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Design Activism through Student Engagement

Marywood University Project Brief

Understanding how sustainable design benefits a community introduces the notion that architecture is not only an academic discipline, but also one that serves social consequences. In the ARCH399EE Socially Responsible Architecture seminar, students from the Marywood University School of Architecture explored the notion that, as designers, they can create social change. The process provided the framework for engaged and comprehensive learning opportunities, developing value thinking skills, understanding the importance of dignity and empathy, while accentuating citizenship as part of the curricular standards.

Students were challenged to consider how the articulation of space both shapes and reflects political and social biases, and how that might influence the education, practice, projects, and legacy of architects and designers. These projects showcase the work of the students through interventions, strategies, theories, and solutions that hold the potential for significant social change focusing on both advocacy and design

activism, especially as it focuses through the lens of isolation.

The following projects tackle Disaster Relief, Homelessness, and Food Insecurity, especially as it affects underrepresented and marginalized groups. Each of these design proposals concurrently examine how Isolation can be addressed through a Values Thinking approach.