

University of Miami School of Architecture

Faculty Oral Histories

Charles Bohl

Professor & Director of Masters Real Estate Development and Urbanism

University of Miami, January 18, 2017

Interviewed by Gilda Santana

Recorded by Gilda Santana

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Summary: Charles Bohl is an associate professor and the founding director of the graduate program in Real Estate Development and Urbanism (MRED+U) at the University of Miami's School of Architecture, where he previously directed the interdisciplinary Knight Program in Community Building from 2000-2008.

Dr. Bohl is an expert on place making, mixed-use development and the public process for planing and community design. He is the author of Place Making: Developing Town Centers, Main Streets and Urban Villages, a best-selling book published by the Urban Land Institute now in its 6th printing. He co-edited (w/ Jean-Francois Lejuene) the book Sitte, Hegemann, And The Metropolis: Modern Civic Art And International Exchanges (Routledge).

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

GS: Chuck, just to get a little bit of background, how did you get the idea to start a real estate program here at UM? I remember when you first came to see me about the availability of resources.

CB: Yeah, so it actually goes back a little bit further than when I first got here. I got here around the Fall of 2000, so this is my seventeenth year here. At that time, I was brought on to direct and put together the curriculum and hire people for the Knight Program in Community Building, which the Knight foundation funded. Actually, publications and the connections to the library were important even from the start because one of my first hires was Andrea Golin (sp?) who was the publications manger. Anyway, the MRED [Master of Real Estate Development] program would eventually evolve from that interdisciplinary community building program. We had mid-career fellows from different fields, including real-estate, but also architecture and housing, and elected officials in the program. We did seminars and study tours, and had a big workshop each year involving the architecture students and faculty and one the Knight communities. So from the experience of testing out the idea for the real estate program, Lizz Plater-Zyberk, who was the Dean then, said “let’s go ahead and put together a curriculum for real-estate”, and that became the MRED program. Some of things that transferred were the interdisciplinary aspects of it, the full time Graduate students were placed with the part-time mid-career fellows, the charrette that was held each year would continue on as our capstone, which involved students and faculty from all different departments in the school, Architecture, Urban Design, Real Estate. At the very beginning, I think, probably the first most important connection between that program and the library which was right at the beginning of the program, was we didn’t have whole lot in terms of content, certainly not in our own library and what we did have on real estate was scattered around. We were distinct because we weren’t a generic kind of real estate. We were real estate and

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

development, blending it together with what the school is known for, livable community design. So, there was this intersection of real estate and livable community design, and New Urbanism that we wanted to be at the core content for the program. So, a lot of New Urbanism books kind of fit into that, including my own, but then the rest of the body of material to start with was really from the Urban Land Institute (ULI). I've been involved in the Urban Land Institute a long time and some of our first founding board members were as well, including Neisen Kasdin who was our first chair. I forget how it came up but, through my involvement with the organization, they were very aware that we were starting a real estate program and the executive director, Carla Coleman who would eventually also join our board initiated a discussion about gifting a ULI library to our library. In fact, the gift included every book they had ever published, which was a substantial catalog.

GS: I remember it was around 100 titles.

CB: And that really kind of jumpstarted our collection for the whole program and we continue to use many of those books in our curriculum. So, they're in the School of Architecture library, as an immediate resource to our students as well as we use those textbooks in our classes. So, they were a fantastic gift to our program from that organization.

GS: Can you tell me more about your research and your teaching experience? What were some of the challenges of building the program? What would you say?

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

CB: Which one?

GS: Was it maybe getting other people on board?

CB: Yeah, so starting with the Knight program, when I arrived in 2000, we had a fantastic grant from the Knight foundation, which the Dean who was Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and a couple other faculty put together the proposal. So, we had a 2.1-million-dollar grant from the Knight foundation and I arrived and the mission was, “Ok now create a program”. So, I was set up in these office spaces which were actually studio spaces, there was no floor, I literally mean “raw” space, I had no staff. It was a challenge. From the start, a lot of the work was coming up with what would each one of these—we had 6 gatherings with the mid-career fellows—what would they look like? What types of speakers would you have? What kinds of activities would you have? It was coming up with the program for those. Fortunately, through the New Urbanism and Liz’s connections we were blessed with being able to get great speakers to come in for these 12 lucky individuals, the mid-career fellows. So, in a small conference room like this one, you’d have Andres Duany come in and speak to them and it would be very interactive. The first program, actually, that we put together, the first set of days, usually about three days, they would come together. We decided to start with Miami Beach, which was somewhat of a case study for a community building program. The first speaker who was here, Dennis Ross, was very involved in community development organizations in Miami Beach for many years and knew the whole history of how the preservation movement evolved so he was a big force in the revitalization of Miami Beach. The second speaker was Craig Robbins, the developer who Lizz again could call and just say, “Hey, we want you to

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

come in and speak to the group”, and he basically sat down and said, “What would you like to know?” It was that kind of great, interactive discussion. That day ended after some other speakers with a trip to Miami Beach, where we met with Niesen Kasdin, who was then just finishing his term as mayor of Miami Beach. He filled in the story of how the preservation movement become a political movement and led to the revitalization that was built on the art deco architecture. So, it was a great story, a great start for the program.

GS: Did you record any of these? Document them?

CB: We didn't record a lot them until we actually had a conference celebrating the completion of the first 3-year cycle, which was held in downtown coral gables. We had a variety of speakers come for that. I think we featured Tony Goldman in one of our events. We had Carol Coletta, who at that time was, I think was one of our Knight fellows, do an interview with him. Carol had her own syndicated NPR [National Public Radio] show on smart cities. We started through the program, and the other thing to figure out was how we were going to solicit nominations for the program. How were we going to select them and what kinds of people were we looking for? The main basis was looking for exceptional people from all different fields to bring them together into the whole interdisciplinary conversation. That kept bringing a variety of really interesting people into the sphere of the school. Suddenly we had developers, we had elected officials, we had people like Carol Coletta who were coming in and out of the school not only interacting with themselves (fellow) but going into studios, we'd have events sometimes built around the visit, we might have Robert Davis come in and speak and the would become a public event. Another part of it would

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

become each of the twelve fellows we ask to come up with an independent research topic that they would pursue during their yearlong fellowship with the school, and based on what they are interested in we could then say “Alright, you have a great interest on Urban Design, so we have a number of urban design faculty you’ll like” There’s Plater-Zyberk and Jaime Correa to connect you with, to explore your topic with...so that became another part of the program. The final charrette, which culminated each year’s class, became a very special event in the school’s history that involved multiple faculty, always involving the dean, and always with Jamie Correa, director what was then Suburb and Town design program and his students. So, it was these combinations of our fellows who as mid-career people were almost like a consulting team in particular for our urban design students, but also for some architecture students and faculty and that collaboration became a big event in each school year.

GS: It sounds like you just jumped on every opportunity that become available and created new opportunities.

CB: It was challenging. Fortunately, along the way it was joined by some great staff to help carry things out. Andrea Golin who not only was the publications manager because we had some funding’s to generate publications, but she also worked with those individual fellows on their research ideas and some wrote papers and some actually published some material on it. We would do things with the Center for Urban and Community Design (CUCD). I remember on 9/11, which may have been one of our first seminars, when we heard of the World Trade Towers tragedy that morning, we met here in this room and I came back to let he fellows know what was happening so

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

that they could make calls. We had a discussion about whether or not they wanted to continue on with our program or if they just want to go back to their hotels and figure out what's next. They decided there was nothing they could do. They were here and they wanted to continue. One of the next things on our schedule was to go to Coconut Grove where Samina Kureishi was very active. The school was very active at that time and we met with the whole group in the community. We were always looking for ways to connect to what was going on within the school and to bring these people into those activities. There was a whole evolution of that program and it got refunded after three years for another 1.1 million dollars. Some of the funding that was for scholarships for students were discontinued, but the core part of the fellowship and the charrettes in the Knight community continued for another 3 or 4 years. Out of that, during another 7-year time period, we had 6 classes of mid-career fellows, sometimes we'd stretch the budget to include 13 instead of 12. So we'd have those probably 70 odd people almost 80 people who became to connected to the school in different ways and then towards the end of that was when some of the people who had been fellows and Real Estate Developers, Real Estate Researchers. We had a real interesting Knight Fellow, who worked for a company called Forest City, who'd done a thesis at MIT on the connection between real estate and public space...and then that started the process where I tapped some of those people who would then invited...they'd help us connect us to Real Estate faculty at MIT who we brought in to do these weekend seminars to start testing the waters, to see how much interest and demand was there for Real Estate courses and programs here. And we did the probably for about a year and that began... roughly about that time it began my collaboration with other schools so, I reached out to faculty in business to had taught some Real Estate course some Real Estate finance, Real Estate law we started putting those seminars together. So Dr. Houston, who taught Real Estate finance, collaborated with us as we started to put together some real estate

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

finance seminars to test the water on those. Real Estate law... Renee Sacasuss became hugely important not only as we put together a seminar on... I forget the exact title but it's related to Real Estate law contract, zoning, land use. John De La Gloria (sp?), was one of those lecturers who was a part of that and that was held right here. Renee became super important thought because he was very involved with the faculty senate still is and as we moved from just doing the seminars to putting together a curriculum for our master's program he really helped me figure out who did I need to go and meet with ahead time for the general welfare committee and for the faculty senate with in the business school with in the law school to get support...

GS: He was a key facilitator

CB: Absolutely, and the coming out of that once the MRED program was approved, he became instrumental in formalizing out relationship with the business school. We actually drafted a memorandum of actually understand to say how our program will connect with the business school courses and the MRED program was established first in 2008 and then business established a real estate track for the MBA program in 2009 /2010 but that memorandum of understanding said, the MRED students in our program could talk real estate and finance courses and real estate law courses in the business school full credit for their program and their students who were pursuing the Real Estate track and then eventually they revive their undergraduate major in Real Estate the upper classmen that could take our Real Estate development courses and that simple memorandum is still used to this day. It established our relationship and kind of mapped out how we would do things, both deans we very much involved in those discussions. So Dean Plater-Zyberg and Dean

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

Khan, who was dean the time, and we also began to co-organizing events so there was one event that help business school and was supposed to help with that it was very informal but we had an audience of about of maybe 30-40 people, I think at that time it was a discussion about what was going to happen in the wake of the recession.

GS: To be or not to be an architect.

CB: Yeah, or what am I going to do if I'm in real estate and nobody is buying or selling anything right now and my portfolio is 40% less than it was yesterday (laughing). So it was an interesting time, I mean the program was launched right at the height of crash and the great recession everything, so we didn't... no one knew what to expect. The first year in 2008, was a part time class because we were already at the end of the spring when it was approved, so we didn't have all the courses and there were some student who wanted to start right away. 2009 was the first year we had the complete program in place, so that was the first full time year, but that was I mean we were in the heart of it right then, but we had an incoming class of 19 students that year which was a great start.

GS: In hindsight, it always hindsight, do you always see that it was the perfect time? Does it seem to have been the perfect time to launch the program?

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

CB: The program has been around since 2008 so here we are 8 years out, and there are a lot of things I can't say I understood why it worked the way it did. That year we had 19 students, but the 2010 was a little smaller. Next thing we knew we went down to something like 5 students in the program. We asked, "so what is this? Is it counter-cyclical that when the economy is bad we are going to more students in the program, and when the economy is good we are going to have less?" Well that didn't prove to be true either because we are up to forty students in the program and the economy is better than it ever was. So I'm really not sure, I think were too young to really tag it onto, it's an economic or business cycle driven. I think at this point, it's that...

GS: Too early to speculate?

CB: I think at this point, the reason we are doing so well is because we have a great Board, word of mouth is really driving us, and we have some good traction. I think before we were just too unknown.

GS: Yeah, but I mean you've managed to accomplished a fair amount of success in a relatively short period of time for a new founding program so, something's working somewhere and I think you should take credit for that

CB: I mean the MRED program is really an interesting case study. First of all, in how to put together a curriculum and figure out how to get it approved. Thanks in part to the resources we

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

had in the Knight Foundation program we were able to commission a study which included interviews with 17 or 18 directors from real estate programs around the country. There was another faculty member Armani Montero, and there was also one of the staff at Duany Plater-Zyberk who had done some research creating charts on what types of courses were offered in those different programs, how they lined up, in order to figure out what was essential and what not. But the research study, which Jean Scott did—Jean was very involved in a lot of New Urbanism, CNU Florida type work here—was really informative. The individual feedback from those program directors, not only on their curriculum, but also—we had an idea for a real estate center even at that time, and still do which would be a joint center with the business school for all real estate programs—that really helped me. We also surveyed the people who took our weekend seminars on real estate finance, real estate marketing, historic preservation and preservation development. We kind of did one seminar on each topic that would become a core in the curriculum, plus ones on retail development and others. We were able to survey the people who paid to take the seminars as well as people who came to our events, and some alumni. We asked them questions such as what they thought in terms of the choices on a two-year curriculum versus a one-year curriculum, about the timing of the courses—should they be held mostly in the evenings? We got good feedback from the surveys we did. So, between the studies and the surveys, I thought I had a really good basis to make recommendations such as one year is enough, but two semesters aren't quite enough, so we stretched it in the summer a little bit. We had a couple of really good models and ideas from the Knight program to incorporate into it, in the interdisciplinary side of it, and the charrette becoming a capstone, so we kept some of those ideas. We presented our study to the University General Welfare Council and the Faculty Senate to show that we'd done our homework, and felt that it would be a successful program. We'd point out the different markets, which

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

included architects. I should point out that was Dean Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk's vision for this always included architects who could come back to school, pick up the expertise in real estate, and become their own developers, to be in control of their own fate, and be hired not only to do the design but actually drive the whole project. It was important for our alumni from her perspective. Even the Knight Program evolved out of her effort to raise money for the building, for what would become Glasgow and the Jorge Perez Architecture Center. Through that long process of raising money for building and figuring out who could we actually get to support the school, she clearly identified that real estate was such an important industry. Architects and architectural firms are enormously important to the school but they don't have deep pockets for the most part. Their clients in the real estate world, on the other hand, have much deeper pockets, and that became part of the rationale that first our alumni would really benefit from it if they want to come back to school, it's a new graduate program for the school, and it was addressing a core industry that directly related to architecture that we hoped would be supporters of the school going forward. I made sense for all those reasons. Through the experiment and getting it approved and then launching it, I also benefited from contact with Doug Bischoff who ran the LL.M. (Latin Legum Magister) program in real property in the law school, which is essentially a graduate program for attorneys who want to specialize in real estate law and land use. He had run that program very similar to the MRED program with adjunct faculty for many years. It's the oldest real estate program in the University. He was great. He sat down with me and shared how he went about bringing on adjuncts, what he paid them, all of that, very generous, and that helped me think through because didn't have a bunch of full time faculty ready to teach everything. So that became an incremental process of identifying who could help teach different topics in addition to have some core faculty in business and real estate law. I also had lots of urban design faculty who could fill that in but

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

everything else needed more talent. That was a good model which became an incremental process, and then the MRED program became its own little experiment. In the first year we formed a small advisory board which was no more than a dozen people. We asked Neisen Kasden to chair it on a purely advisory basis. We didn't ask for any money and we gathered them a couple times a year in a room, really once a year to start. We talked this fledgling program and asked what their ideas were for helping us to make it better. That went on for a couple of years before we started expanding the board. But through those first few years, through the students and our advisory board and our experience, we started to figure out what was important for a student coming back to school for this program. Contact with the industry was hugely important. So, through the little board, under Edgar Jones the next chair, and also Carl Coleman, who joined the board and helped us think through how to ask for money, which turned out to be really easy. We made a list of student needs, presented it at a board meeting, and everybody paid dues. Steven Owen who had joined the board at the time was with Swire, and he said, "Oh, this line for student scholarship for \$10,000, Swire will do that"

Swire Properties, who were building Brickell City Center...So we, through our friendships with people with the school, Neisen Kasden, Tony Goldman who was a founding board member, and others as we started to add other people. Edgar was so important because Edgar was married to Susan Jones who was major development officer in the advancement arm of the University. Edgar had also been very involved in UF's Real Estate Board and the evolution of that, so he kind of brought that experience here to UM. He added people who could easily afford give some extra money. We start to doing an annual conference with the business school called the *Real Estate Impact Conference*. We were terrible at raising money for the first few years, but this year, actually the last three years we've raised more money than the business school for the conference. The first

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

three years we raised maybe \$10 or 15,000 total. The board grew from a dozen people who didn't pay dues to 30 people who were paying dues. We change the bylaws to say, ok you pay dues and you agree to help raise money for the conference, and now we are approaching 60 members under Toby Cobb our third char. That board became hugely important in the life of the program.

GS: Tell me the name of the board.

CB: MRED + U advisory board, and it's interesting because we were developing our board and the business school was developing their Real Estate board at the same time and we chose very different directions. Our board has always intended to be diverse, to be very involved in the lives of the students in the program, as well as raise some money. The Business School board was purposely small. They didn't want a big unruly board to manage nor to just target significant wealthy individuals. We had two different models. We also had the idea from the start, in fact, that we work on it jointly with the business school, the concept for Real Estate Center, we identified the LUSK Center at UFC, L.U.S.K, as a model because it's one center for the whole university and supports multiple real estate programs in multiple schools.

GS: You had said you had done quite a lot of research on other real estate programs, I was wondering which ones kind of stood out for you? Were there one or more that you modeled this particular program after and maybe tweaked it.

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

CB: Definitely, so the two that were really importance models and this impart came out of conversations with some of our Knight Fellows, like [unclear], who went to MIT, and we had faculty from MIT who did the finance seminar. MIT is a development oriented program, it is its own program and center at MIT, and the other one, which Tony Goldman recommended we look at, was Colombia's MRED in the Architecture School. So Colombia, like some other Universities, have separate Real Estate programs, there was one in business and there was in Architecture. The Architecture was the entrepreneurial one, the MRED one. A typical distinction is that the MRED programs are development, hands on, positioning, building, developing, assets...places. Whereas the business programs are more focused on real estates as an asset class, so it's more preparing people to go into real estate finance, real estate investment trust and banks and other entities. We get the people who want to build and work with tenants.

GS: Would you say that you created the balance between entrepreneurship and community engagement?

CB: That's been a goal all along and that, there is skepticism—especially with the Faculty Senate and within our own faculty—like, “Oh...real estate”. At the final meeting at Faculty Senate where they had to vote on it, I think it was one of the biology faculty, “I'm afraid that we are letting the devil into the university”. (Laughter)

GS: As though the devil wasn't already here.

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

CB: Yeah, real estate developers do not have a good reputation, so the purpose of the program had to be about building a better developer. One who appreciates good architecture, good design, sustainability, historic preservation, green building—all of the things that you would want a real estate professional and especially successful developer to value. I think that really won the day because we had all of that expertise, and the mission of the school was about that already, and we were saying that we wanted to bring all of that to the education of real estate professionals. So it continues to be what we strive to do.

GS: I know it too early to see the effects of what your trying to promote in terms of that balance. Do you feel like you've been successful so far?

CB: I think it's pretty easy once they're here. First they are here because that is what they aspire to, as part of their aspirations. We're not an inexpensive school to go to. Most of these students can choose to go wherever they want. How they find us, and what they're looking for—usually they hone in on the theme of the program. They are faced with a choice. Even if they decided they want to go to the University of Miami for real estate, they could go to business school and just focus on real estate finance and that out of the business. But, the ones who come to us are really interested in this connection to Architecture, and Urban Design, and Sustainability and all of these things. So, that in part makes it a little easier. Once they are here they are surrounded by faculty and studios and everything. The other big effort that I made since the start of the program has been to integrate this program into the life of the school. We partner with studios. Small teams in my classes work with small teams in the studios, and they collaborate on projects together. They learn

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

from each other and they argue over stuff like, better design versus more affordable construction. It is intended to replicate what you go through when you're trying to get something built, or even approved for that matter.

GS: Beyond theory.

CB: Beyond theory... and there is a whole variety of things that I think show where that program had come from and where it is now, from a small class of like 8 students to the first part time here in 2008. That same class meets in Glasgow Hall every Fall because we outgrew Rinker. In Glasgow we'll have 50 students or more, and those students would come from the MRED program but there will also be almost as many MBA real estate students. The urban design program students are actually required to take my first development course in the Fall, but we get architecture students, sometimes we get law students, architectural engineering students. So we get this great mix of graduate students and upper level undergrads who have an interest in the intro to Real Estate Development and Urbanism class and they get to work together and go through the ordeal of putting together a proposal and presenting it to a jury. That to me is one of the most satisfying things, when I can look out of that room and see there is students from all over the University.

GS: What about diversity? I know you get a lot of International students who are attracted to this program.

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

CB: That is one distinction from a lot of other real estate programs, especially around the state. Miami attracts a much more international student population. When we were trying to figure out how to market the program and how to target for recruitment, it seemed impossible, because every year it brought students from so many different places. There is the obvious connection to Central and South America and the Caribbean. But we have also had multiple students from the Middle East, we have had students from South Korea, France, and Russia. So there wasn't a clear pattern of how to market it. I ended up saying, "Well, let's just put good material on the website and let them find us".

GS: And, Miami is in and of its self a marketable aspect.

CB: They are here for different reasons. The Saudi's come to get their education, and then they have to go home. I just met with another prospective Saudi student today who knew of an alumni back in Saudi Arabia who was an architect, who came here to get his MRED, and now he works for a big development company back in Jeddah. Same with our student who came from Korea. She is back in South Korea working for a real estate company there. We get students from around the country, and we get a good decent amount from Florida as well. I think it really enriches the program. Like when we had to students present a case study and do a short presentation in class. I said, "Look, wherever you come from, I'd prefer you do a project you're familiar with from your home country". We would bring that into the classroom so everybody learns from it.

GS: How has technology impacted the program in terms of practice as well as access to information?

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

CB: Real estate obviously has a really heavy data side—data driven side. There is the financial side and then there is also the market—understanding the properties and the evaluation of them. Then there is the graphics, and the geography—where everything is, and the analysis of patterns. One of the key focal points for that type of data is our market analysis course which takes place in the fall. It started out, primarily, with Jack Winston who had taught here before. He was teaching in the law program and works with a firm that does market analysis. He started teaching that for us, and in a few years he was joined by Mark Troen. We brought Mark on, who had taught at the NYU Shack Institute. Mark was very current in all of the databases, REIS, and Costar, and different tools. I think that it has added a lot of rigor to the program. That has become a really important part of the program and continues to evolve each year. It's not cheap to subscribe to some of those things, but I think it is part of what we really need to bring to the students. Then there is some software like Excel, which in finance serves a lot of the purposes for performance and things. For that there is a more substantial financial software package called Argus that we have had people teach in the past. We actually initiated the course and invited business school students to join us.

GS: What are the funding sources for these softwares? How much of it comes from the School of Architecture? How much support does the School of Architecture provide versus the schools of law and business?

CB: Richter (UM Libraries) has licenses for ESRI and others, which is university wide, which is great. Other more specialized programs like COSTAR, they almost have to be negotiated individually. For instance, we have a certain amount of students that we need to get registered

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

with the program, and they may have a special student arrangement. We have to do that every year. REIS is similar, but it is contract with a cost that is considerable and for the most part we do it independently. I'll mention it to my counterpart in the business school and they do have a market analysis course that someone has been teaching, but I don't think that person is using it. If and when you start to us it as with ARGUS, which was important for both of us, our instructor for Argus became my instructor for our intro to real estate finance. We have our own intro to real estate finance in the fall.

GS: Is that a program funded through the School [of architecture]?

CB: At our start up, I'd say to Dean Plater-Zyberk, "Look, there is certain software or materials that we need to subscribe to...", and she would then review it, looking at the cost. For most part we determined that if it was important, then we'd charge it to our budget.

CB: After those first few lean years, even though we had few students we could justify some of the expenses. Then the role of the board, the board dues and ultimately the conference revenue really freed things up for us. In the event that we could identify a need, we had the adequate resources to do so. Instead of having to ask the school for help, we were able to bring in enough support not only for things we did, but for the things we did collaboratively with the school.

The Hines competition which is going on now is an example. Last year those were interdisciplinary teams. We might have just one MRED, a couple of architects and urban designers, and some business school students. If they are lucky enough to get into the next round and they all want to go visit the site, we can pay for their travel. We can send a faculty member along with

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

them. Through the generous support of our board and funds generated from the conference, now we have the resources we need. Since we are a pretty expensive program, we try to provide support for the students and not add on to tuition. For REIS, for that database, we're not charging them. We are acquiring that license for their year here as a part of the program. Every year we take them to the ULI conference, Urban Land Institute Fall Meeting, which is the big annual conference for the real estate industry. It's somewhere different every year, a different city. We typically set a stipend amount and estimate the basic cost. We'll reimburse up to this amount, which is the lion's share of the cost. Even with thirty students this fall we were able to cover that.

GS: That's really great, it's a great self-sustaining model.

CB: There are a couple of things that we're working on for this and other programs that the current Dean really likes. As the board got more established and grew we realized the importance of that to our students. So, we did a couple of things. One was we formalized a mentorship program. First we formalized the bylaws. We told the board members what their responsibilities and the structure for it was. We have committees and nominating committees and all of that stuff, but every board member, when they are nominated, is interviewed.

GS: Is this a separate bylaws or are these underneath the same bylaws structure of the University...

CB: Under the bylaws for the Board, for the Advisory Board, which are spelled in a more simple prose. Every board member agrees to be willing to serve as a mentor to a student. Students arrive,

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

they get to know some of the board members, we arrange for some meetings, and some they review online. We give them a couple weeks, and then we ask them give us names of three, maybe four board members they think they would like as a mentor. Then as the requests come in, and we line them up, and then they send a resume and set up the first meeting. We encourage them to meet monthly. That become an important part of the programs. The second thing we were working on was internships. Internships were very ad-hoc at first, and we tried to formalize it by following the model the business school had implemented whereby companies are asked to give the University a certain amount of money that will incur interest. That proved to be unruly and not very much liked by the board members. So, what we settled on was to have the board members agree to at least try to offer internships. We would try to match students up, but then it became an interview process just like a job. So, if they were interested in an internship with Flagler, with **FACI (sp)**, great. They would go and interview, even negotiate salary, retest some parameters—it has to be a paid internship. But, if they have the experience we expect them to pay more, and that's worked really well. So there's a mentorship program and an internship program through the Board. They help organize our annual conference, which is no small feat because we get really powerful and important individuals who I can't just pick up the phone and call, but George Perez or other board members can. So from Samsel to...

GS: So you've got a pretty illustrious list of board members.

CB: Very illustrious...John Gray. This year it's David Simon, the biggest retail organization in the world, is our keynote speaker. We've got Stuart Miller, former head of the Board of Trustees.

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

GS: Is this something I can look up online?

CB: Now there is a great record of these impact conferences. It is all online. So those things, they're not only good for our program, but as we look to do internship programs and mentorship programs in other parts of the school, it's a record we've been able to share. It's a record of our experience.

GS: That said, it seems you're proud of these accomplishments and well you should be. One of my questions is, "Besides having mounted this very successful program, what do you see as your greatest professional accomplishment?"

CB: As an individual? or...

GS: You answer that however, you want, professionally or personally...

CB: Here is the choice that I was very happy to make at the time the Knight program was finishing. I had gotten the MRED program approved. But I was research associate faculty and at the time, I told the Dean, "I gotta know what the future is." And she said, "I know you've got to go out and interview, but if you get a job offer please tell me and I will try and make your position here more permanent." And that is exactly what happened. I had three pretty darn good offers, so I came back and I said, "I am really interested, and I know this a pure start-up situation, but I love the idea

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

of that.” Here I would be able to build something from scratch, work with faculty that I really loved. I loved the school. I liked where we were, but I had to, like all of us, have a little more security as a faculty member. That was the point at which the faculty had to vote on whether or not they wanted this program. Did they want this person and propose me for tenure, and all of that. That was a real turning point. That was a really clear decision on my part. I could have gone other places where I would have been tenured there, you know, and I would have become tenured here. They already had like 2 million dollars a year for their endowment for a center, and all of that, but I had kind of done that with the Knight Program already. Here, there was an academic program that I could really help shape. I could do something from scratch. The trade-off was there was no way I was going to ever have enough time to do that and be a faculty member who has to do continuous research and publishing and all of that. That was the sacrifice and I don't regret any of it because I think that to be a relatively young university and create a new program that hopefully can go and have a lot of great alumni and connections here is very satisfying.

GS: You took a calculate risk.

CB: That's very satisfying, you know, and rather than having a few more books on my shelf that I said I wrote or something, it's ok. Maybe I'll still have time to go back to that. (laughs)

GS: There's time for that. You've published quite a few articles and you've written and co-written books. Within the field of Real Estate right now, what do you see in terms of publication? Do you

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

see that as, I mean clearly almost everything is online now and that is the general direction, but what does that mean for you, what does that mean for this program?

CB: Well my whole connection here, why I ended up here, and what I was passionate about was the New Urbanism. The New Urbanism really change and really influenced a whole variety of things, including real estate development. There was a time 15 years ago when New Urbanism was the steady critique of the way real estate was done and the type of projects you would see in major mainstream publications. That is why all the New Urbanism publications and conferences were always cutting edge, always bringing out new ideas. Now, you look at more mainstream industry publications like *Urban Land Magazine* and others with all the walkability and mixed use ideas and those types of things. New Urbanism is still very innovative and very relevant, but there is a lot of satisfaction in knowing that it really did move the needle, or that the world caught up with us, or a little of both. I think there were also generational changes that played out that favored a more urban walkable lifestyle and we continued to see it today. So where the world of publication things are at this point or what I think a lot of the...

GS: Maybe it's not as relevant or important.

CB: No, it's still relevant, but we're in a different place. New Urbanism has gone through many phases, and DPZ in particular, Andres Duany and Lizz, they've always been at the forefront of that, whether it was, on the regulatory side, on smart code and the form-based codes. Miami became the first city with a whole form based code. That was important, that relates directly to

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

real estate development. Our program became the little research group that would test out that code because we kept taking all different types of properties and still do, that are under Miami 21 and see what possible.¹ In the Fall we do a lot with small properties in the middle zones, T4 and T5 to test that out, and ask, “what if you change the parking rate relations, what if you added more density.” So there's been a continuing relationship with that, but I think where the industry is at right now is this big focus on disruptive technologies and how that's changing so many things—the impact of *Airbnb* on hospitality, and not only hospitality but there is also concern about maybe sucking up affordable housing in places like New York, where housing becomes an alternative to hotels.

GS: What affordable housing in New York? Is there such a thing as affordable housing in New York?

CB: Exactly, or in the reverse, that maybe Airbnb helps where the housing market isn't as strong or something. So, the impact of Airbnb on hospitality, the impact of *Wework* on office space—the whole changing nature of the workplace is a big topic. The impact of the internet, certainly on retail, will be a huge topic this year at the conference. All those things, and *Uber* and everything else, that an app could have such a dramatic change on the type of development that is taking place and how profitable it is, or what the alternative is. I mean *Wework* completely changes the office

¹ The Miami 21 Zoning Code is a [Form-Based Code](#) guided by tenets of [New Urbanism](#) and [Smart Growth](#). All form-based codes share the same organization: Definitions, Regulating Plan or Atlas, Building Form Standards, and Public Space / Street Standards. The Miami 21 Zoning Code is organized for users to read only the parts they need. It is not necessary to read it from cover to cover, but some parts interrelate and often must be reviewed together.

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

scenarios of, "We really want a 5-year lease, or, we really want a 10-year lease." Well, I guess that's where Wework comes in and offers it for a month...and so it just changes the whole formula. It's responding to the way people want to live, the way they want to work, how long term their commitments are, whether it's for renting or owning housing, or owning or leasing commercial space. All of that is...

GS: So it keeping you on your pedagogical toes in terms of real estate right? How does this relate to, you the Dean has brought in with him this mission of the internet of things and this philosophy of the internet of things. How does that connect to what you do here? I think that you just talked about it somewhat.

CB: Dean El-Khoury has been I think a really positive and I think a really great force. First of all, he really understands and appreciates what the Real Estate and Urbanism program brings to the school. He's made a particular effort to connect the school more with industry including the technology companies like Google and others, as well as to sponsor studios. One example of that was last spring he helped get Moishe Mana involved in the school who sponsored a studio which was interesting and something very different. Here came somebody from the business world who said, "I'd like you to look at how to create housing with smaller units, micro units, that are smaller than what the code says you can build, because what I want to deliver are residential units that are affordable to new graduates, young professionals, and the creative class, so that they can stay in places like Wynwood and downtown Miami and others so we don't have this brain drain. He gave

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

us essentially an outline for what he wanted us to research. He owns a lot of property in Wynwood, biggest property owner in Wynwood, and a lot of property in downtown Miami.

GS: Huge buildings that yeah...

CB: So, he said, “Here is a property in Wynwood and here is a property on Flagler in downtown Miami, and I want the studio and the real estate program to work together, look at the market, meet with our construction company on cost, and come up with a design and a marketable, financially feasible concept that could deliver this without being restricted by the code.” Part of the idea is that from the current code you cannot deliver that, so it shows how you might deliver it and then he can always use that to propose a little flexibility in the code, perhaps a little smaller than whatever the minimum is. What does that look like in terms of a new model for residential buildings when people are willing to give up a little bit on space if they have more amenities.

GS: What is the minimum?

CB: I think it's 500sqft. 400sqft. Pretty small

GS: But not a closet

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

CB: No. The students went out and researched examples from San Francisco, New York, and other places, came up with some really creative ideas. Then we had some discussions about what types of amenities would make it worthwhile for someone to live in a smaller unit. It was almost like this fusion of an apartment building with a youth hostel—a modern youth hostel where you have a co-living situation that includes shared public spaces in the building with rec rooms.

GS: Before you start collecting a lifetime of stuff...

CB: And debt. Not only did that project connect them to the outside world, and have a sponsor for something in the school, but, it was a really interesting research topic that students said motivated them.

GS: We're coming to a close, but before we conclude, who or what are some of the people that inspire you, or, what is the reason or reasons you got into architecture? I know you went to UNC Chapel Hill, you also went to University of Albany for your Masters.

CB: And NYU undergrad.

GS: Where was Chuck when he decided to become an architect?

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

CB: Well, I did not become an architect, which was shocking to some of my colleagues. When I first arrived, it was urban and regional planning. When I was finishing, about half way through my masters in planning, I discovered New Urbanism and that became an inspiration. It really bummed me out that what my curriculum gave me in the Masters of Urban Planning had nothing to do with placemaking, with urban design, with all the really interesting stuff, and studies of great places, or figuring out how we can take lessons from those and create new neighborhoods and places. That was what new urbanism was about. That truly inspired me. After working a few years following my masters, I just couldn't stand it anymore. So, my goal in going back for a doctorate was, my goal was to get a doctorate in planning and I'm going to bring physical planning and design into urban planning. I figured I'd end up in the planning department and I would teach interesting stuff that nobody else did. Then through a series of circumstances I got connected with Lizz, and I invited her to an event in Chapel Hill. They were just getting the funding for the Knight program, and the way she describes it, they had a meeting where they interviewed a bunch of people to be the director of the program. They asked, "Is there anyone else we haven't thought of?", and she said, "Oh, we got an email from this guy [Chuck]. We should invite him to come down." So, I was the last person in the door, but it was the perfect fit. But in contrast to I ended up in a planning school where I was the one who knew more about physical planning and design, I was like the "new urbanist" compared to all the faculty here in terms of urbanism and great cities. That really was the path and I eventually got to know all the figures of the New Urbanism movement like Lizz and Andres. I got to know Victor Dover really well. All of those people became not only an inspiration to me, but they became my friends and colleagues. That was a whole sharing and learning environment—the congresses, the annual national events, and the charrettes going on with DPZ or Dover /Kohl. It became this great network of people who supported one another and

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

shared ideas and inspired on another. It included developers, like Robert Davis who did Seaside, who was so generous and always welcomed people to go there and learn. Vince Graham up in the Carolinas, and Robert Turner. Those people became interconnected, and still are. There is a small group of New Urbanist developers totally separate from ULI, who hold their own Fall and Spring councils of about 40 or 50 people.

GS: Congress of New Urbanism?

CB: Nope, they call themselves the National Town Builders Association, so it's really just the developers out of the New Urbanism group. When we started this program I asked if we could send a couple of students, and every time now they welcome a couple of our students to attend those councils—they call them councils. So, there is still this great connection to that network that I know is inspiring our students.

For the program, I would say, we've had a lot of great people. Tony Goldman very early on would become inspirational. It isn't that all the other models of real estate developers and people who are finance oriented aren't great and relevant, but Tony was inspirational. I think it was at our first board meeting that we shared recent publications by faculty with them. I had my book which is called "Place Making", and at the break, he came over to me and said, "That's what I am. I'm not a real estate developer. I'm a place maker." And the students loved him. When we started the mentorship program at least half the class would at would ask for Tony Goldman as a mentor. He couldn't do that many students individually, but he agreed to have four of them go as a group and he'd spend an afternoon with them. We have these great photos of him in these mentorship

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

sessions. His daughter, Jessica [Goldman Srebnick] would also be there. Jessica has taken his place on the Board this year. We have often held him up as a really great example for the fusion of real estate development, community design, place making, community-oriented development, that we can hold up as a model. And now people like **Abra Jane spelling?** who are on the board, definitely in the mold of Tony Goldman, continues that tradition and Jessica. They are inspirational to me and I think to the program as a whole.

GS: Thank you again for taking the time. I would like to have more conversations like this one in the future. Is there anything else that you feel like you've not said or want to contribute?

CB: We could visit it another time, but the other thing I have not talked a lot about is all the different the faculty who intersected with both programs over time.

GS: I'd love to hear about that. The more you talk the better.

CB: It might help if we break and revisit it another time so I can kind of think through all the different faculty and the different times. The first year of the MRED program faculty like Jorge Hernandez taught the first "Architecture for Non-Architects" course for the MRED students. The alumni still talk about that. Jean François [Lejeune] taught "The History of Cities", and eventually I asked Jaime Correa to put together a curriculum for an "Architecture and Design" elective, because they were all electives. Then I thought all the MRED students should have a fundamental

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

introduction to urban design at the scale that they worked. Jaime has taught that course consistently for the last five years or so. Lizz taught a course on New Urbanism multiple times for them. There have been lots of different interactions with different studios. We've had great collaborations with Jake Brillhart's studios for the last couple years. There was one year we paired with three different studios in one semester because we many teams in a class. One team paired with Frank Martinez's studio. He had Michael Graves working on a couple of different sights with the studio, and, of course, I'm, be very careful not to interfere with the studio. But Michael Graves really appreciated the fact that we had these students looking at the market and real estate side for the studio, and there was a little property in downtown Coral Gables that became a really interesting project. It was actually before there was a Wework and it was about sharing workspace and some residential mixed use built into it. It was really interesting.

GS: They are learning at a very early point in their education/careers that it is all about collaboration if you want something to work. You can not do it independently.

CB: The same semester of that Jorge Hernandez was very involved in the preservation effort for the Marine Stadium, and he had ideas for development on the property there to help fund it. There have been of lot of these. Armando Montero has been really involved and helpful from the beginning. I imagine that he did some of the original research on other real estate programs and has been a big advocate for alumni or existing student to pick knowledge in real estate as a way to expand their career options, which is a big part of what I think the program brings. He became the first faculty to formally organize a collaborated studio with my spring course each year for the first

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

years. Armando began by insisting we work together right from the beginning, breaking up into teams within both the studios and the real estate class. That was a big contribution. Joanna Lombard, on the healthcare side, we did projects together on the medical campus with *Miami Asset Management Company*, which were looking for different ideas for hotels and medical offices. We've done a lot through that collaboration. Then Steve Olman, who she's connected with through her work. Allan Shulman has always been great as a lecturer. We've never done a studio with him but Allan brings in a really applied method for both preservation and additions to the great boutique hotels on the beach.

GS: He understands the culture of the region.

CB: Of the region, and of the developer, investor, entrepreneur side.

I think the capstone has been the most important way that we really integrate the program with the school. At the end of each MRED year right after graduation, usually in May right after everybody leaves for the summer, we usually found a sponsor somewhere in the South Florida region. We've been in Hollywood, Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, historical Flagler Street, Allapattah, Opa Locka. It's usually a study area and the sponsor comes up with a set of challenges for us. The team is usually about thirty people with faculty and students from the MRED program, from architecture and from urban design. Typically, we break them into different teams with different parcels and places to look at. There were six different historic buildings on Flagler last year with adapter for use potential, and also with the possibility of adding some development too. Each of those was headed by a different faculty member. There were six different architecture faculty

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

leading those teams. In Allapattah we had Carie and Adib working on scenarios. We had R&R Studios, Roberto Behar, working on a concept for the market there. Each of the capstones is kind of a special experience for the school and the faculty and the students and everybody gets to of bring their talents to the project. [Recording Cuts off]

GS: Ok go ahead.

CB: So I'll give you one example from the capstone program. They don't all produce things that get built. A lot of them are explorations. There's always an urban design element to them as well.

CB: From the beginning, the MRED program and what was the Suburban and Town Design program, which is now the Urban Design program had a close relationship, as the Knight program did with the program as well. So MUD students take my intro course, my students have their urban design intro course with Prof. Correa and that course is with Lizz Plater Zyberk as well. The capstone, of course, has always been integrated. Jaime Correa, in particular, has really led the design team for all of the capstones. The one that I think is really special was Lauderdale-by-the-Sea. This community wanted us to look at few different areas. One was around the city hall, a lot of the beach front area where they had a lot of these smaller hotels that were ready for redevelopment, as well as public spaces, the corridor that goes to the beach and actually terminates in the beach. It was just a big wide boulevard where there were some restaurants. So out of the capstone, Jaime and the design team came up with an idea for a plaza where the road meets the beach a block in, in order to continue that plaza as a special, more walkable place because that's

Charles Bohl
January 18, 2017

where all the action was for Lauderdale-by-the-Sea. That concept came that out of the capstone, the city manager and the community then hired Jaime and Steve Fett, who was also involved in the charrette, to come back and flesh out the design and actually got built. I think it's called Pelican Square. It's an award winning plaza. I think that's one of the more satisfying things. It's not always all about real estate, and what we talk about a lot in the program is how to create value. A lot of the ways you create value is through public space. It is through great streets, through the urbanism. There is great research that proves that. So it is this blending of urbanism, new urbanism, urban design and real estate that is about creating value for the real estate, but also for the community in so many different ways in a really holistic way.

END OF INTERVIEW

Gilda Santana

04.16.18