



TACAA NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2, Spring 2010



Notes from the President



Tarlee W. Brown, AIA, AICP

Charles Dickens in his book *A Tale of Two Cities* wrote “these are the best of times—these are the worst of times”. Although I am not sure what Dickens meant, his words are certainly meaningful today. Less than a year ago, we witnessed the election of the first American of African descent to the Presidency of the United States. . He was elected on a slogan of “Yes we can”! *The best of times*. Less than a month before he took office we suddenly became aware of the worst economic melt-down since 1929. The banking system—the core of the American economic system had imploded on itself. *The Worst of Times!*

It is not a surprise that our economic sector (Design and Construction) has bared the worst of the current economic downturn. It always does. Financing for construction (and therefore construction itself feels it first, and funding for design very soon thereafter began to dry up. Projects “in the pipe line” most of the time will continue to completion or at least until there is a product completed enough where it has value. I am concerned that our so-called “market share” will be eroded during this economic time. We know the impact is hitting the full spectrum of our Sector when we see, in increasing numbers, much larger local, regional and national firms compete for work on small projects. These firms are able to field more staff to business development and relationship building than the small one or two principal firms. They are able to paint a rosier picture of *bigger means better* when we know that the overhead of large firms cannot sustain efficiency on small projects. Yet, they take them on until their market share returns.

Many of our members are hurting right now. In increasing numbers, they are out of work, and some have been for a long time. We are all feeling the pinch right now. Many design firms, like my own, are a much “leaner” version of what it was a year ago. Our small full service firm was able to cross lines between design, infrastructure and small commercial and residential

construction. Even so, work is not easy to come by and when it does many times it is not profitable.

We must continue to look for ways to ride this slump out. Look for opportunities to collaborate or associate such that competitions with larger firms are better matched. When possible, hire individual members to do isolated work elements. Advise other members of potential opportunities that for whatever reason, you can't do and/or not interested in doing. Together, we can do a better job to come out of this, and I predict we will.

Alumni Update:

Last year, we made great strides toward a “come back” of our alumni association. But we are back. Two years ago, you elected a new slate of officers to “kick start” a new beginning. That corps of officers have worked hard spending enormous amount of time, and in many cases, used personal facilities, influence and funds to move some things along that you wanted done. For example we:

- 1.) **Incorporated our association: The Tuskegee Architecture and Construction Alumni Association, Inc.** has been incorporated in the State of Georgia as a domestic non-profit organization.
- 2.) **Tax Free Status:** TACAA has been designated by the Internal Revenue service as a 501©3 Tax Exempt organization.
- 3.) **Awards and Recognition:** Founders Day '09 TACAA recognized architecture and construction graduates from the classes of 1949 and 1950.



4.) **Service to our Students:** Summer '09 Student Program with the Community Design Center of Atlanta provided internships for four students in a summer workshop. The design problem was to convert rail car containers into GREEN homes.



4.) **Participated in Outreach and Foreign Study:** Your President (at his own cost) participated in a follow-up visit on a previously established relationship with the University of Fort Hare in South Africa. The Mission (Dr. Vascar Harris and Professor Rod Fluker) completed the first step of an on-going Student Exchange Program with that University.



Several years previous, Professor Rod Fluker and his students at Tuskegee designed an environmentally friendly house that could be cooled in summer with natural ventilation and heated in winter with little heating assistance. A model was professionally constructed on the campus of the University of Fort Hare. It was fitted out with instrumentation to measure the amount of savings realized from the design.

The added advantage of the Tuskegee design was the ability to completely build the house with widely accessible indigenous materials.

The photo above depicts the house built by local resident.

Upcoming Events on the Yard:

A number of significant events are scheduled this spring:

1). **Architecture/CMS Banquet** is scheduled for April 27, 2010 at the Kellogg Center. This is a TACAA sponsored affair. This is our opportunity to support and encourage the students who are our future alumni. All members are encouraged to attend.

2). **Architecture Juries Schedule is as follows:**

Classes End April 26, 2010

Final Jury Schedule

- **All Juries will be from 1:00-4:30 in Wilcox A**

5th Year Jury-April 16,2010 ----Thesis Project 1:00 – 4:00PM

2nd Year Jury-April 19, 2010----Early Childhood Center Campus

3rd Year Jury-April 21, 2010----Disaster Emergency Housing
Haiti-Steel Competition

4th Year Jury-April 21, 2010-----Visitor Interpretive Center

Selma-Montgomery Center Trail

Super Jury—April 27, 2010-----All Day

Department Retreat/Peer Review- May 26-27, 2010

3). A Banquet is being planned for out-going President Benjamin Payton on April 17th.

Election Year:

This is an election year for your association. We are way behind on our schedule to prepare for next year. Our “Annual Meeting” was scheduled for Founders Day Weekend at Tuskegee. The time now is to close for that to happen. We have not gotten the word out. The Executive Board will meet within the next two weeks to set a new schedule for our Annual Meeting and elections of officers.

As indicated above you elected a panel of officers more than two years ago to get us going again. Those terms are up. In fact we extended the terms in order to complete the work we started before the new slate of officers is elected. We need members to step up and assume these vacating offices. ***All Offices are open for election.***

Your Current officer holders are as follows:

1. Current Officers:

- President: Tarlee W. Brown, AIA, AICP. tbrown@thebrowndesigngroup.com
3099 Washington Road, Atlanta, Georgia 30344; 404-559-1805
- Vice President: Jarvis Meeks; Charlotte, N C.; 704-643-5178;
- Secretary: Wilford Ray, AIA; wray@matrix3d.com;
404-522-3801; 678-665-3489; 44 Broad Street, Atlanta, GA 30303;
- Asst Secretary: Mike Conley; 404-406-5087
- Treasurer: William Robertson, wrobertson@monumentals.com; 425 – 19th Street
Ensley; Birmingham, AL 35218; 205-788-6275;
- Advisory Committee (Past Presidents): Charles Raines, Eddie Todd, Robert Brown, etc.

Please feel free to contact any and all members to get information or “up to speed” on the duties and responsibilities of their office.

A member must be financial or paying on their annual membership in order to vote.

Membership Dues/Funding

Membership dues are \$150 per year and are now due. Your membership help foster the efforts of TACAA and Tuskegee University. We recognize that this past year has been difficult for many of us. That means that it has been difficult for our students and well as our dear Tuskegee University. We must do all that we can to keep our momentum going. What has been accomplished cost money. Last year we had to spend considerably more than we took in by way of dues. Your financial support is needed now!!

However, we cannot fund our work with dues alone. We must look for addition avenues of funding for our programs and activities. We are architects and constructors with avenues to, and relationships with a community of producers, fabricators and manufacturers, etc. I would like the next administration to develop a method whereby TACAA as an organization can engage this community for general operation and specific program support.

Fund Raising Projects: We are still in need of creative fund raising project ideas. Let us hear from you on these. No idea is too small!!

Look Ahead:

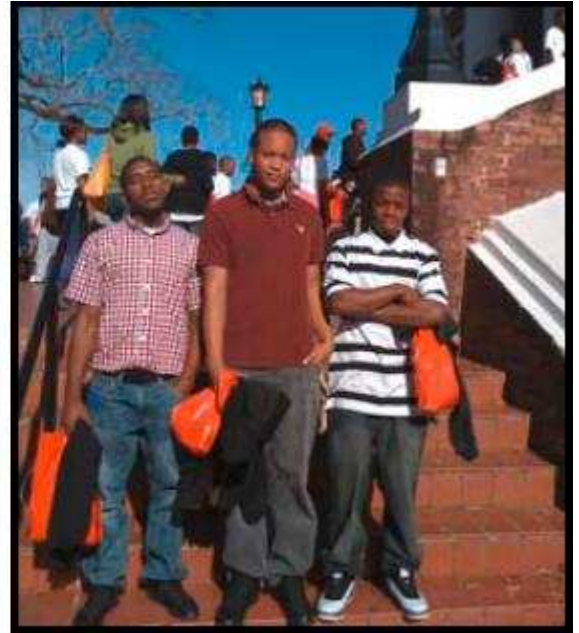
Architecture Accreditation – Dr. Dozier and the faculty are working vigorously on preparation for the next accreditation visit next term. TACAA's leadership and membership must stay vigilant and supportive during this process. We want to be part of that Team and part of the process.

Construction Science Management Accreditation – Not enough is being done in this regard on the University side. We must continue to push this initiative. An Ad Hoc committee chaired by Keisha Richardson has been meeting on this issue. We will be looking for some suggestions and/ recommendation or update from her group in this regard. If any member wishes to be involved in this good work, contact Keisha.

Department of Architecture and Construction Science Management

Advisory Council – The College of Engineering, Architecture and Physical Sciences has an Advisory Council that advises the Dean on fund raising and contact/relations within industry. There are three TACAA members on the CEAPS Council: Tarlee Brown, Eddie Todd and Robert Brown. As I understand it the Architecture and Construction Science Council will be a group similar to the CEAPS Council and will advise the Associate Dean/Department Head in like manner.

Student Recruitment & Mentoring – Last year, for the first time in memory, TACAA received a complete listing of the students Architecture and Construction Science Management. To my personal knowledge, we have been trying to get this early information to no avail. We thank Dr.



Dozier for getting this information to us. TACAA divided the list up by States and match them to contacts nearest the student applicant's home. Letters were sent to each student on the list welcoming them to Tuskegee and the "Tuskegee Tradition". It indicated that we were here to assist them in any method necessary to smooth their transition.

The September '09 freshman class was the largest (22) in recent memory. We believe it was largely due to the personal contact from alumni who had graduated from the program and was actively working in the profession/industry. This demonstrates to me that we are positively influencing our youth both as mentors as well as the financial support we've been able to provide.

In Spring '09 I was able to bring three high school juniors to Tuskegee during the Spring Open House. ***I know I am not the only one doing this.*** We need to share our activities with the TCAA as well as the local alumni chapter, so we will have a better idea how well we are assisting the process.

Endowed Scholarship – is the only way we will be able to stabilize our support for student and student development in the Architecture and Construction Science Management Department. It takes \$25, 000.00 to endow a scholarship at the University. We must start working on this goal immediately. TACAA can decide at the appropriate time if this should be “housed” in the University or at TACAA . First, we must find the money and build the Fund.

In the current issue of *Black Enterprise*, Dr. Michael Lomax, President of UNCF noted that HBCU’s must ensure that “young people get the rigorous academics that will prepare them to study STEM disciplines, and that “they need flexibility that enable them to work and study at the same time. They need ... support.” In the same issue, Dr. Carlita Shelton, President of University of the Rockies in Colorado Springs, noted that support such as financial, positive influence encouragement must come from family, instructors and councilors,” *many of which are alumni.*

We must continue to work to ever improve the quality and quantity of our Architecture and Construction Science Management student body. With the university up the road spending a lot of money and effort to recruit away our best students, we should do what ever it takes to retain our students when we get them.

I invite your questions, comments, suggestions, ideas and above all your help. Contact me at: tbrown@thebrowndesigngroup.com;