The American Institute of Architects has a stated goal to help communities create a sustainable relationship between humans, the natural environment, and place. By achieving balance between cultural, environmental, and economic systems, communities can sustain a place as a stage for human settlement. Implicit in this goal is an understanding of sustainability from the large-scale urban context to the details of the building context.

Schools of architecture have a similar mandate. The National Architectural Accrediting Board's (NAAB) Conditions for Accreditation for architecture programs require that students be able to design projects that optimize, conserve, or reuse natural and built resources; provide healthful environments for occupants or users; and reduce the environmental impacts of building construction and operations on future generations through means such as carbon-neutral design, bioclimatic design, and energy efficiency (source: NAAB).

Innovative, sustainability-oriented projects are currently being produced in most schools of architecture, and several schools have assumed true leadership positions in the field. Sustainability education in the academy occurs in architecture and urban design studios, as well as in lectures, workshops, seminars, special projects, actual construction, and in interuniversity competitions.

Separated somewhat from the constraints of the real world of practice, schools across the nation are experimenting with leading-edge approaches and technologies for sustainable design that have not yet been adopted in the professional practice mainstream. Academics, students, and practitioners should understand, discuss, and critique these approaches, and the AIA National Conference is the best, if not the only, national venue for achieving this dialogue.

The panel assembled for this session will result from a call for proposals during the fall 2012 semester from all of the accredited architecture schools in the United States. Specifically, presentations will be sought from the best sustainable design education case studies in America. Competitions are ongoing from ACSA, AIAS, and ASHRAE, and winners will be announced soon. Designs are currently underway for the next round of the Solar Decathlon competition. Innovative construction projects, like Studio 804 at the University of Kansas, have set high bars among educational institutions.

Three teams will be selected to present projects during the first half of the session. The panelists will be asked to concentrate on "leading-edge" techniques and technologies supporting sustainable design of buildings and sites and/or sustainable urban design. In the second half of the session, a moderator will elicit a wide-ranging discussion between the panelists and the professional audience.

Learning Objectives:
1. Explore the application of innovative and sustainable building technologies and approaches in architecture education.

2. Observe a variety of approaches to sustainable site design and sustainable urbanism in architecture education.

3. Examine, through a series of best-practices case studies, specific details and construction techniques that support sustainable design practices.

4. Discuss, among the assembled professors, students, and practitioners, the future of sustainable design education and its ramifications in real-world practice.

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