

April 21, 2008

[The following letter was sent to all students admitted to the College of Architecture.]

On behalf of my architecture faculty colleagues, congratulations on your admission to the College of Architecture. As architects, we all have compelling ideas about teaching. I bring to teaching a passion for education, a reverence for the tradition and history of architectural education at IIT, and a genuine love for Chicago's world-class collection of late 19th, 20th and 21st century architecture. Crown Hall, the IIT campus and the city of Chicago are each and all the laboratory that provides me with examples, references and experiences. These are not just images on a screen or pictures in a book, but real examples that students can sketch, photograph, measure, tour, visit, re-visit and study, the way buildings were meant to be discovered, investigated, enjoyed and understood.

Teaching is both talking and listening. I enjoy listening. You will bring to IIT a unique vision, experiences, culture, who you are, where you come from, what you like, where you've traveled, what you've seen and what you've imagined. I enjoy developing with first-year students the skills necessary to translate qualities that make each of you unique into explanations, drawings, models and full-scale constructions you have dreamed about or never imagined.

Every year, architecture students arrive at IIT from a hundred cities, clad in a hundred shades of denim. You come from Barrington, Brooklyn, Bosnia, Chicago, Cleveland, Casablanca, Hammond, Honolulu, Hong Kong, Palos Park, Pittsburgh, Paris, Schaumburg, St. Louis, Seoul, and beyond. Teaching architecture at IIT is like traveling the world without ever having to leave Crown Hall. IIT brings together a world's wealth of students to design and build projects of a scope and scale only teamwork makes possible. Teaching is inspiring you to learn, with me and with each other.

Three of my first-year classes have graduated. Many former students live in and around Chicago, which means we run into each other. I hear about their architecture careers and I know that I am a small part of their success. The small part I may have played in a former student's career is what makes teaching more than just fun and exciting. I share in the fulfilling experience of both accomplished student and thriving professional.

50+ studio classes and their instructors will have experienced first-year Design Studio in Crown Hall before you. Teaching, being taught, drawing and building architecture in Crown Hall is a tradition, a legacy, a privilege and an opportunity for both of us, you and me. To be part of a school and a program that is at the same time steeped in tradition and looking towards the future is to be both timeless and of our time.

These are some of the many reasons why I have returned to IIT for the past 9 years. These are some of the reasons why I will be back next year, to meet you and over 100 others as we build upon Crown Hall and IIT's tradition while imagining, drawing and building a new vision, our vision.

Welcome to IIT; my name is Professor Pettigrew and I look forward to beginning our education together here in Crown Hall, on the campus of IIT, in the city of Chicago, on August 21, 2008.

Sincerely,

Paul Pettigrew
Assistant Professor
College of Architecture