

# Letter from the Dean

**By Ralph Stern |** We are collectively entering our Centennial, celebrating one hundred years of architecture at the University of Manitoba. This is a remarkable moment in the history of the Faculty and I'm certain that there is great excitement throughout the alumni community for such an anniversary. In the past months, I have often tried to imagine that moment in 1913; the seminal moment in which the professional design community stepped forward and resolutely determined that "we are now here, but we must go there!"; a hope and demand leading to the creation of the University's first Professorship in Architecture.

There was a great and propitious opportunity to be realized and realized it was: an opportunity robustly developing from a single Professorship into a Department and then unfolding into an independent Faculty under the Deanship of John A. Russell. Since that moment at which "Jack" Russell took the reins, the Faculty has grown substantially, expanding and diversifying such that today the Faculty of Architecture houses four highly recognized and professionally accredited graduate programs: Architecture, City Planning, Interior Design, Landscape Architecture.

In addition to such significant strength in our graduate programs, we also have a remarkable undergraduate program in Environmental Design; a program with a strong pedigree, an important trajectory, and the potential to be a central force in shaping highly innovative and broad-based design approaches to a sustainable future. Beginning a century ago as a Beaux Arts institution and transforming into Canada's leading faculty of modern architecture, the Faculty of Architecture promotes a sustainable future as our shared future. It is a future shared not only by our alumni and faculty, but, most importantly, by our students, the students of today and tomorrow.

Personally I am proud, honoured, and humbled to be part of this venerable tradition. As with that moment in 1913, the year 2013 presents another great opportunity; an opportunity for the Faculty of Architecture to reflect on its remarkable history, to recognize its significant accomplishments, and to move forward with renewed rigor and commitment into its second century. As such, it is of greatest importance to the Faculty and to its alumni that this coming year be used as a springboard for engaging a vital new future; to confirm, adjust, or realign its goals to engage the challenges

awaiting all design professions.

During the past year, the Faculty of Architecture has made significant progress in multiple areas. We have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Technical University of Munich (MoU), one of Germany's premier institutions for architecture, landscape architecture, and city planning. The MoU facilitates student, faculty, and administrative staff exchange in the areas of innovative design and sustainability. Closely associated with the TUM is the Oskar von Miller Forum, an "independent initiative of the Bavarian construction industry." Our interest in establishing close working relationships with these two institutions is coupled with another trajectory, that of working together with TransSolar. TransSolar is a global leader in the area of "climate engineering" and sustainable design and an engineering firm central to the successful realization of Winnipeg's new Manitoba Hydro Place.

Taken together, this triad of relationships underscores the Faculty of Architecture's commitment to our environment. Within the University, we are exploring new possibilities of working together with the Faculty of Engineering; inaugurated by a successful event jointly organized by the Partners Program and Friends of Engineering and hosted by Manitoba Hydro. Internally, we have strengthened our Environmental Design Program with the addition of two stellar new members of the Faculty: Dr. Mohamad Araji and Assistant Professor Alyssa Schwann.

In addition to new international partnerships and an expanded commitment to Environmental Design, we have also significantly added to our capabilities in the area of digital design and fabrication. With the generous support of the Student Technology Fee Fund, the Faculty of Architecture has made a \$250,000 commitment to new digital fabrication equipment. This equipment was instrumental in facilitating the work on the successful 2013 Warming Huts Competition Entry undertaken by Environmental Design Program students; work that would simply have not been possible one year ago.

To underscore the commitment to our future and to our alumni, our Partners Program, situated within the Office of the Dean, will soon be expanded to Partners International so that we can more actively engage our alumni across the globe. The Partners offices are now in John A. Russell Building, in the stylish area that many

of you may remember as the Slide Library. Doug Clark, who has ably led the Partners Program over the past years, has left the University of Manitoba for new endeavours. We are thankful for the significant contributions that he made to Partners. The Partners Executive Board will continue to be led by Jacqueline Jasinski, who is bringing great expertise, skill, and enthusiasm to the Partners Program.

In the coming weeks and months we will be sending out a series of updates on the new initiatives of the Faculty of Architecture. It is my sincere wish that Alumni will feel welcome to "come home" during this Centennial year. And, as always, I welcome your input into collectively creating the future of our Faculty as the best means of honouring the Faculty of Architecture's remarkable history. ■

Sincerely,

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[umanitoba.ca/faculties/architecture/facstaff/facilst/Stern.html](http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/architecture/facstaff/facilst/Stern.html)

