

2015 ROBERT L. SIGMON SERVICE-LEARNING AWARD RECIPIENT

Travis L. Hicks, University of North Carolina at Greensboro



Four and a half years ago, TRAVIS L. HICKS, M.Arch., left a successful career in architecture and interior design to teach full-time at UNC Greensboro. As an Assistant Professor of Interior Architecture, he fully embraces community engagement pedagogy, focusing his scholarship and teaching on projects that advance social justice. He teaches a process that affords equal voice to all members to the design team (which includes community partners) while recognizing conditions related to poverty, empowerment, degraded environments, and lack of education resources. Examples of student designed projects from his Interior Architecture Spring 2014 course include a homeless shelter for a church in High Point, homes for Habitat for Humanity in Raleigh, and a greenhouse for Steelman Park in Greensboro. Hicks

received the university's Mary Francis Stone Teaching Excellence Award in 2012, and the College of Arts & Sciences Teaching Excellence Award in 2013.

Hicks' approach to design has significantly shaped the Interior Architecture department's collective understanding and implementation of community-engaged design, impacting "culture, activities, and vision," according to the Chair. Most significantly, Hicks helped launch the Center for Community-Engaged Design (CC-ED) in a storefront space in the low-income Glenwood neighborhood near UNCG. The center connects students and faculty with community members and partners, engaging diverse stakeholders in design processes that address specific and often critical needs.

The dedication of the Center in April 2014 coincided with the inaugural Novem Mason Symposium on Community-Engaged Design, which highlighted the community-engaged design of faculty, staff, and students and featured a distinguished panel of experts assembled by Professor Hicks. In conjunction with the symposium, over 100 faculty, students, community partners, and alumni spent six hours participating in community-engaged design projects throughout the community. Since opening, the CC-ED has been engaged in numerous projects including a community-engaged summer studio directed by Professor Hicks involving 11 interns in four projects, including one where students worked with a local organization to conceive a Housing First approach to ending homelessness; and one involving redevelopment of College Grove, an impoverished area in Greensboro, to include a community center, medical clinic, and garden. For his outstanding work in interior design education, the Council for Interior Design Accreditation awarded Hicks the 2014 CIDA Award of Excellence.

In 2014, Hicks published a chapter on research in practice in the 15th of the The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice, a national standard for architectural practice. He has presented at numerous national and international conferences and helped secured multiple community-based research grants, graduate research assistantships, and undergraduate research awards. He is currently serving as a Faculty Fellow for Community Engagement, through UNCG's Faculty Teaching and Learning Center. In 2014 he was one of ten finalists for the national Ernest A. Lynton Award for the Scholarship of Engagement for Early Career Faculty, sponsored by NERCHE.

Hicks received his master's in architecture from Princeton University in 1997 and his B.S. in architecture, *summa cum laude* from Georgia Tech in 1995.