

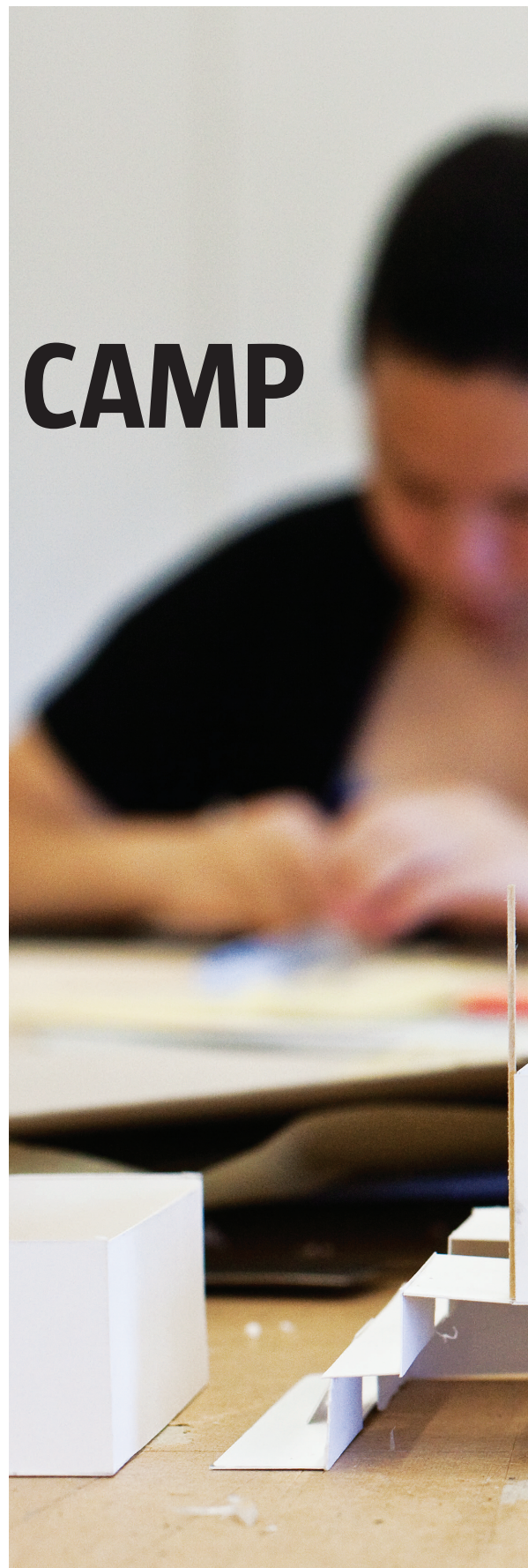
DESIGN CAMP

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A STUDENT WHO ENTERS COLLEGE as a prospective English or biology major has a pretty good idea of what he or she's getting into: chances are, that student has already taken Advanced Placement classes in his or her chosen subject. Not so for the would-be architect. Few high schools teach technical drawing; none prepares students to slog through all-nighters in the studio, or to endure withering crits. How can a 17-year-old be confident that he or she will actually like architecture school and succeed in it?

That teenager would find out at an architecture summer camp. These camps (programs, really) allow high-schoolers—and, increasingly, college students and adult professionals—to experience architectural education firsthand for a few weeks in the summer, an appetizer they can try before the main course of a B.Arch. or an M.Arch. degree. Today there are 66 such programs around the country, most hosted by colleges and universities, a few by nonprofits or arts institutions, according to Lee W. Waldrep, assistant director of the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Their popularity has surged: "In the '80s, there were maybe 20 or 30," Waldrep notes. This is partly because the schools themselves reap great benefits from the programs—extra revenue, a means of employing graduate students, and, perhaps, a small boost to recruitment.

We sent three reporters to three different campuses, where each of them spent a day learning the design-camp ropes. Turn the page to see what they found.





DISCOVER ARCHITECTURE

University Of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

A SUNNY SUMMER DAY on the University of Illinois' Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) campus finds a group of 65 high school students ensconced in the top-floor studio of the Ralph Johnson-designed architecture school. Usually, it's home to the school's elite, the graduate thesis students. But for two weeks in July (there's another session in June, too), these juniors and seniors come from across Illinois—and this particular term, from 14 other states and four countries—to experience what architecture school is all about.

Lawrence Hamlin and Matthew Niermann, instructors at UIUC, are the day-to-day presence in the studio—and the days are long. Because of the students' young age, every waking minute of their time needs to be carefully structured for the full two weeks. "You give trust, and they step up," notes Hamlin, although teaching assistants help out during the day and residential advisers deal with the students during the evening hours. Meals are provided, just as in college, and most of the "grownups" attend these as well, to help cement bonds with the students.

The central focus of the program is the design studio; the final project incorporates drawing and model-making skills into a pavilion-type design problem. But instruction in sketching, drafting, CAD, lectures, movies, and a field trip to Columbus, Ind., make for a rich experience that introduces the students to almost every aspect of the profession.

John Henderson is from Chicago's West Side, where he attends North Lawndale College Prep Charter High School. "I like creating things,"

he says. The rising senior came to Discover Architecture after designing a house in school that impressed his counselor. Both his high school and the university provided scholarship money so that Henderson could attend.

Monica Scinto is a rising senior at York Community High School in Elmhurst, Ill. Her interest in architecture is broad—"How does this work, what's the physics of it?" she asks. Although the campus is relatively quiet in July, she has definitely gotten a taste of college life. "The dorms are small," Scinto says, noting that it takes some coordination of sleeping schedules to get along with her roommate.

Chicago native Gabriel Vidal-Hallett attends Walter Payton College Prep and knows a bit about the profession from his mother, who's an architect. That may seem to give him a step up on the others, but, he says, "I've always seen the finished project. I've seen the process here." And the two-week session is about a lot more than just design. "I didn't know about exams, internship, 4+2," he says. "I'm so much more informed."

The next few months will see many participants applying to colleges. Scinto is looking at up to eight, including Illinois and Pennsylvania State University. Vidal-Hallett is trying to choose between the University of Michigan and Illinois. Henderson seems most intent on coming back to Urbana-Champaign for the full four years. "We want to help them, wherever they want to go," says Lee W. Waldrep, who directs the program. "But we want them here at Illinois," adds Hamlin, with a smile. **EDWARD KEEGAN**

PROGRAM DETAILS

These are just three of more than 60 architecture summer programs around the country. For a complete list, visit archcareers.org/summerprograms.html.

CAREER DISCOVERY (Harvard)

Program length: Six weeks

Concentrations: Students can choose from architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, or urban design

Tuition: \$2,760 (2010 rate)

Housing: Available in Harvard Law School dormitories at additional cost

www.gsd.harvard.edu/professional/career_discovery

DISCOVER ARCHITECTURE (Illinois)

Program length: Two weeks

Fees: \$1,300 (2010), including room and board

Housing: Students live and eat in a supervised residence hall

www.arch.uiuc.edu/programs/discoverarch

SUMMER DISCOVERY (Houston)

Program length: Five weeks (9 a.m. to

3 p.m., Monday through Friday)

Tuition: \$750 (2010)

wonderworkshouston.org/Summer2010/ByDesign.htm