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MCHAP occupies IIT's College of Architecture

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For College of Architecture students, Wednesday, October 22, was an early morning—and a long day. At 9:30 a.m., Dean Wiel Arets announced the beginning of the Mies Crown Hall Americas Prize (MCHAP) 2000-2013 Symposium and Award Ceremony. Following the Dean's short speech, each of the seven MCHAP inaugural finalists broke off into student-led discussions with the architects and clients about project-specific details.

The Iberê Camargo Foundation breakout session was very well attended, and it seemed like even more people started crowding around to hear the conversation as the session came to a close. Contradicting his aging body and hearing difficulties, Alvaro Siza, the Portuguese architect of the project, captured the imagination of everyone around him. The way he spoke about the foundation built in Porto Alegre, Brazil and the way he conducted himself throughout the session made him feel like a grandfather. Even the men present during the session who worked with Siza on the project radiated with positive energy, laughter, and smiles—one of whom stressed the wonderful "spirit of collaboration" on this "happy project." The same man also said that whenever they reached a tough spot in the project, they always followed their master, Alvaro Siza, and found a way to accomplish what needed to be done in order to maintain the project's integrity. For instance, *béton Blanc* (white concrete) was never made in Brazil before this foundation. Therefore, those involved with the project found a way to make it work, even though they were forced to invent a whole new way to build

in Brazil.

Another amazing thing about Siza's foundation is how he came up with the form of the building. The taller rectangular mass of the foundation reads as being very stable, yet it also has three angular arms that stretch out from the mass, creating a hole between the mass and the arms where you can stand outside feeling still enveloped in the architecture. Alvaro Siza described the context of the site, with the liveliness of the downtown area in view while looking in the direction of where the arms of the building stretch out. He felt a pull towards downtown himself, and this reflects in how he pulled out the ramps (which is the function of the arms, joining the different floors of the structure) from the tall mass: the architecture itself stretches out towards the city. The taller mass then has a shorter corresponding rectangular mass, and both are connected underground by the service areas located one meter below. Additionally remarkable is how, despite there being very few window perforations in the massive block making up the foundation, Siza claims that the building can operate until 6 p.m. without electrical light. The small windows give such expansive views while also taking in light, which reflects off the white concrete walls to illuminate the entire space.

Obviously, the breakout session with architects and clients was the most interesting part of the entire symposium. The subsequent roundtable client-focused discussion with the entire college, held in Crown Hall's Upper Core, was quite dreadful. By this time, everyone was getting hungry, and it did not help that the roundtable went overtime by an hour, leaving only twenty minutes for lunch. Following lunch was the MCHAP debate with all seven finalists

and the jury at the roundtable. The debate topic, Rethinking Metropolis, was intriguing, because this is basically the slogan of the new dean of the architecture college. Tension was created in Kenneth Frampton's opening words, when he effectively denied that the metropolis could be rethought, that this would be quite a daunting task. On the other hand, he quoted Mies van der Rohe by advocating that we must learn to live in the jungle, in the chaos, since cities have expanded so much lately. This debate felt mostly static after his opening comments, other than one later instance when the person representing the Seattle Central Library spoke out in a cynical manner against architects creating a distinct language and that architects should instead do whatever "turns them on."

The finale of events after the debate included a fancy reception, dinner, and presentation of awards against the elegantly-decorated Crown Hall (this environment enhanced by its lack of architecture students during these events). The candles lining nearly the entire length of the building created an experience like no other while viewing the building from the outside in the surrounding night-time darkness. In the end, both Alvaro Siza and Herzog & de Meuron (for their unique parking garage at 1111 Lincoln Road, Miami, Florida) won a prize, since the jury ended up splitting the original MCHAP 2000-2013 into one for 2000-2008 (presented to Siza) and another for 2009-2013 (given to Herzog & de Meuron). Overall, the entire day of MCHAP transformed Crown Hall into a building worth even more than its previous significance owed to Mies, and it also opened up students' eyes to the real world of architects practicing remarkable architecture around the globe today.

Provost Alan Cramb selected as next university president

Kori Bowns
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Illinois Institute of Technology Board of Trustees unanimously selected current provost, Alan W. Cramb, to succeed John L. Anderson as president of the university. This announcement came late on Thursday, October 23 in the form of an email from Bud Wendorf, Chairman of the IIT Board of Trustees.

The selection process for the next president of the university began earlier this year; at the May 2014 meeting of the IIT Board of Trustees, President John Anderson announced his decision to resign from his position on August 1, 2015. A selection committee was then assembled that included representatives from various aspects of the IIT community, including trustees, professors, and a representative from student government. Under direction from the Board of Trustees, the committee met to conduct an evaluation of Provost Alan Cramb for the position of president. The selection committee then reported their findings to the Board of Trustees, and the board then elected Cramb to succeed Anderson.

"Alan has been instrumental in moving the university to a new level of academic excellence over the past six years," said Wendorf. "His leadership has helped IIT increase its undergraduate enrollment to record levels, strengthen its financial position, and attract eminent scholars to our colleges. He also understands the challenges facing higher education. The Board of Trustees believes that he will be an outstanding president and looks forward to working with him in the years ahead."

Cramb has served the university as Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs since 2008. As provost, Cramb is responsible for overseeing all educational activities within the university. He also worked closely with President Anderson to implement the university's new strategic plan.

Following the selection of Alan Cramb as our next university president, the IIT Board of Trustees has announced that a national search for a new university provost will begin in the near future.

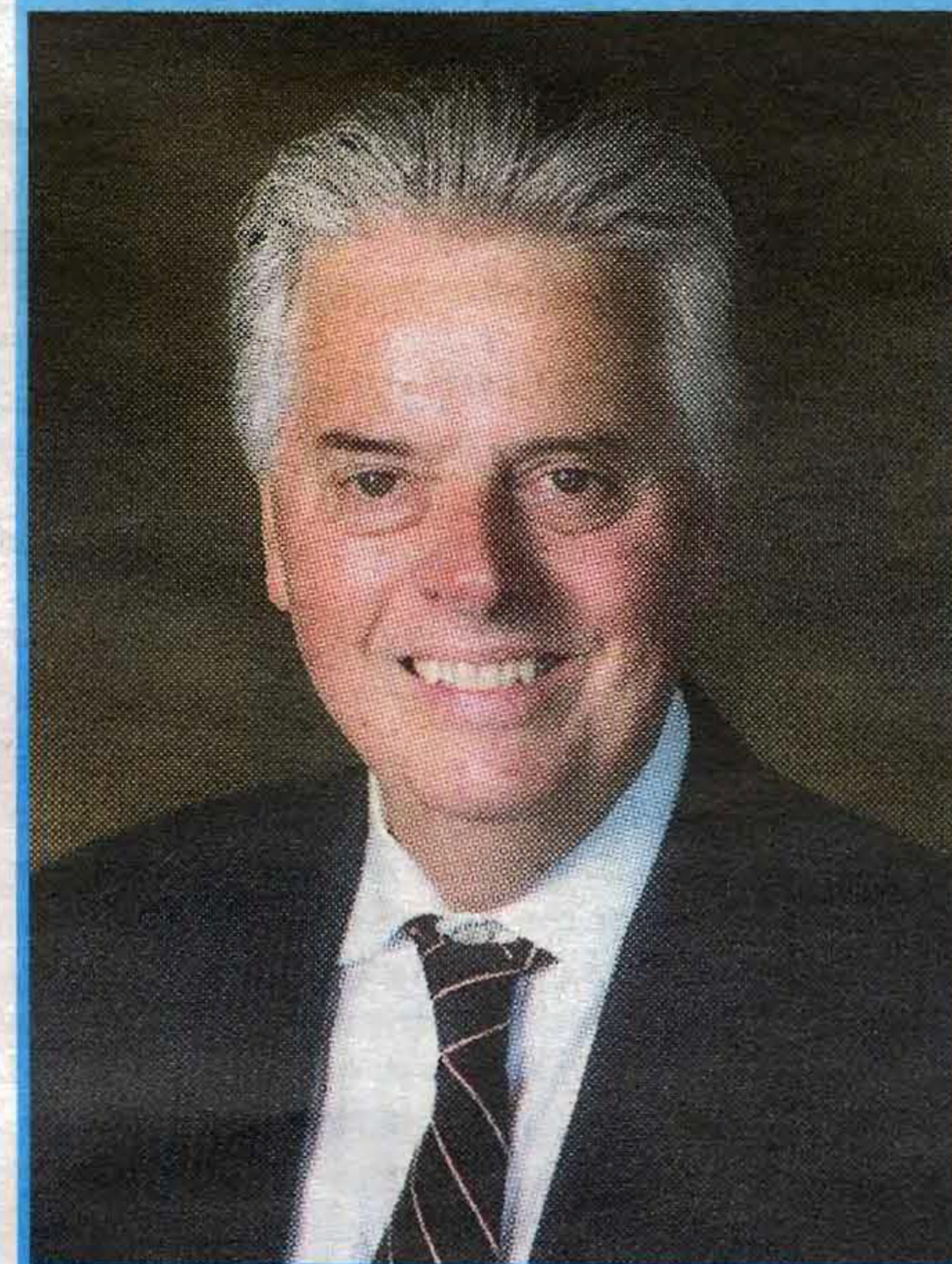


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