Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences

Graduation Plan: All tracks

Personal information	
Name	Oskar Michal Lubera
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Studio		
Name / Theme	Public Building Graduation Studio: The vertical campus	
Main mentor	dr. ir. Stefano Corbo	Design Mentor
Second mentor	ir. Florian Eckardt	Technical Building Design Mentor
Third mentor	dr. Sang Lee	Research Mentor
Argumentation of choice of the studio	The way public buildings shape social cohesion, sense of belonging, and cultural experiences fascinated me throughout my studies. In my past projects I researched the impact of built environment on social realm, which started my curiosity in this field. However, visiting Lina Bo Bardi's Teatro Oficina and SESC Pompeia fueled my passion towards the unconventional use of public buildings. Merging art with the audience, engulfing spectators and making them a part of a play through spatial design, while strenghtening social cohesion struck me as the pinnacle of my interests in architecture. Together with the aim for further exploration of possibilities of public buildings, this is why I chose this studio.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	"Unified diversification"
Goal	
Location:	The project is situated in the city center of Den Haag. More precisely, the buildings of the National Archives and National Library are acting as a plinth for the vertical campus. Additionally, the project's location is close to the existing Leiden University building. Therefore, the new towers introduce physical connections between those buildings while creating a unified campus in the area.

The posed problem	The number of international students in Dutch higher education has grown from around 24.000 in 2006 to 122.287 in 2023. 167 nationalities were enrolled in 2023 (Nuffic, 2023). Traditional universities do not accommodate space for such diversity, resulting from the rapid change in demographics. The spaces are usually repetitive, ignoring students' various preferences of learning, thus, lowering their sense of belonging (as concluded from the street interviews on the 26th of September 2023 in Den Haag for Design Thinking Assignment). Moreover, traditional universities lack spaces for socialization, which is crucial with such diversity in students. They also need to accommodate dynamic and static changes in campus culture to stay innovative. Therefore, a campus needs to redefine its type more than ever, to accommodate, celebrate, and connect diverse users. Especially, being directly connected to an urban fabric.
Research questions	The research questions aim to examine and challenge diversity in a new type of campus in an urban setting. They investigate campus culture, which is a collective combination of users' different cultures.
	"How can social and spatial diversity influence the learning process?" "How does connecting a campus to the urban fabric and general public affect its use?" "How can a higher education building answer static and dynamic changes of a campus culture?"
Design assignment	The design assignment is to create a hybrid, vertical campus in an urban setting. The aim is to design a public hub that encourages social interactions and sets standards for sustainable development.

The goal of the project is to redefine the use of a campus in an urban setting. According to Deborah Son Holoien, diversity positively affects the learning process, moreover, it improves students' civic engagement in the future (Holoien, 2013). Therefore, the design aims to create and celebrate diversity in a learning environment, while magnifying connections between the users themselves and with the general public and policymakers of Den Haag. The project explores diversity as an architectural concept while using a variety of solutions, devices and techniques that will create multiple experiences of space.

Process

Method description

The analysis method is qualitative, led by a theoretical literature review. It consists of studying historical campuses, starting with the established in the 11th century Oxford University, and their approach to campus culture through architecture. It also consists of case studies of university buildings with a focus on understanding spatial diversity and its influence on the users. Next, studying the meaning of social interactions in modern universities and within an urban fabric helps in applying the knowledge to a vertical built environment. Site visits in Den Haag provide insight into the magnitude of connection with the urban fabric. The Public Building studio approach is research by design, meaning that the knowledge acquired during the literature review influences the design process, and vice-versa, findings during design help to structure the research.

Literature and general practical references

Brian Edwards, University Architecture (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013): 2-21

Charles Strange and James Banning, Designing for Learning: Creating Campus Environments for Student Success. Second ed. (San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass; 2015): 27-45.

Deborah Son Holoien, "Do differences make a difference? The effects of diversity on learning, intergroup outcomes, and civic engagement." Princeton University: Trustee Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity (2013).

Enrico Deiaco, et al., "Universities as strategic actors in the knowledge economy". Cambridge Journal of Economics, vol. 36, no. 3, (2012): 525-541.

Isabelle Soares, et al., "Public Spaces as Knowledgescapes: Understanding the Relationship between the Built Environment and Creative Encounters at Dutch University Campuses and Science Parks". International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 17, no. 20: 7421. (2020)

Janet Lawrence, "Campus Culture and Faculty Perceptions of Time". New Directions for Institutional Research. 18(8). (2006): 25-38.

Jean Gonondo, "University campus culture connotation, characteristics and functions". International Journal of Acadmic Research and Development. 1. (2016): 36-40.

Jean-Paul Addie, et al. "Beyond town and gown: universities, territoriality and the mobilization of new urban structures in canada". Territory, Politics, Governance, vol. 3, no. 1, (2014): 27-50.

Nuffic, "Incoming degree mobility in Dutch higher education 2022-23" (2023): 8-16.

Shen Xi, et al. "Academic culture and campus culture of universities". Higher Education Studies, vol. 2, no. 2, (2012)

Reflection

The graduation topic "Common diversification" is an answer to the studio's topic - creating an innovative vertical campus. It relies on designing for users' wellbeing and social cohesion which has been a recurring concept in my designs during the master track MSc AUBS. The project allows for a deeper understanding of public spaces and their influence on their users.

On a larger scale, the project contributes to redefining the use of a campus in a dense urban setting. The often-overlooked campus culture becomes its main feature as the need for connectivity and communication for a campus is stronger within the city. The direct impact of universities on civic agendas and scientific progress can only benefit from the connection to the urban context (Addie 2014). This project questions the ways those connections can be achieved resulting in a proposal of a new type of campus.

How does the topic relate to your personal interest?
Being an international student myself, I always struggled to find a place for myself at campus to study. I prefer studying at home because of the repetition and inhospitality of the spaces. Additionally, my passion is traveling and I have seen a lot of cultures and learning environments so far. Therefore I would like to create an inclusive place where everyone can learn with their own preferences.

How does your approach help you with your design?
The approach of research by design, literature review, and street interviews proved to be the most in line with my design process. As the project progressed I discovered areas in theory I needed to improve to deliver coherent project. Then, I could use the theory to further experiment and question diversity in academic environments. Nevertheless, street interviews helped me with starting points for users' basic needs.

Time Planning