

# Dean's Roundup

Friday, 17 January, 2014

**Roundup:** *Ceiling function*, the mathematical operation of rounding a number up to the next higher integer.

**Roundup:** a term in American English referring to the process of gathering animals into an area, known as a "Muster" in Australia.

**Rounding up:** when a helmsman cannot control a boat and it heads into the wind

**Roundup:** the plan for an invasion of northern France by Allied forces during World War II (Wikipedia)

**Dean's Roundup:** part blog, part bulletin; part honour roll, part curatorial [**cu**'ra-to'**ri**-al (ky<sup>oo</sup>'r<sup>ee</sup>-tôr'<sup>ee</sup>-al, -tôr'-)] n. nounised by the Dean from curator + editorial]

Dear all,

Since arriving in HKU last May, I have had many conversations with architecture colleagues and friends inside and outside of the university about the balance of the technical and the abstract. Conversations are sometimes in terms of modern versus traditional; sometimes it's parametric versus conventional architectural models; or art versus science; training versus education; immediate versus longer term benefits to the profession; local versus global education; down-stream versus up-stream 'depth'; realism versus abstraction; creativity versus technicality; buildability; and other formulations of what is essentially an overlapping cluster of issues.

In response I have promised the local professions that we will have an active conversation about these things within the faculty and this has started. Indeed, it is a conversation that has been going on for some time – probably constantly in the life of the Faculty. Weijen, as Head of Department, with colleagues, is reviewing several key points of the architectural curriculum. Informal discussions I have had at various stages include the idea of specialization in the final undergraduate year (greater abstraction and emphasis on form, greater emphasis on implementation and technical specification etc); joint or coordinated studios with structural engineers; using BIM at all levels of teaching; extending the length of the dissertation to allow for 'downstream' development of ideas; and others.

The issue of balance within a curriculum is a more general one beyond this particular architectural debate. Feedback I am getting from the outside suggests, for example, that DUPAD's professional MSc has historically been strongly geared towards the local market, specifically HK government planning. There is scope for greater connection with urban design as practiced in architecture and with landscape. ACP has built itself a great reputation for conservation management but is not as connected as it could be with vernacular architectural practice and research or materials conservation.

All of our programmes are strong. I would like in the year ahead of us to start to develop a more articulated set of pedagogic strategies for the subjects we teach. No-one that I talk to doubts that our Faculty's students are the best in their subject in HK and the region and among the best in the world. I would like to make sure that we are giving them one of the best learning experiences possible and getting those difficult curricula balances just right – for our students and for the professions in which they will one day take up leadership positions. As far as I can see we have a lot right already. There is always room for improvement however and I shall enjoy exploring this challenge with you all – and indeed with students – during the course of 2014. The forthcoming Faculty Development Plan is a chance to flag up strategic issues and ideas and agenda for change. On the basis of departmental inputs to the FDP, I shall be working with Heads to produce a succinct pedagogical statement for

each Department and Division, setting out the aims and expectations that will guide our teaching and looking for a niche in each subject that we and our students can happily defend, promote and be proud of.

Research and engagement activity is picking up after the winter break – congratulations for the achievements listed below!

Chris

## Department of Architecture

### 1. Ms. Tris Kee

- presented a research paper "Community Engaged Dialect in Design Practice" at the Eighth International Conference on Design Principles and Practices, Vancouver, Canada, 16-18 January 2014.
- was invited by M+, the new museum in West Kowloon Cultural District to give a speech with Aric Chen, Curator for the M+: The Museum and Architecture Collection on 11 January 2014.

### 2. Ms. Eunice Seng and Mr. Koon Wee

- Eunice Seng, H. Koon Wee and SKEW Collaborative were the exhibition architects for the recently opened "Building M+ Exhibition: The Museum and Architecture Collection" at ArtisTree, TaiKoo Place.
- Foreword (Excerpts) by Dr Lars Nittve, Executive Director, M+ "Building M+: The Museum and Architecture Collection", celebrates the design of M+'s building, lending insight into its process and progress after approximately four months of intensive work. But it also provides a snapshot of an aspect of the M+ collection in the making - the part focusing on architecture. As with all Mobile M+ exhibitions leading up to the building's completion - of which this is the fifth - we hope to provide you, the public, with a glimpse of the future of M+.  
<http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/wkcda-presents-building-m-the-museum-and-architecture-collection/>

### 3. Mr. Tom Verebes

- following an external peer review process, Verebes signed a contract to Guest-edit a special issue of *AD Architectural Design*, titled, '*Mass Customised Cities*', to be published in 2015, featuring articles, interviews and projects on questions concerning the impact of design and fabrication technologies at the scale of the twenty-first century city

### 4. Dr. W S Wong

- was appointed by the University of Bristol as external examiner of oral examination for Doctor of Education at January 2014.

## Department of Real Estate and Construction

### 1. Dr. Koh Tas Yong

- was invited to attend the Hong Kong Construction Safety Benchmarking Group (CSBG) meeting on 14 Jan 2014. In this meeting, Dr Koh, together with practitioners from the Hong Kong construction industry, had exchanged views and ideas on improving construction project safety performance of the industry. Among the issues discussed, a novel Construction Safety Passport Scheme proposed by the Hong Kong Construction Association (HKCA) had been intensively debated. Dr Koh had suggested to the representatives of the HKCA to start piloting the Scheme in their members' projects and advise the CSBG (a grouping of major clients in Hong Kong) in due course to further explore the practical issues that may arise in the initial trial implementation of the Scheme.

### 2. Dr. Wilson Lu

- published a research article "**Lu, W.S.** (2013). Beyond the inert and non-inert dichotomy: towards 'building a zero waste Hong Kong'. *Building Journal*, 13, 46-49.
- was invited to give a talk ""Bridging BIM and Buildings" to Leighton Construction Ltd. (Macau) on 14 January 2014.

### 3. Dr. SW Poon

- Dr. S.W. Poon, was re-appointed by the Director of Buildings as a member of the Structural Engineers Registration Committee Panel and a member of Structural Engineers Registration Committee for a period of two years commencing 1 January 2014.

### 4. Professor Steve Rowlinson

- was invited to Kochi University of Technology, Japan to deliver a lecture "Recent Developments in Procurement" and to sit on the thesis advisory committees for three PhD candidates on Kochi's International Programme in Professor Watanabe's Frontier Studies Laboratory.

## Department of Urban Planning and Design

### 1. Professor Rebecca Chiu

- was appointed as Expert Member of the Nansha New District Town Planning Board by the Nansha Management Committee of Development Area.

### 2. Dean Webster

- gave a talk 'Healthy Cities by Design' at the HKIA
- was appointed external examiner for a PhD candidate in the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, London.
- was invited to join the International Advisory Board of the proposed Asian Institute of City Management, Singapore.

### 3. Professor Anthony Yeh

- has joined the launching ceremony of the "Hiking and Exploring along Shenzhen Bay" in celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the Chinese Academy of Urban Planning and Design, Shenzhen Branch on 10 January 2014. (please see photo below).

