Changing the World through Universal Design Standards

Outline

- Concept of Universal Design
- The GUDC Organization
- Conceptual Framework
- Standards Development Process
- Technical Resources
- Certification Process
- Early Adopters
Concept of Universal Design

- Universal design is a **process** that enables and empowers a diverse population by improving human performance, health and wellness, and social participation.

- Making things easier to use, healthier and friendlier. 
  Steinfeld and Maisel (2012)
The GUDC Organization

- GUDC is a not-for-profit corporation (NGO) organized under the laws of New York State.
- The GUDC was established to:
  - Conduct public education on universal design
  - Develop UD standards and promote their adoption
  - Certify buildings, products and practices
  - Promote the adoption and use of newly developed UD standards across environments.
  - Conduct training and offer technical assistance
  - Conduct research to improve the knowledge base on universal design
The GUDC Organization (Key Players)

- Robert Congel, a commercial developer
- Graham Hill, member of the National Council for Disability
- Josh Heintz, environmental attorney
- Peter Blanck, Professor of Law, Chairman of the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University

- Congel financed a series of meetings that brought experts together for discussions on how to implement UD in commercial building construction
- They concluded that consensus based standards on UD, similar to the LEED standards for sustainable design would be an appropriate strategy
Josh Heintz and his law partner William Gilberti agreed to fund the formation of a not-for-profit organization, the GUDC, to develop and promote use of consensus standards.

A Board of Directors was recruited and a process initiated to develop standards in keeping with best practices in consensus standards development.
Established a partnership with the Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access (IDeA) at the University at Buffalo to provide technical support in development of standards.

The IDeA Center obtained funding to support its work through its Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center grant on Universal Design and the Built Environment.

A draft of the standards and rating system has been completed.

Focus is now on developing a certification system.
Conceptual Framework

Five Sections:

- Design Process
- Site elements
- Facilities Management
- Building elements
- Customer Service
Conceptual Framework

- **Performance Guidelines** – statement describing the end user experience
- **Required Guidelines** – insure the basic goals of UD are met
- **Strategies** – specific design feature that contributes to meeting the Guideline
- **Alternative Strategies** will be accepted subject to review and approval
- **Numerical ratings** for strategies, e.g. 1-3 points
- **Certification** is based on meeting point threshold
Purpose of Standards

- Identifying UD compared to regulatory compliance
- Recognize achievement of UD goals
- Benchmarking – establish levels of performance
- Clarify benefits for adoption by business and government
Conceptual Framework

Business Case for Standards

- **Emotional impact** - a seamless consumer experience
- **Innovation** - new and interesting experiences to the public, higher rate of return visitors
- **Investing in social capital** - goodwill to the community creates a social branding opportunity
- **Market broadening** - new opportunities to address the diversity of the population
Conceptual Framework

Business Case for Standards

- **Lowering renovation costs** - pro-active response to trends and building in flexibility

- **Reducing operating costs** - attracting and retaining workforce, lower accident rates, lower health care costs

- **Increased productivity** - reduces burden of customer assistance, facilitates customer service, reduces errors
Standards Development Process

- Voluntary guidance standards
- Complement rather than replace existing accessibility standards
- Easier to use than regulations
- Ease of use in certification
  - Accommodating to different type of projects
  - Recognize achievement regardless of level of economic development
- Support a continuous improvement process
Standards Development Process

Standards Committee

- Starting with Commercial buildings
- Voluntary participation
- Balanced across interest groups
- Using due process procedures developed by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)
Guideline: Handrails designed to prevent falls.

Strategies:
- Railings at multiple heights (for adult and children)
- Where there are large crowds expected, intermediate railing to separate traffic streams on stairways with two directional traffic
- Handrails evenly illuminated
- Photoluminescent striping or integrated lighting highlights railings
- Railing shape provides grip that facilitates grasping when falling
- Tactile cues on rails indicate upcoming landing
Guideline: Spatial organization of the building reduces conflicts in neighboring uses.

Strategies:

- Flexible spaces that can be customized to accommodate a range of events or activities
- Spaces for noisy activities located where they will not disrupt use of spaces for quiet activities
- Direct access to adjacent exterior space for related outdoor events
- Spaces for social interaction located strategically at points of frequent use by occupants (e.g. water fountain, vending area, kitchen, mailboxes) to reduce undesirable socialization in other areas
- Basic design data organized by Goals of UD
- In a form that is easily applied to design
- Reference research literature available on Internet
- Gradual expansion and improvement of knowledge base
Certification Process

- An interactive website will be used to apply for certification
- Two level certification
  - Self certification
  - Audited certification

### Universal Design Commercial Building Standards v 1.0
#### Ratings System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Elements</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Site Entrances/Exits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15 / 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Location</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site entrances/exits are conveniently located and distinguishable from their surroundings</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs identify all site access points and universal route choices at decision point</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>If construction limits access to entrances/exits, signs provide information on alternative universal or accessible routes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Similar landscape features/graphics distinguish each class of entrances/exits Pedestrian, Bicycle, Vehicular, Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landmarks at primary entrances/exits that provide information that is audible, visual, and tactile</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
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Early Adopters of UD Standards

University at Buffalo’s Greiner Hall
Early Adopters of UD Standards

Syracuse University’s College of Law Dineen Hall

Gluckman Mayner Architects
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