

Freelance design program lets students build careers

By Scott McFetridge
Of the Emerald

Students can learn only so much in classes that don't include practical experience, and finding ways for students to apply their studies is often difficult. However, the School of Architecture and Allied Arts found a way 20 years ago, and it's still working.

Assistant Dean George Hodge says that soon after he came to the University, he found many local residents needed help on small home projects and didn't know where to turn for help. They didn't want to spend the money to hire a professional architect but didn't have the knowledge to complete the project on their own, he says.

It was just a matter of setting up a freelance program that would match the students to those in the community, he says.

"The program gives the experienced student some extra income and experience in their field," Hodge says. "No matter



Photo by Michael Clapp

Architecture student Cheryl Martin says the University's freelance design program gives her more free time while adding to her income.

been most consistently involved with the program during the last two years is fourth-year architecture student Cheryl Martin. The freelance program has given her experience in a wide variety of areas and has been her primary source of income this year, Martin says.

"This is my bread and butter, my way of making it," Martin says. "This way I can at least pay the bills and buy groceries."

Last year Martin was forced to balance her full-time architecture studies with a work-study job, another job in a local architecture office and her family, she says. The freelance program gives her more control of her time, she says.

"I set the wage and it's always something different," she says. "It forces me to do things I wouldn't ordinarily do."

Martin has worked on a variety of projects during the last two years, some more unusual than others.

She drew sketches of the Medford Civic Auditorium from blueprints to help potential supporters visualize the finished project. Another project involved designing a booth for the Junction City Scandinavian Festival that was shared by four craftspeople. And she was even called upon to mingle with hanging slabs of meat in order to measure and draw plans of a local meat plant.

"Most of the people who come to me know what they want but don't want to pay an architect fee. They want to pay a student fee," Martin says. "People will have a project go-

ing but say, 'what's it going to look like?'"

Marian Donnelly, a professor emeritus in art history who employed Martin to draw plans detailing the history of Scandinavian architecture, says she is enthusiastic about the freelance program. For her needs, a student would be more qualified to do the project than a professional architect, she says.

"Instead of someone just stuck in an office, I would certainly have gone for a student who has day-to-day contact with historic architecture," Donnelly says.

Hodge says the time devoted to a project can vary widely, but usually takes around 10 to 12 hours to design. Payment often is based on an hourly rate.

'Instead of someone just stuck in an office, I would certainly have gone for a student who has day-to-day contact with historic architecture. It just seems a natural thing for faculty to work with students.'

— Marian Donnelly

Because students must deal directly with clients and builders, they begin to understand that once they design something, it won't necessarily be built exactly as they thought, Martin says. And designing now means students may avoid making some mistake later, she says.



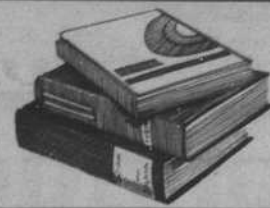
George Hodge

how trivial it may seem, it can show desire and constructive ability."

Hodge's system is simple. Students sign up on a list for future projects posted in Lawrence Hall. Hodge then submits to potential clients, on a rotational basis, the names of those students who he believes are most qualified for a given project.

While only two or three students were willing to design consistently last year, the number involved has increased this fall, Hodge says. Since the state has recovered somewhat from the recession, which stalled building for the last two years, there should be more opportunities for current students to find work, he says.

One of the students who has



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