Part 1: Highlights from the Design Minor

• The Interdisciplinary Design Committee has oversight of the Design Minor. We have agreed to continue with managed growth for the minor. We have worked very closely with the CDES programs to ensure that students have access to highly sought-after design courses. Our goal is to add approximately 50 students to the Design Minor by 12-14. Currently, the Design Minor has 210 students.

• Barry Kudrowitz and I have been collaborating closely with faculty in Electrical Engineering, and we have customized both the Design Minor and the Product Design minors so that Electrical Engineering students completing either minor will have also completed EE technical credits. We are in the final approval stages of this process. Given student interest, and with over 400 students in EE, we expect to see a significant growth in these minors, as a result.

• I will also be contacting Computer Science and have contacted CSOM to capitalize on growing interest among students from these areas. I plan to use our collaboration with EE as a possible model for these majors.

• The Design Minor has approximately 80 courses in its elective area. Student can customize this minor in many ways to suite their own interest. One high-priority project that we have launched will enhance this customization process, as we focus on the development of related cohorts of courses within the Design Minor. This will be presented as an interactive advising tool of options on the re-designed Design Minor website.

• This interactive customization tool is a conceptual tool, as well. It will be a tangible way to address shifting interdisciplinary connections within design and it will highlight newly emerging areas of design. For example, we have identified a cohort of courses within the College that focus on “Public Interest Design,” sometimes referred to as “Design for Good.” Many of our major programs are developing courses in this emerging area of design engagement. We are coupling this cohort of courses with a new Landscape Architecture course called Ethics and Design. If a student has an interest in this emerging area of design, they will be able to see several course options available to them, from graphic design to architecture, to interdisciplinary design.

• The Interdisciplinary Design Committee will use this customization model to identify new areas of course development. This is in process, but in our preliminary work, we have seen exciting cohorts of courses appear. One cohort relates to User Experience/human factors. Another addresses the relation of user experience to the design of interactions that may include designing experiences and services rather than physical objects. Again, this flexibility will allow us to respond to the changing landscape of design, take advantage of the unique organization of our College, respond to the design profession, and, most importantly, appeal to our students.
• It should be noted that we also intend to preserve the possibility of students choosing design courses that may not form into a cohort. One remembers the impact of a single calligraphy course on Steve Jobs' development of typefaces on early Apple computers, to see the value of flexibility, as well.

In December 2013, Laurie Gardner and her staff created a snapshot of Design Minor student demographics and course choices (see attached). APAS reports of all Design Minor students were examined. At the time of the report, the Design Minor had 202 students. Currently, there are 210 students. Laurie has created a second report that will focus only on courses taken in Fall 2013 and Spring 2014. This report is now being analyzed.

**Highlights from the 12/13 Report**

• Based upon this snapshot, current Design Minor students accounted for 683 additional seats in CDES courses. Assuming an average of three credits per course, this results in an additional 2049 credit hours taken by Design Minor students. Note that some students had only begun their minor, while others were nearing completion when the data was collected. The new data will give us an annual number of credit hours.

• Every CDES major has opened courses to Design Minor students. It should be noted that many of these courses are “hands-on” or studio courses.

• Courses have been carefully selected to include LE, Writing Intensive and Honors courses. Students completing the Design Minor can fulfill several of their University-wide requirements at the same time.

• The number of sophomores declaring the Design Minor has risen to 28 (13%). Although a small number, this could indicate a possible trend of beginning a minor as a lower-division student. The current model for Minors at the University of Minnesota focuses on upper-division students. These students often look for the “easiest route to completion” of a minor, based upon credits completed and remaining time left to graduation. If encouraged to begin earlier, and with supporting effort by career services and advising, students could see a much clearer and stronger connection between their major and their minor.

• I have been working on a conceptual idea of “+ design.” This approach would highlight and foster the connections between majors and minors and could be a “value-added” in terms of future career opportunities. The Design Minor will serve as a model in CDES, and the +design concept could, perhaps, be flipped so that Design Majors would develop stronger connections to their minors in CSE, CLA, CSOM, etc.

• One of the most interesting insights from this data was the number of Design Minor students completing a second Minor. This contradicted a perception that students in some majors do not have time to complete a minor. Many students are transfer students or have completed courses for University credit while still in high school. Of the 202 students in the report, 27% were completing more than one minor; 48 students had two minors, 5 students had three minors. We found it interesting that 10 students were completing two CDES minors (Product Design and the Design Minor.)
Of the 151 non-CDES students completing the Design Minor, the majority of students were from CLA (85 students). The remaining students are distributed among most of the Colleges in the University.