University of Cincinnati to Collaborate on New Greater Ohio Living Architecture Center

On September 25, 2018, at the 16th Annual CitiesAlive Conference in New York City, the Green Roofs for Healthy Cities and Green Infrastructure Foundation announced that the Greater Ohio Living Architecture Center (GOLA) will be one of four North American locations chosen to serve as a Regional Center of Living Architecture Excellence.

Faculty from the University of Cincinnati’s College of DAAP and College of Arts and Sciences will collaborate with faculty from Kent State University and Heidelberg University in establishing GOLA as an academic and professional resource committed to improving green infrastructure in Ohio and the Great Lakes region. The three Ohio universities will partner in coordinating and hosting professional training and academic conferences to promote living architecture research, pedagogy, professional training, and policy development specific to the region.

Professor Virginia Russell, FASLA, RLA, LEED AP, GRP and immediate past Chair of the Green Roofs for Healthy Cities Research Committee is one of the University of Cincinnati’s academics working on the collaborative project. “The leaders in this new Center have been collaborating on research and pedagogy in Living Architecture since 2008, so this recognition as a Center of Excellence by two international leaders in Living Architecture gives us a platform for launching new initiatives and reaching new funding sources. Our Midwestern focus is especially exciting for connecting with other initiatives in our region that are providing research and training for green jobs, green infrastructure, food security, and other urban resilience issues.” Professor Russell is the Director of the Master of Landscape Architecture and Bachelor of Science of Horticulture programs in the School of Planning.

Dr. Ishi Buffam is an Associate Professor with the University of Cincinnati in the Department of Biological Science and the Department of Geography. “I am very excited to enter into this partnership with Kent State and Heidelberg Universities, further anchoring the body of Living Architecture research and education being undertaken in the state of Ohio, and helping our region develop into a leader in this
The field of Living Architecture is fascinating because it envisions a marriage between the built and natural environment, in a way that provides many needed ecosystem services in cities. For this reason, Living Architecture elements like green roofs and walls are becoming mainstream – in terms of policy, public interest, and implementation. We want to help maintain and grow Ohio’s position at the core of that movement, building from the solid base of expertise and passion which already exists here.”

University of Cincinnati’s Dr. Ishi Buffam (left) with Dr. Mark Mitchell (right) from Heidelberg University, on the Green Roof at the Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati. © University of Cincinnati

Dr. Reid Coffman, founding GOLA Director and Chair of the Green Roofs for Healthy Cities Research Committee is an Associate Professor of the College of Architecture and Environmental Design at Kent State. Dr. Coffman echoes the importance that GOLA will have on the region, “The Centers will build upon much of the work in Living Architecture already underway at these universities, setting the stage for new developments in research and innovation, while helping students prepare to enter this growing industry.” As for students interested in Living Architecture, Dr. Buffam says, “The GOLA center will provide a great opportunity to introduce students to exciting new research, courses, and training in the growing fields of living architecture, urban green design, and urban ecology.”

Students interested in Living Architecture can learn more about what DAAP offers, including the Horticulture Program’s Certificate in Green Roofs, by visiting the College’s website. Additionally, alumni and undergraduates interested in the field are encouraged to apply to the School of Planning’s Master of Landscape Architecture. The Master of Landscape Architecture program’s curriculum is associated with the work of GOLA and with the Sustainable Sites Initiative SITES©. More about the program’s admission requirements can be found here.