



INTERIOR DESIGN
STUDENT
CONFERENCE

2025 OHIO KENTUCKY CHAPTER AWARD SUBMISSION

2024

NOVEMBER 14-15 CINCINNATI, OH

OUR WHY

Over the past several years, The Ohio Kentucky Chapter has provided scholarships for a handful of students to attend student focused programming at NeoCon and the TXOK SHIFT Conference. While these programs provided valuable experiences and learnings for our students, the impact was limited due to the number of students we were able to sponsor to participate. Additionally, we received feedback from previous conference attendees that while it was valuable to network with professionals in other states, they would prefer to meet and engage with individuals in their own regions with post-graduation goals insight. Instead of investing large dollar amounts on just a few students, we strove to make a bigger impact with our resources available, and within our region.

Ohio and Kentucky have approximately **15** interior design programs throughout the two states, **7** of which are CIDA accredited. Our chapter wanted to capitalize on the large student presence we have within the region to not only provide valuable educational resources for students, but to foster local connections that help retain talent in our markets.

The first ever IIDA OHKY Chapter Student Conference was held in Cincinnati, OH on November 14th and 15th. The two-day event brought together **90** students from **19** universities, uniting design students not only from Ohio and Kentucky but also from neighboring Midwestern states. The conference featured a design expo, breakout sessions led by top textile and furniture companies, motivational talks from inspiring speakers, and a collaborative design charrette.

Cost for OHKY to send students to SHIFT =
\$1,048 / student

OHKY Interior Design Programs Map



STUDENT MEMBER TO VICE PRESIDENT OF STUDENT RELATIONS

IIDA has been a valuable asset in my career growth, starting as a student at The Ohio State University. IIDA student involvement in my Campus Center leadership provided me a network and learning experiences which allowed me to attend TKOK SHIFT and NeoCon, as well as winning IIDA Student of the Year 2020. This propelled my transition from student to professional practice, where I have continued my IIDA membership and leadership with the Ohio Kentucky Chapter.

-Tyler Hatton, Designer at WSA



STRATEGY & GOALS

Conceived in 2021 as a five-year goal, the IIDA Ohio Kentucky Chapter Student Conference launched in just four years, guided by five key pillars.

FINANCIAL EQUITY

*Affordable & Equitable
Access for All Students*

Conference overhead cost to the Chapter: **\$380/student**

Conference ticket cost to the student:

\$75/student member

\$100/student non-member

LOCATIONS

*Local Networking &
Industry Exposure*

We received feedback from previous SHIFT attendees that while it was valuable to network with professionals in other states, they would prefer to meet and engage with individuals in **their own regions** with post-graduation goals in sight. Pre-event survey responses also indicated a desire for other types of programming not offered at local career days or portfolio reviews such as access to firms, finished project tours, information about careers within design, etc.

ADVOCACY & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*NCIDQ & Professional
Certification Exposure*

As Ohio advances toward interior designer **licensure** and Kentucky maintains its title act, we aim to support emerging talent by connecting graduates with local career opportunities. Through networking with A&D firms and manufacturer representatives, fostering strong professional relationships, and promoting licensure in Ohio, we strive to retain and empower the **next generation of designers** within our region.

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

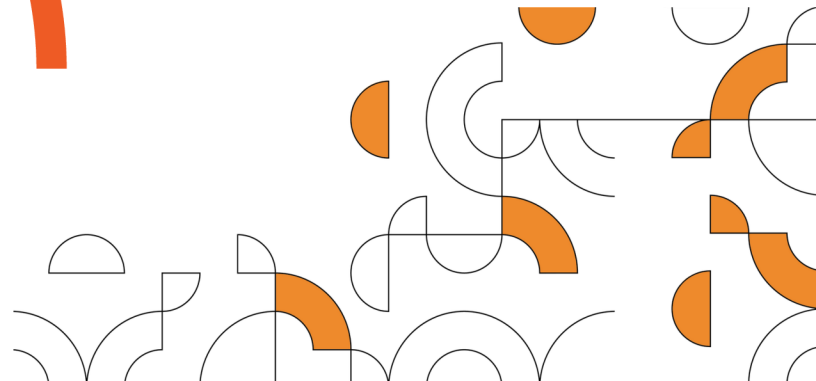
*Strengthening Chapter Unification,
Faculty Connections, & Engagement*

We have cultivated **strong connections** with faculty advisors in the past and are actively working towards rebuilding these relationships in this post-pandemic environment. This included 4 faculty members on our planning committee.

MEMBERSHIP

*Building Lasting Relationships
& Career Connections*

Following the conference, our **student membership** grew to **180**, reinforcing the need for stronger connections with each campus center. Moving forward, we aim to establish a consistent organizational structure, support leadership development, and assist schools in registering as official **campus organizations**—all while effectively communicating the **value** of an IIDA Student Membership.

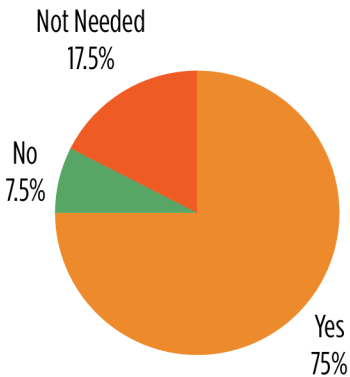


PLANNING BEGINS

Pre-Event Planning Interest Survey

We surveyed students and then focused our content and speaker outreach to provide what they were asking for. We had 40 participants from 10 of our chapter universities.

Would you take advantage of a hotel block if offered for this event?



Top 3 Activities Requested for the Student Conference

1. Completed Project Tours
2. Panel - Navigating Post-Grad Life
3. Tours of Local Firms

What is the maximum price you would be willing to pay for this event?

\$125 average of all answers from survey participants

Committee Structure

STEERING COMMITTEE

Tyler Hatton, VP of Student Relations

Samantha Bonner, President Elect

Bethany Williams, VP of Benefactors

CHAIR

CO-CHAIRS

SUB-COMMITTEES



VENUE



EXPO



CONTENT



COMM/PR



TRANSPORT & LODGING

DAY-OF VOLUNTEERS



Planning Timeline

January 2024

Planning Begins

February 2024

Analyze Student Survey Results

March 2024

Explore content options for speakers, breakout sessions, etc
Venue secured

Monthly Student Conference Planning calls begin

April 2024

Save the Date sent out

June 2024

Sponsorship & Booth Sales Open

August 2024

Student Registration Opens

September 2024

Sponsorship Closes

October 2024

Registration Ends

November 2024 Event!

Marketing Avenues Checklist

- ✓ **E-blasts**
- ✓ **Social Media**
- ✓ **Professor Outreach**
- ✓ **Personal Emails**

With a surge in registrations early on and just before the deadline — ultimately exceeding capacity and requiring a **waitlist**.

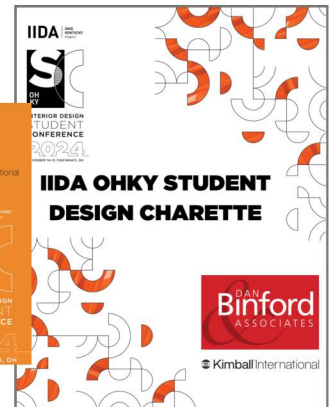
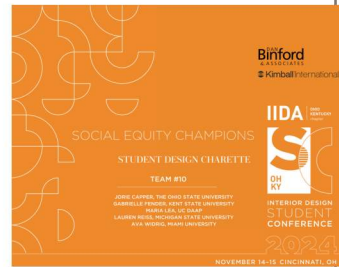
GRAPHIC DESIGN

To ensure a polished, professional look, we hired a graphic designer who was familiar with our chapter brand to refine event graphics, emails, and materials.

Key elements of the Design Awards' stylistic grid were deconstructed and simplified to represent a student's path of progress. The linework "pieces" are a nod to the journey of discovery as young members learn, explore, network, and develop as design professionals. Color fills (sampled and limited from the parent event) represent gained experience.

The logo design, in particular, is reminiscent of a networking nametag or badge, and the shape of the letter "C," combined with the stacked lines in overlapping negative space, is a callback to the IIDA Design Awards

- Janet Roy, Graphic Designer



CONFERENCE **DAY 1**

The IIDA Ohio Kentucky Chapter Student Conference kicked off on Thursday at GBBN Architects, where students arrived for check-in, enjoyed boxed lunches, and took guided **tours of the firm's office**. After a warm welcome and introductions, Kaelynn Reid, Design Futurist at Kimball International, delivered an **inspiring keynote** presentation, sharing insights on the evolving workplace and the role of design in shaping the future.

THURSDAY **SCHEDULE**

- 12:00PM** ARRIVAL, CHECK-IN & LUNCH
TOURS OF GBBN
- 1:00PM** WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS
- 1:30PM** KEYNOTE SPEAKER
- 2:30PM** DESIGN CHARETTE
- 6:30PM** HOTEL CHECK-IN
- 7:00PM** SOCIAL



The afternoon was dedicated to the **Student Design Charette**, where teams worked on conceptual solutions for “The Future of Working,” utilizing products from Kimball International and Dan Binford & Associates. Throughout the charette, students collaborated, strategized, and refined their ideas, receiving valuable insights from industry professionals.



90

STUDENTS

15

TEAMS

4

HOURS

1

DESIGN PROBLEM

DAY 1 CONTINUED

Following an intense afternoon of design, students checked into their hotels before heading to RJE Business Interiors for an evening of networking and socializing. The **social event** featured an educational session from RJE/Allsteel, alongside opportunities for students to connect with their peers and industry leaders, including Cheryl Durst.



The student charrette was definitely a highlight. Getting to collaborate with students from a variety of universities across the Midwest and see how they approached the same design challenge in totally different ways was so eye-opening. It pushed me to think differently, step outside my comfort zone, and work as a team under pressure. Having the support of professionals like Dan Binford & Associates made it even more exciting, and it was a great way to apply what we've learned in a real-world setting.

Students had the opportunity to have free professional headshots taken and participated in Cincinnati-themed trivia, a fun photo booth, and icebreaker activities to get to know their peers and industry professionals. The night concluded with a membership raffle prize giveaway, wrapping up an exciting and interactive first day of the conference.

The IIDA OH KY Student Conference was an incredible opportunity and experience. Being able to network and meet other interior design students from all over the Midwest was such a great experience. Learning from and connecting with leading industry professionals at the conference was an unforgettable and rewarding experience for me as a designer.

- Abigail Wiinamaki, Student,
College for Creative Studies

- Kevin Schenkel, Student,
University of Cincinnati

CONFERENCE **DAY 2**

Friday at the IIDA Ohio Kentucky Chapter Student Conference was a full day of learning, networking, and celebration. The day kicked off at 21C Museum & Hotel with **breakfast and opening remarks** from Cheryl Durst, IIDA EVP & CEO, setting the tone for an inspiring day ahead.



Students engaged in a series of **breakout sessions** covering topics such as circular design, personal branding, color psychology, and the future of interior design with IIDA and CIDQ. Simultaneously, the **Vendor Expo** at the Contemporary Arts Center provided students with hands-on opportunities to explore the latest innovations in design materials & furnishings as well as network with local A&D firms.



FRIDAY **SCHEDULE**

8:30AM	ARRIVAL & BREAKFAST
9:00AM	OPENING REMARKS
9:30AM	BREAKOUT SESSION #1 VENDOR EXPO
10:30AM	BREAKOUT SESSION #2 VENDOR EXPO
11:30AM	BREAKOUT SESSION #3 VENDOR EXPO
12:30PM	PANEL DISCUSSION & LUNCH
1:30PM	FINAL REMARKS
2:00PM	LOCAL TOURS EDUCATOR ROUNDTABLE
4:00PM	END OF CONFERENCE
6:00PM	OHKY DESIGN AWARDS

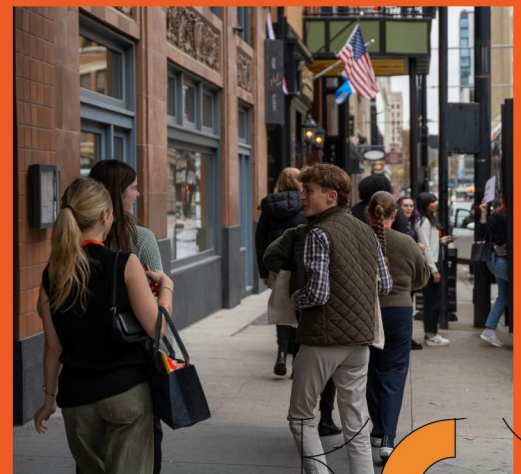
DAY 2 CONTINUED

Over lunch, attendees participated in the **“Minding Your Brand” panel discussion**, moderated by Cheryl Durst, which featured insights from industry professionals on career development and professional identity. The afternoon continued with the announcement of the charette winners, followed by two unique tours—one exploring A&D firm **SHP’s local projects** and another offering an inside look at the **Formica plant**.

Educators also gathered for a **roundtable discussion** led by Emily Valentine of Ohio State, diving into the role of AI in design education. The day concluded with the **Ohio Kentucky Design Awards** at the Cincinnati Museum Center, where students were recognized for their outstanding work, and the industry came together to celebrate design excellence in the region.

Attending the IIDA Student Conference was truly an eye-opening experience. It provided me with invaluable insights into the real world of design and helped me better understand the dynamic and evolving design industry. The conference also opened doors to many new opportunities and meaningful connections. I highly recommend it to anyone looking to deepen their knowledge and expand their network in the field of design.

*- Alison Blackford, Student,
Bowling Green State University*



We took a hands-on approach when assigning students to breakout groups, tours, charette teams, and hotel roommates to enhance their experience. We focused on logistics—directional signage, day-of packets, and swag bags—so students arrived fully prepared. Every detail was thoughtfully planned to create an engaging, impactful event encouraging collaboration and networking among students.

CHAPTER DESIGN AWARDS INTEGRATION

Our chapter spans two states, requiring members to travel long distances to gather. To foster connection and celebrate design excellence, we introduced the Chapter Design Awards, which rotate across the chapter. By combining the inaugural Student Conference with our second Design Awards, we were able to unite members at all levels for a two-day event.

The Design Awards showcased the DAY 1 Student Design Charette posters, and we invited all students to attend. We also presented the Emerge category to Emily Daiken from Kent State, who participated in the conference.

Since both events took place over the same weekend, we worked with our graphic designer to create a look and feel for the conference that complemented the Design Awards.

Graphic Connection

While branding the IIDA OHKY Student Conference as a standalone event, it was important to maintain a cohesive chapter-wide aesthetic by closely referencing its parent event: the IIDA OHKY Design Awards. Key elements of the Design Awards' stylistic grid were deconstructed and simplified to represent a student's path of progress.

- Janet Roy, Graphic Designer



PROFESSIONAL'S REACTION TO STUDENT CHARETTE SHOWCASE

It was refreshing and rejuvenating to see the level of creativity the students were able to accomplish together. To think they went from not knowing each other to being able to communicate concise designs in such a short amount of time speaks volumes to the power of this profession in bringing people together over a common goal. As professionals, we tend to stick to what we know as being successful in the past, and seeing the students' work was a great reminder to approach every project with fresh eyes and look for solutions outside of the box.

*- Regina Erdman, Interior Designer,
Sol Harris/Day Architecture*

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The mission of Chapter student programming is not to generate profit, but to provide high quality content for all students across the chapter. Profit from this event was allocated to resources and preparation for our 2026 event and beyond.

Event **Budget** Breakdown

INCOME	REGISTRATION	\$3,500
	SPONSORSHIP	\$18,750
	VENDOR BOOTH SALES	\$5,250
	TOTAL	\$27,500

EXPENSES	VENUE / RENTALS	\$8,500
	FOOD	\$12,00
	GIFTS & GIVEAWAYS	\$1,350
	DECORATIONS & SUPPLIES	\$100
	PRINTING	\$300
	BUS RENTAL	\$2,000
	LODGING	\$2,000
	PARKING	\$400
	CREDIT CARD FEES	\$395
	TOTAL	\$27,045

Event **Actuals** Breakdown

INCOME	CATALYST GRANT	\$6,000
	REGISTRATION	\$7,575
	SPONSORSHIP	\$18,800
	VENDOR BOOTH SALES	\$5,100
	TOTAL	\$37,475

EXPENSES	VENUE / RENTALS	\$12,590
	FOOD	\$10,735
	GIFTS & GIVEAWAYS	\$1,396
	DECORATIONS & SUPPLIES	\$736
	PRINTING	\$725
	BUS RENTAL	\$830
	LODGING	\$7,785
	PARKING	\$100
	CREDIT CARD FEES	\$403
	TOTAL	\$35,500

One of the best organized and content rich events I've attended. The students were exposed to so much; Design professionals, interesting venues, design challenges, access to product vendors and peers from other schools.

- Belinda Binford, Carnegie
Fabrics Sales Representative,
Student Conference Sponsor

TOTAL EVENT PROFIT

\$1,975

GRAPHIC DESIGNER*

\$2,000

*funded by Chapter administrative budget

FREE HOTEL ROOMS

As part of our strategy to provide affordable and equitable access for students to attend the conference, our Chapter received a Catalyst Grant of \$6,000 to provide free hotel rooms for students traveling outside of Cincinnati. This alleviated financial burden on students and boosted conference engagement and excitement in our inaugural year.

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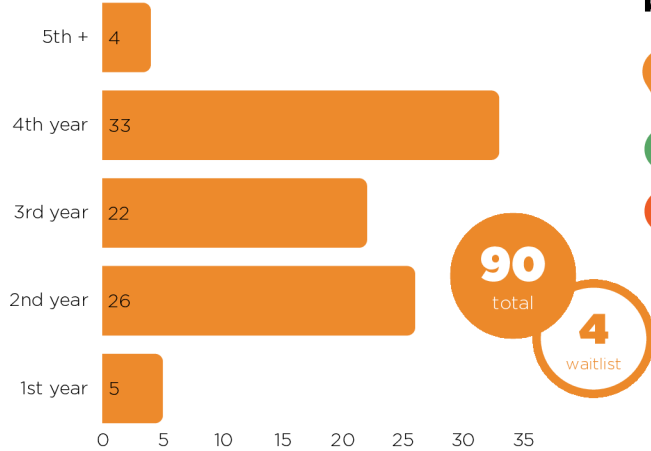
Event
Sponsors

34

Expo
Booths

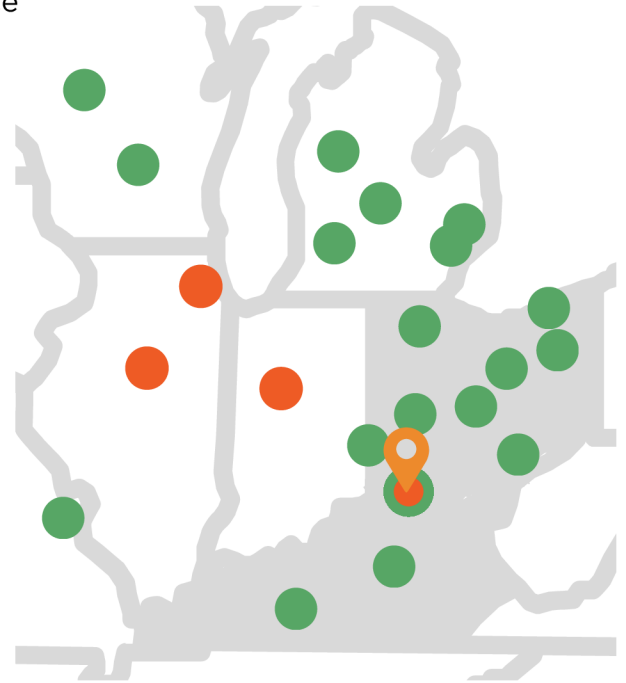
POST-EVENT DATA

Student Attendees by Year



Student Attendees by Location

- Conference
- University
- Waitlist or Interested University



GOAL REVIEW

- ✓ **Elevated Programming Beyond Local Offerings**
- ✓ **NCIDQ & Professional Certification Exposure**
- ✓ **Strengthening Chapter Unification, Faculty Connections, & Engagement**
- ✓ **Affordable & Equitable Access for All Students**
- ✓ **Local Networking & Industry Exposure**
- ✓ **Building Lasting Relationships & Career Connections**

OHKY Student Membership Numbers Increase

157

Jan '24

163

Oct '24

180

Feb '25

VIDEO RECAP



The Student Conference was a unique opportunity to connect with both fellow students entering the field of interior design and seasoned design professionals. Accessible and practical professional development beyond the classroom is extremely valuable to students. This event was a mentoring experience that built a broader sense of community and expanded my understanding of what it means to be a designer today. Personally, it made the post-graduation transition seem less intimidating as I got to know more designers in the area.

*- Aubrey Schmidt, Student,
University of Wisconsin - Madison*

FUTURE GOALS

- Present this high-caliber conference biennially to a wider audience of student attendees
- Engage more of our regional chapters and develop stronger connections with participating interior design programs
- Expand our Student Conference content offerings with Educator needs/desires in mind