

Survey of impact of PKAL on Architects and Design Professionals

Networking

87% of respondents indicated that participation in PKAL resulted in at least one professional contact. Respondents attributed an average 10.73 professional contacts to participation in PKAL events and activities. Beyond networking, seeking consultation, and invitations to submit proposals, respondents described other types of contact:

- preliminary discussions about the nature of their project
- preparation to organize their initial steps to be more effective in pursuing PKAL goals
- opportunities to collaborate on articles.

When asked to comment on how PKAL involvement has impacted their connection to colleagues in the fields of STEM educational reform and facility design, respondents volunteered the following responses:

PKAL has been an unparalleled resource in connecting members of the planning/design community with leaders in the STEM reform movement. My professional career has been positively impacted through participation in PKAL Facilities Workshops, Summer Institute 2002, Cranbrook Facilities of the Future Roundtable 2003 and contributions to the Volume 3 handbook. The network resulting from these efforts has been remarkably productive with long-lasting positive results.

These colleagues have provided me with a better understanding of the pedagogical options and physical environments in which undergraduate STEM education is taught and learned. It has also given me the opportunity to visit other facilities to gain a better understanding of what works and what doesn't work, which allows me to apply those lessons on a daily basis.

It has increased my understanding of the concerns that the client representatives bring to the project planning and design process. Much of what they are undertaking is actually reinventing the way they approach creating a learning opportunity for their students and a stimulating creative academic environment for their faculty. It is all about bringing a vitality to the learning environment and then serving it through the character of the building.

Impact on clients

93% of respondents indicated that they have evidence of at least one client who used PKAL materials or ideas in facilities planning. Respondents indicated an average 6.2 clients used PKAL materials or ideas.

Respondents indicated that at least some clients are aware of PKAL as a resource, use PKAL workshop materials and website, and participated in a PKAL consultancy or workshop.

When asked to comment on how PKAL has impacted their clients in the field of STEM educational reform and facility design respondents noted that:

PKAL has promoted discussion among the network of STEM participants in the critical areas of curriculum reform, faculty development, and facilities planning/design. PKAL has focused on 'what works' in science education, encouraging thoughtful introspection about curriculum before moving on to facilities' implications. The development of the F21 program has been critical in identifying/nurturing the future STEM leaders. PKAL Facility Workshops have provided the forum to help teach others how to go about their own projects by learning from the past and engaging in discussions about the future.

The best example is our most recent project at Meredith College. It incorporates many of PKAL's concepts in both facilities and curriculum. I get unsolicited calls from the faculty there on a regular basis who tell me it is now possible for them to innovate in ways they simply could not before. This has opened a new direction for women's education in North Carolina.

They no longer see the building as the answer but rather as the result of engaging in a thoughtful restructuring of the learning experience. They also understand the steps in the design process both in terms of who should be involved at what stage and what to expect as a result of each of the steps in the process. They also see the design team as fellow collaborators and they see themselves as participating in a creative endeavor in addition to practical problem solving. A very important shift has occurred; PKAL's process puts incredible emphasis upon the decisions made early in the process when they can have the most impact with the least expense.

Individual involvement with PKAL

93% of respondents indicated that their own involvement in PKAL has impacted at least one facilities planning project. Respondents indicated an average 6.2 projects were influenced by their own involvement in PKAL.

When asked to comment on how PKAL has impacted their own work in the field of STEM educational reform and facility design respondents noted that:

I believe the greatest accomplishment PKAL has contributed to the design of science teaching and research facilities is the spirit of innovation. Thinking back to the earliest one I worked on (Allegheny College), I can see in our work and the work of our colleagues a continuous thread of development and innovation that was made possible by creating a framework and knowledge base that faculty and administrators could draw on to bolster their cause.

PKAL provides an entire network of subject matter expertise, from university planners, scientists, educators, researchers, administrators and design professionals that are an ongoing resource to my work. It has provided me the opportunity to participate in detailed conversations with academicians in the many fields of science, which provides me with a more comprehensive understanding of the many different ways undergraduate science is taught and learned. The focus on collaboration, teamwork and sharing of ideas has fostered for me a wonderful community of people who are deeply interested in improving the facilities and pedagogy for undergraduate science teaching and research, which will one day provide the foundation for the world's leading scientists who will eventually find a cure for cancer, diabetes, AIDS and any other life threatening diseases. In the end, this will make the world a better place for all of us.

It brings me to the table with fresh emphasis upon the importance of fresh thinking on the client side about the learning experience. I used to be thrilled when I found a client that approached it that way. Now I work to make sure that each client sees the value in approaching it that way and demonstrate my own enthusiasm for the impact that can have on the student's experience and upon the character of the building. Although PKAL is aimed at STEM programs I think of it as applying to other educational settings and I approach virtually every project with these principles in mind.