

Position Statement

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Reconfigure design education in the trend of global innovation

Q1: How can university reconfigure design education to innovate and compete in trend of globalization?

In the trend of globalization, design education also needs to actively adjust in the attempt to solve the common problems faced by human society. At the same time, the designer's knowledge and ability structure will also change, which requires the adjustment of education content and patterns design.

1. How to face the common problems, how to solve the problems with a global vision has become the new mission of design education. The establishment of a number of platforms such as impact hub, living lab has provided methods and resources in exploring of social issues and enhancing social impact and social value. From the design of education itself, it is also important to go out of the classroom, use the city as our test Field, and explore new learning and training patterns.
2. Responding to globalization, we need not only innovative technology, but more importantly, ideas and methods to develop students' ability to identify problems, opportunities and to integrate. At the same time, university should dedicate to cultivate students' imagination, flexibility, cross-cultural communication skills, and also emphasis more on leadership training which can help the team to bring ideas into reality.
3. Take the Tsinghua-Stanford Human Cities Program as an example. Beginning in 2014, the summer workshops and collaborative courses and exhibitions have been supporting interdisciplinary and intercultural students to understand the impact of globalization on urban sustainability, to discover design opportunities in real-life situations by exploring urban lifestyles and urban experiences under different cultures, to solve problems and challenges faced by cities and communities through design thinking with collaboration with social organizations and government agencies. We support students to become change makers.
4. Another program is the Tsinghua-Santander World Challenges of 21st Century Program. Inspired by the maker movement that is popular around the world today, there is a group of change makers who aspire to make a difference in the world with their innovative solutions to the challenges and with the open source equipment that turns their ideas into reality. Sponsored by Tsinghua University and Banco Santander, the program is designed for talented youths who aspire to make a real impact on the world. They are encouraged to find the problems and to propose solutions to the challenges. The finalist teams will be invited to a two-week workshop in Beijing, China and will be supported by the innovation and entrepreneurship platform of Tsinghua University and experts from innovative companies and organizations to develop their own projects.

Q2: What is the new trend on innovation and startup that is changing the design education and practice?

Today, the Enterprise Research Center is playing a leading role in innovation. Based on the kickstarter and indigogo platforms, more and more independent startups are launching innovative products, but universities that used to pioneer innovation have moved away from product innovation. It is necessary to explore the new model to integrate innovation and entrepreneurship into the training system.

1. Recently we saw IDEO join Kyu Collective - the CEO Tim Brown called it "the next big thing in design". We can see the design agency is re-positioning themselves. John Medea, the former professor of MIT Media Lab and president of RISD, has become the design partner of KPCB.

He has brought design DNA into the enterprise. His focus has shifted from product and education to capital and the value of design has played an important role in organization management and ecology. Just as the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) will be renamed the World Design Organization, the idea of big design, the innovation ecology is becoming a trend.

2. Innovation has become a combination of design, technical realization, social and business value, and corporate ecology. Design is no longer just to provide planning and proposals, or rendering and model, but need to provide a complete solution. In today's innovation and entrepreneurship context, a variety of rapid prototyping tools and methods, all kinds of creative space and incubators, angel investors, mentors in various fields, have been able to support this trend of product innovation, while at the same time challenge the formal design teaching.
3. In 2013, through the organization of a series of innovative workshops called Designow, Tsinghua University's teaching practice is driven by design to find solutions to social problems through an interdisciplinary team approach. The 2014 Design Partner Program provides a range of standard design processes and tools that encourage designers to collaborate as design partners with startups incubated by Tsinghua University, to bring DNA into the startups and create incentives for innovation, making progress among enterprises and designers together.
4. Practical education plays a more important role in design education. Maker space and innovative learning space is creating a new platform for campus innovation. 2015, in response to the growing enthusiasm towards innovation and entrepreneurship, the newly-built Tsinghua iCenter, a 16,500 m² maker space that provides the tools and resources needed for autonomous discovery, design and implementation is launched.
5. In September 2016, Tsinghua University launched the minor programs in technology, innovation and entrepreneurship. Based on the innovation-driven development strategy, Tsinghua University has made great progress in its global frontier areas such as intelligent hardware, robotics and intelligent transportation. Through cross-border learning and practice, the programs will allow students to learn about the theories, methods and tools in Innovation and entrepreneurship in the background of globalization. Focused on innovative product development, the program will expand students' ability in innovation and leadership, and cultivate students' pioneering spirit and entrepreneurial spirit. This minor will cultivate students with design thinking, technology capability and leadership to develop the innovative products with interdisciplinary team, and complete the business planning.