The 2014-15 Think Tank envisions a Greensboro that is designed to be viable, livable, and sustainable through meaningful discourse and planning. The overarching goal of this Think Tank is to draw together a diverse cross-section of relevant university and community partners and students from any major to address selected issues within the city of Greensboro through design thinking, promoting a commitment to collaborative learning, public impact and sustainability.

Following a process of community-engaged research and design, this Think Tank will produce a vision for Greensboro at a critical time for university-community relations. Projects like UNCG’s Spartan Village and Lee Street expansion, the Downtown University Campus, the new Greensboro Performing Arts Center, and the South Elm Arts District are but a few of the projects and initiatives that this Think Tank will consider. Quite frankly, the time is right for UNCG’s faculty and students to take a leadership role in long-term planning and design of Greensboro in response to the city’s arts, cultural, and economic assets.

This Think Tank will engage students and faculty with community partners through “real world” projects. Faculty in the Art and Interior Architecture departments will be able to use real, existing buildings and spaces in Greensboro as sites for research projects, ranging from preservation-related projects for historic structures to initiatives to integrate energy-efficient and sustainable design solutions into these buildings. Students will “get their hands dirty” exploring the connections between their curriculum, faculty research projects, and community partners’ goals. Community partners, such as Preservation Greensboro, Action Greensboro, Downtown GSO Alliance, and others will provide the structures and sites for the projects as well as access to resources and additional community partners; in turn, these partners will benefit from the applied research and scholarship of these projects.
### FALL 2014 [tentative schedule]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 19</td>
<td>Introduction + Field Trip</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 02</td>
<td>Greensboro Historical Museum, Civil Rights Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 16</td>
<td>Action Greensboro, Interactive Resource Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 30</td>
<td>GSO City Planning Dept., Greensboro Housing Coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oct 9-11</strong></td>
<td><strong>FIELD TRIP - Imagining America Conference, Atlanta, GA</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 14</td>
<td>NO CLASS - Fall Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 21</td>
<td>IARc Community Design Workshop, Guest Speaker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 4</td>
<td>Design Charrette @ Center for Community-Engaged Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 18</td>
<td>tentative FIELD TRIP - Richmond Storefront for Community Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 25</td>
<td>FINAL REVIEW of Research</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **Instructional Format:** Bi-weekly 3 hour workshops and design charrettes. A charrette is a technique from architecture and design, from French “charrette,” or cart. The history of design competitions in the French Beaux-Arts tradition suggests that students who worked very quickly near the end of a deadline would jump on the cart, “en charrette,” that instructors used to collect the work. The word charrette has come to mean a very intense, focused, short period of time for which participants have clearly-stated goals for their intense and active productivity.

- **Special Events:** guest speakers, travel to Atlanta for Imagining America Conference

- **Research and Analysis:** Greensboro history, Case study precedents, surveys, interviews.

The purpose of this proposed coursework is to introduce and incorporate students into the multi-faceted development process of ambitiously scaled, civic Art & Design projects including pre-planning, city policy-making, funding, as well as the actual design and implementation of ideas.

### SPRING 2015

- **Instructional Format:** Bi-weekly 3 hour workshops and design charrettes. Students will work in small groups of interdisciplinary teams to come up with diagrams, sketches, drawings, and mock-ups.

- **Special Events:** guest speakers, meetings and presentations to City of Greensboro Planning Department staff

- **Planning and Design:** Diagrams, drawings, scale models, posters of schematic designs.
There are a number of national precedents from which this Think Tank will take inspiration. A few of those are listed below. The Think Tank will collect additional case studies and precedents during the fall semester.

- **University of Oregon’s Sustainable City Year Project**  
  [http://sci.uoregon.edu/scyp](http://sci.uoregon.edu/scyp)  
  This university-based initiative solicits proposals from cities in Oregon each year, and faculty and students spend a year addressing issues that are identified by the city in its proposal. Using existing faculty and courses, this project has become a national model for leveraging university/community partnerships.

- **Syracuse University’s Connective Corridor Project**  
  [http://connectivecorridor.syr.edu/](http://connectivecorridor.syr.edu/)  
  This university-based initiative sought out community working group partners for long-term planning and design initiatives to connect Syracuse University with its broader urban context. Products of this project include bus shelters, bike lanes, pedestrian trails, and facade improvements.

- **buildingcommunityWORKSHOP’s Neighborhood Stories Project**  
  This Dallas, TX, non-profit organization’s project involves detailed studies of various historic neighborhoods in Dallas. Through this initiative, bcWORKSHOP convenes diverse groups of residents in Dallas to discuss the history and future of Dallas. Using a mixed-method approach to researching these neighborhoods, bcWORKSHOP generates exhibits and films for each neighborhood studied in this project.

- **The Atlanta Beltline Project**  
  [http://beltline.org/](http://beltline.org/)  
  This Atlanta, GA, project has become a national model for “rails-to-trails” initiatives that connect urban areas using pedestrian trails, greenways, light rail transit, and public art installations and events. Using abandoned rail lines that encircle Atlanta, this long-term project engages various constituents and partners in developing a master plan for smart urban growth in an otherwise sprawling edge city.
selected readings and references

Bamberger, Bill + Greg Snyder, Stories of Home and the Mobile Gallery: Photography, Architecture, Community

Bell, Bryan, Good Deeds, Good Design: Community Service Through Architecture, Princeton Architectural Press, 2004


Dallas City Design Studio, Connecting the City, City of Dallas, National Endowment for the Arts, 2012

Feld, Brad, Startup Communities: Building an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Your City, Wiley, 2012

Haar, Sharon, The City as Campus: Urbanism and Higher Education in Chicago, University of Minnesota Press, 2011


Jacobs, Jane, The Death and Life of Great American Cities, 1961

Mau, Bruce, Life Style, Phaidon, 2000

Mau, Bruce & The Institute Without Borders, Massive Change, Phaidon, 2004


The exciting aspect of a Think Tank like this one is that the content of the final product is unknown. Students and faculty will work with uncertainty, unknowns, serendipity, collisions, and overlaps that will only be evident in time. The format of presenting the final product will consist of three parts:

1. DESIGN DOCUMENT

The design document will include students’ research sections on precedent studies, historical analysis, photographs, drawings, and diagrams. In addition, there will be sections to cover the art and design proposals contributed by student teams. The document will be presented to City of Greensboro staff, either in a public meeting or in a private meeting in the municipal building.

2. PUBLIC EXHIBIT

The contents of the design document will be presented in an exhibit in a gallery or other public space in downtown Greensboro. An alternate plan is to design a mobile exhibit space that will be located in various neighborhoods and districts in Greensboro. Students and faculty will re-format their work in larger formats that are more appropriate for gallery displays. Mock-ups and models of certain elements will be possible in such a setting, and students will be encouraged to contribute large-scale products for display.

3. DOCUMENTARY FILM

Students will be encouraged to generate a 20-30 minute documentary that illustrates the Think Tank’s process. Community partners, faculty, and students will contribute interviews for this film, and students will be challenged to generate a documentary worthy of student film festivals both on and off campus. An example of this kind of documentary is “IF YOU BUILD IT,” which covers a design-build program in Bertie County, NC and has received international and national acclaim.