to grow the material bank in future years to support additional courses.



This summer I will be leading the Interior Design Study Abroad in Italy! I am very excited to be taking 18 students to visit Venice, Florence, Rome, and the Sorrento coast. Follow along with us on Instagram @msuid_italysa

From left the right: A funny "Now and Then": Laura as a student studying abroad in Spain in 2007. Laura leading Interior Design Study Abroad in Italy in 2023.



Linda Nubani, PhD,
EDAC, CPD

Associate Professor &
Director of Interior Design

I have the pleasure of leading one of the oldest Interior Design programs in the country. What an honor to continue the legacy of this 89-year-old program while expanding its relevance through emerging technologies, design justice, sustainable practice, and community-centered innovation. My academic path began with a BA in Interior Design from the American University in Dubai, followed by an M.Sc. in Architecture from the University of Cincinnati, and then a second M.Sc. and a Ph.D. in Architecture from the University of Michigan, where I also pursued a cognate in Criminology. These experiences laid the foundation for my interdisciplinary focus on design, technology, and crime prevention.

Over the years, I've had the opportunity to teach across all levels of our curriculum, but the senior capstone course remains my favorite. Drawing on over 20 years of professional design practice, I guide students through projects aligned with their passions, while also collaborating with clients throughout Michigan who generously support real-world learning. Since stepping into the role of program director in 2023, I've also had the joy of working closely with IDSO. From professional networking events to community-building activities, their commitment to excellence and leadership is inspiring—and I continue to seek ways to support and raise funding for their work.

On the research front, I'm proud to serve as co-PI on a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant alongside Dr. George Berghorn, Assistant Professor of Construction Management. Together, we're developing the first national curriculum focused on mass timber design and construction. I lead the virtual reality (VR) component of the project, creating immersive educational modules that expand access to students nationwide, especially those without physical construction labs.

My passion for crime prevention through design led me to found and coordinate MSU's Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Program. Through this initiative, I provide certification training to law enforcement officers, planners, architects, and educators. I also proudly serve as a board director of the U.S. CPTED Association, where I help shape national conversations around safety.

As a CPTED consultant and researcher, I've worked on safety-focused design strategies for healthcare facilities, schools, parks, and neighborhoods—collaborating with communities in Michigan, such as Lansing and Detroit, as well as in Texas cities like San Antonio. Our built environment plays a critical role in shaping how we perceive crime—and in some cases, in facilitating it. I want our future designers to understand the responsibility they hold in creating environments that promote safety, inclusion, and dignity for all users.

At the core of everything I do is a belief that design is not just about beauty—it's about people, safety, and social impact.



Conducting a CPTED assessment with the Detroit Police Dept. 10th Precinct as part of our Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation (BCJI) grant, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice.



Community engagement and mapping exercise -- collecting resident input to inform CPTED-based design strategies and updates to the city's master zoning plan.

FACULTY PROFILE



Jessica Flores

Interior Design Teaching Specialist
Founder/CEO
Preservation Forward

BACKGROUND

I am a native West Virginian, proud of my Appalachian roots. Honestly, traveling throughout West Virginia with my family—going to flea markets, junk sales, and historic sites—planted the seed for my love of historic architecture and design.

I am a certified architectural historian and historic building pathologist—a true lover of old buildings and the stories they tell. I connect easily with people and communities passionate about preserving their historic places. I feel I was called to this field at a young age through my grandmother, who enjoyed antiques, old furniture, and architecture.



Jessica Flores with her students at a site visit to the Union Depot, Downtown Lansing



Another site visit to the Meridien Historical Village, Okemos

I hold a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Professional Accreditation from the U.S. Green Building Council. I also earned a Master of Science in Historic Preservation, with a focus on architectural conservation, from Eastern Michigan University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Business Preservation and Construction Technology from Belmont College.

For the past seven years, I've served as a faculty member in the School of Planning, Design and Construction at Michigan State University. I teach history courses within the Interior Design Program and proudly lead the only historic preservation course offered at MSU. I'm also the owner of Preservation Forward, a historic preservation consultancy based in East Lansing, Michigan.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

My business, Preservation Forward, received a historic preservation award from the Michigan Historic Preservation Network in 2021 for a successful adaptive reuse project on the Peabody Lofts/ Foundry bakery in Downtown Albion. I have also had the honor of being featured speaker on topics related to historic preservation and architecture with the Michigan Downtown Association, National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Heritage Ohio

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Preservation Forward is an organization dedicated to conserving and restoring historic buildings, led by Jessica Flores. We are committed to preserving the architectural and cultural heritage of our communities. Our team works to protect and revitalize significant structures, ensuring they endure for future generations to appreciate and enjoy.



Chloe Aalsburg IIDA,
NCIDQ

Class of 2016

Interior Designer III,
C2AE

2013 Interior Design Study Abroad Experience

As a freshman, I was still finding my footing and lacked confidence. One of my most cherished experiences was the 2013 study abroad trip to Romania, Amsterdam, Paris, and London with Dr. April Allen. I barely knew anyone on the trip, and after a canceled flight, I arrived a day late—with no access to money. Dr. Allen immediately took me under her wing, making sure I got settled and could fully experience the trip. Before that, she had seemed a bit strict and intimidating, but I quickly realized how wrong I was. One evening in the Romanian countryside, our group shared some drinks, including shandies and a traditional plum brandy called Țuică. She even showed us how to put beer caps on our eyes as a joke. In that moment, she wasn't just our professor—she was a real person, even a friend.

That trip was filled with unforgettable memories: taking Dr. Allen to the different parts of the city in Amsterdam and giggling at her shocked Southern expressions, exploring new cities, and bonding as a group. After that, she became a cornerstone of our college experience, guiding us through junior and senior year. She even joined us for a flight of beer on my 21st birthday. Those who had the privilege of knowing her were incredibly lucky—she made a lasting impact on both our personal and professional lives, and we miss her deeply.



Dr. April Allen (in memoriam)

ALUMNI PROFILE

I became an alum of the MSU Interior Design program in spring 2023, but my design journey started on day one. I didn't know what I wanted to study when I applied to college—interior design almost fell into my lap. At times, I felt unsure, but it was the support from my professors and peers that helped me grow into the designer I am today—thank you!

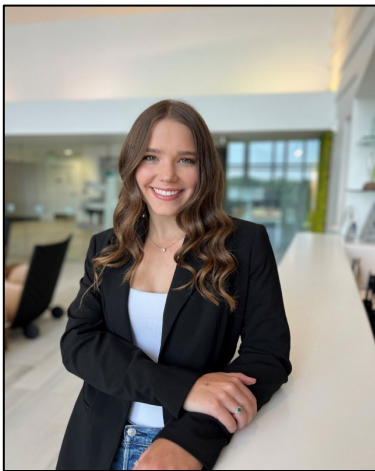
After my freshman year, I landed my first internship with Seven Generations Architecture & Engineering in Kalamazoo. Working summers in my hometown gave me real-world exposure to design processes and taught me valuable lessons about myself as a designer. I encourage students to seek out internships early—they help you discover your interests, strengths, and work style.

After graduation, I accepted a full-time design role at the same company. Thanks to the relationships I had built and the experience I gained, I was able to jump right into active projects. It's exciting (and sometimes daunting) to take on real deliverables and deadlines, but having a supportive team makes all the difference. As a new designer, exploring fresh ideas while learning from others is the best way to grow—and nothing beats seeing your designs come to life!



**Marleigh
VandenBussche**

Class of 2023
Interior Designer
Seven Generations Architecture &
Engineering



Emily Bojo, IIDA

Class of 2023
Creative Strategist,
Interior Environments

My name is Emily Bojo, and I graduated from Michigan State University's Interior Design program in May 2023. At MSU, I was active in the design program and Spartan community serving as IDSO President, an IIDA member, working as a teaching assistant, and completing internships each summer.

A standout experience was my internship at Neumann Smith Architecture in Southfield, MI, which led to a full-time interior designer role after graduation. After nearly two years, I transitioned to Interior Environments in Novi, MI, where I now focus on creative strategy and business development, a pivot driven by my passion for people and strategic growth.

Supporting students has always been important to me. From mentee to mentor in IDSO and IIDA, I've reviewed portfolios, offered career advice, and guided students. As an IIDA board member, I'll continue to pay it forward.

My advice to students: put yourself out there. Many opportunities came from stepping out of my comfort zone, attending events alone, and introducing myself. This industry is small one connection can change everything. Lead with curiosity and passion, and people will notice.

The most meaningful lessons I've learned came from those who taught them. Interior design is about people, and the MSU program gave me the support and opportunities to launch a fulfilling career. I'm committed to offering that same support to future students.

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Many Farms High School + Campus.

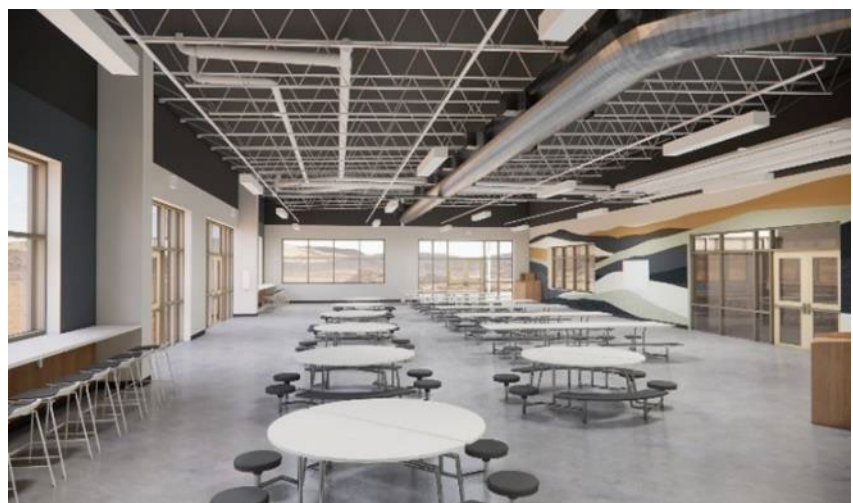
By Marleigh VandenBussche, Class of 2023

Working for Seven Generations has allowed me to change the lives of tribal communities that desperately need new healthcare, education, community, and living environments. Maybe my passion is not designing hospitals for the rest of my career, but it is improving the lives of others. I never saw myself designing penthouses and office buildings for the rich and fancy; as fun as that can be, I knew I wanted to make a difference in the lives of people who have been underserved and underrecognized, and that is just as beautiful.

One of our greatest achievements as a company was the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Many Farms High School + Campus. This project was not only one of our largest, but one of the quickest for its size. Our team had 1 year for design and 5 years for construction. One of the biggest challenges we faced during design was material availability. Many Farms, Arizona is remote, located in the heart of the Navajo reservation, far away from material distribution centers. That challenged us to be very intentional about the kind of materials we were selecting. I had the privilege of working with fantastic architects, designers, and engineers to create a brand-new campus for the students, faculty, and families of the Many Farms tribe in Arizona.

While the process was long and the challenges were difficult, the design was inspired. The beauty of the design ranged from staff and student lounges, classrooms, and extracurricular spaces to staff living quarters, student dormitories, and outdoor environments. Since this project was so large, it was all hands-on-deck for many of us at Bodwe Group. Close to 250 people, including consultants and manufacturer representatives, played a part in completing this project.

I think that the magnitude of collaboration that happened on this project is what made it most impactful for our company. In one way or another, each of us contributed to this project's success and its impact on the Many Farms community.



ALUMNI PROFILE

As a graduate of Michigan State's School of Human Ecology in 1996, I'm proud to be the third generation of women in my family to earn a degree from the university. We are Spartans! The education and training I received at MSU laid the foundation for a successful career across a variety of fields. My focus was interior design, which has led to a wide range of incredible experiences in residential, commercial, education and hospitality projects. I've worked for several firms, launched my own business, and taught interior design at the College for Creative Studies and Lawrence Tech.

For the past 18 years, I've been in sales for a large furniture manufacturer, and recently, I transitioned into the role of Innovation and Strategic Business Leader at IDS, an architectural firm in Troy, Michigan. In this new role, I help drive transition, marketing, and growth strategies within the design firm and regional market.

My advice to current students is simple: the limits are what you make them. While your degree is crucial, it's your curiosity and willingness to push boundaries that will open doors to new opportunities. Design is about so much more than just physical space, it extends to systems, innovation, and design thinking that do not always fit in a traditional role.

Stay open to new opportunities and embrace change. Join a networking group. Learn about all the layers you may have a role to play in and find your passion.



Meredith Vyn

Class of 1996
Innovation and Strategic
Development Leader,
IDS

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**Larissa Fedoroff NCIDQ,
WELL AP, LEED AP ID+C,
EDAC, IIDA**

Class of 2014
Project Interior Designer |
Associate
HKS

Background

It's hard to believe it's been 11 years since graduating from the ID program at MSU. And life can take you on a ton of adventures in that time. I've explored multiple job roles in various parts of the industry and have gained an immense amount of experience from these positions. I've successfully obtained my NCIDQ, LEED AP, WELL AP, and EDAC certifications within this time frame: all of which have elevated my success in my roles and contributed to my career path growth along the way. In my current position at HKS, I focus specifically on design for the Healthcare sector and projects of all types and scales; renovations of emergency departments to brand new multi-tower pediatric hospitals.

The irony of where I am now is that if you had asked me when I was a junior at MSU what my end career goals were, I'd have told you it was to be a senior interior designer in the healthcare design sector working on pediatric hospitals. So, to say that I've already accomplished my "end goal" within a decade of graduating is quite the feat but also speaks to the value of having chosen the MSU ID program in the first place! The program gave me the building blocks to succeed in an industry that was still bouncing back from a recession and being on the cusp of forward-thinking design changes around sustainability and digital project delivery.



Student IIDA Event
ArtPrize Scavenger Hunt



Continuing participation in IIDA after
graduation with Finish 2 Fashion



Celebrating commencement and the next
chapter as an MSU Interior Design graduate

Advice

- Make the most of your classes and resources. If your instructor brings in guest speakers, connect with them afterward or ask plenty of questions in class. Attend industry events whenever possible—networking with professionals and classmates will expand your connections and future opportunities.
- Get involved in the student organization! I loved my time in IDSO as a student—serving as president my senior year strengthened my connections with alumni and industry professionals and helped promote our program. The events they host equip you with valuable tools for success during school and beyond.
- Finally, have fun and enjoy your time at MSU and in the program. Four years may feel long, but it flies by and it's always refreshing to return to campus and walk into Human Ecology (and be breathless climbing to Room 309...oof).



Attending topping out ceremonies and
signing the beam for a special project

ALUMNI PROFILE



Reflections and Advice: Lessons We'd Share with our College Selves



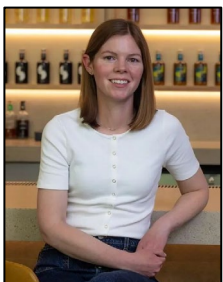
**Lauren
Normandin**

Class of 2019
Interior Designer
Mathison | Mathison
Architects



Amelia Balayti

Class of 2013
Interior Designer
Mathison | Mathison
Architects



**Jen Lindberg,
NCIDQ**

Class of 2009
Interior Design Director
Mathison | Mathison
Architects

As three professional interior designers, at various stages in our careers, we studied at MSU and have landed together at Mathison | Mathison Architects.

Collectively, we feel there are valuable lessons to be learned post-graduation. There are many paths to be taken along the way with various decisions to be made. College provided a wonderful foundation, with the necessary skills to bring value to any team on day one. Transitioning into the professional stage of life marks the start of many more seasons ahead. In hindsight, there is peaceful clarity that provides space to reflect on past experiences through the lens of future wisdom. As designers who have been there, rode the waves of graduation, and survived new jobs, we are delighted to share several tips that we have learned along the way.

Let us introduce ourselves and our paths.

Lauren Normandin, started her career working as an intern for a large architecture and engineering firm specializing in education spaces in Grand Rapids, MI. Upon graduating in 2019 Lauren continued working for the same firm. In 2021 Lauren was craving change and found herself joining the smaller team of architects and interior designers at Mathison | Mathison Architects (MMA). The new position allowed Lauren to work in both the commercial and residential spaces,

Designer Tips:

Lauren:

SOFT SKILLS -School is great for teaching you a wide range of tools, but let's be real you'll learn so much on the job. Every role is unique, and no textbook can fully prepare you for what each job expects and requires.

Amelia:

PEER CRITIQUE-Embracing critique is the best tool to accelerate your creative muscle. Receive feedback with openness and seize the opportunity to revise. Usually within that revision, a better outcome emerges!

Jen:

FIND NEW OPPORTUNITIES -It is a wonderful thing to come out of college knowing so specifically what you are going to do with your degree. Embrace what many of your peers don't have and use that opportunity to explore different genres of design, scales of firms, and organization of teams and roles.

providing her with a much larger breadth of project types. Once again, craving change, Lauren and her husband relocated to the Salt Lake City, UT area in 2022. Lauren's role shifted to a remote position as she remained an Interior Designer for the MMA team and has continued working there for the last 4 years. Throughout the years she has also been an adjunct professor for Weber State University.

While studying at MSU, **Amelia Balayti** worked for the campus at the Design and Construction Office as a Student Designer. Following graduation, Amelia began her career in Grand Rapids, at a full-service architecture and engineering firm working in various markets including, libraries, education, and healthcare. Amelia's family brought her to Atlanta, where she shifted to residential design and founded an interior design business focusing on residential renovations and furnishings. In 2023, Amelia and her family moved back to Michigan, where she had the opportunity to join the MMA team, combining her commercial and residential design experience. She is now a Senior Interior Designer at MMA.

After working for commercial and residential specific firms out of college in Atlanta and Chicago, **Jen Lindberg** moved back to Michigan to start the interior design team at MMA with a combined focus on both sectors of the industry. She is now the Director of Interior Design at MMA.

2025 Interior Design Senior Showcase Celebrated Student Innovation and Community Engagement

IDES 452 Interior Design Synthesis III | Instructor: Dr. Jisun Lee

The Interior Design Program proudly hosted the 2025 Annual Interior Design Senior Showcase on Wednesday, April 30, 2025 at the MSU Digital Scholarship Lab Flex Space in the Main Library. The event highlighted the final work of students in Interior Design Synthesis III, marking the culmination of a year-long design journey.

Each senior presented a comprehensive mixed-use project developed over two semesters—beginning with programming

in Fall 2024 under Professor Laura Winter, and culminating in detailed design proposals in Spring 2025 led by Dr. Jisun Lee.

Projects explored real-world commercial and residential challenges, offering innovative, community-based solutions. Visitors also had the opportunity to experience panoramic renderings of student designs displayed at an immersive 360 Virtual Reality Room adjacent to the presentation space,

which added a dynamic, experiential layer to the showcase.

The program extends its appreciation to the **Gillespie Group**, the **Ingham County Land Bank**, and to the **City of Lansing Department of Economic Development and Planning** for their ongoing support. The event was a fitting celebration of the students' creativity, professionalism, highlighting their readiness to shape environments that are responsive and grounded in community needs.





Selected Capstone Renders from the 2025 Interior Design Senior Showcase





CONGRATULATIONS CLASS of 2025

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Thank you for reading the inaugural edition of INTERIO:SCOPE, the Interior Design Program’s first-ever newsletter for faculty, students, and our cherished alumni. We hope it brought back fond memories and offered fresh inspiration through the work and experiences of our students. Your continued connection to the program means the world to us. We invite you to support the Interior Design Enrichment Fund—an essential resource that sustains the

excellence and growth of our program. Your contributions help fund program resources, facilities upgrades, software acquisition and maintenance, technology enhancements, and professional development opportunities for both students and faculty. With your support, we can continue to offer a forward-thinking design education that prepares our students to lead in a rapidly evolving industry.

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Valerie Wright
Class of 1989

Dawn Cenowa
Class of 2010

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Please email Interior Design Program Director, Dr. Linda Nubani at NubaniLi@msu.edu to learn more about available opportunities.

Newsletter Team

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Lauren Reiss – Interior Design Student, Class of 2026

Thank you to everyone who contributed stories, photos, and support to make this publication possible.