

## **Design Review Board: Annual Report, 2012-2013**

As you read our report, recall that the DRB's current role is advisory—its recommendations are not binding. This may well be appropriate, as there is no professional design presence on the committee, and the DRB's recommendations often relate to the tastes and predispositions of the particular group that serves on the committee at any given moment. Nor is there a uniform procedure at Colorado College for design-related decisions. Projects are often initiated autonomously by groups or individuals without sufficient consideration of how they might impact the larger campus. In fact, design projects are not consistently brought to the attention of the DRB, so that often the committee is not consulted on projects that could or should benefit from its review. Such design solutions may suit the needs of the individual or group, but may encroach on or compromise adjacent areas of the campus, e.g., blocking a view, removing or adding parking spots in inappropriate ways, extending recreational activities into academic areas, etc. Solutions might not be consonant with our identity as an institution or our standards for sustainability.

This year the Design Review Board considered and weighed in on a number of design projects, ranging from the renovation of Slocum to the choice of colors for the repainting of College owned houses on Weber Street, to the design of the gardens and greenhouse associated with Synergy House. Some of these projects were already under way, others merely proposed. Some were Facilities-initiated. Others were Student Life or student-initiated. In a number of cases we became aware of projects that were underway, but that had not been brought to the DRB. Sometimes projects were brought before us when it was too late for our recommendations to have a meaningful impact. These inconsistencies point to the larger group of issues about the DRB's structure and responsibilities as described above. Clearly these issues have evolved over time and need now to be reconsidered.

Without power to approve of initiatives in any real sense, the Board has no authority and becomes a voluntary forum for discussion of projects. In that regard, it is largely successful; in several cases disasters have been averted and many effective solutions have been found through the collaborative processes that the DRB encourages. However, campus design decisions are too important to be conducted in such an ad hoc manner. Design includes aesthetics, functionality, environmental and economic sustainability, and questions of heritage and legacy. Clearly we need a cohesive (but not uniform) vision of the campus design ethos and aesthetic and a collaborative process to ensure that vision is realized.

The Chair of the DRB has presented these concerns to the Faculty Governance subcommittee of the FEC. It is our hope that the role of the DRB will be reevaluated, and procedures for campus design will be established in light of Strategic Planning outcomes and FEC Governance objectives.

Respectfully submitted,

Gale Murray, Chair

On behalf of the DRB

Esther Redmount, Fred Tinsley (faculty)

Lisa Lister, John Lauer, Jan Edwards, Barry Hunt, (staff)

Chris Coulter (ex officio); George Eckhardt, (ex officio)

Jessica Hunter-Larsen, Cecelia Gonzales, Dan Crosse, Emily Wright (consulting members)

Daniel Alvarado, Garrett Benisch, William Carson (students)