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**NEXT.cc AMONG FOUR U.S. NOMINEES SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE
IN UIA GOLDEN CUBES AWARD**

*SAIC Students Collaborate with Architects, Principals, and Teachers in
Development of Web-based Design Education Program for K-12 Students*

Chicago, IL — The **Association of Architecture Organizations** (AAO) has announced that NEXT.cc, a Chicago- and Milwaukee-based educational organization developed in part by students at the **School of the Art Institute of Chicago**, is among four nominees that will represent the United States in the international phase of the inaugural **Architecture & Children Golden Cubes Awards** conducted by the **International Union of Architects** (UIA). The U.S. nominees will join other top programs from around the globe as part of a celebration of K-12 architecture education efforts at the UIA Congress in Tokyo, Japan, September 25–28, 2011. Nominees' work will be publicly displayed at the Tokyo Congress, and the UIA will select four final winners in the international phase. All winning applications are available for public view at wizehive.com/goldencubes.

NEXT.cc was created by School of the Art Institute of Chicago professor **Linda Keane, AIA** (Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Designed Objects) and Mark Keane, UWM Professor with **45 SAIC students**, 15 University of Wisconsin Milwaukee students, and an advisory board of K-12 teachers and principals. It was nominated for the Golden Cubes Award in the Audio-Visual Media category, which is open to all individuals and organizations. The jury commented NEXT.cc will host **Design as Nature Teacher Workshops** as part of National Education Week, April 15 at Visioneers Art And Design Day, Peck School of the Arts, UWM and April 20 at Nelson Institute's Earth Day Celebration, Madison, WI.

Keane explains that NEXT.cc introduces architecture to children with fun and free tools, languages, discovery, and design journeys. Children draw, paint, write, sketch, animate, model, and build online inside and become architectural investigators outside. NEXT.cc's resources take children on physical field trips in local communities while encouraging virtual field trips to global institutions, museums, and contemporary art, design, and architectural practices around the world. Students may submit digital copies of their projects for inclusion in the NEXT.cc gallery online.

How to learn, reason, think creatively, make decisions, problem solve, and see in the mind's eye are 21st-century skills of architects developed and assessed using NEXT.cc's Eco Web. NEXT.cc gallery of young imaginations demonstrates organization of people, places, and environments; interdependence of built and natural systems in spatial dimensions; and urban structure and impacts of change. Children, aware of architecture and engaged with their environment, change from passive consumers to active creators of better spaces and places.

SAIC students participated in the development of the program through a course offered jointly by the departments of **Art Education** and **Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Designed Objects** called **Eco Design**. The course introduces environmental design education as a viable and necessary foundation for lifelong learning and urban stewardship. Students conduct information, object, experience, and environmental design research and develop curricular strategies and activities that encourage integrated "art + design + environmental" project-based methods of thinking and making for schools, museums, cultural institutions, and alternative settings. **NEXT.cc's** transdisciplinary activities empower children to critique, create, and communicate, and shift from consumers to active participants in imagining new relationships between the built and natural environments.

The Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture sites NEXT.cc as a leading K-12 public architecture education program. Awarded a United States Green Building Council Excellence in Green Building Education Award, **NEXT.cc** reaches children in more than 35 states and 15 countries. A resource for Earth Day Educators, National Environmental Education Foundation, the Smithsonian, the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum, the National Endowment for the Arts, Harvard High School Career Links Project, UK's Info Cow, and Australia's Object, NEXT.cc connects with its growing community via Facebook, Twitter, and Linked in. NEXT.cc was sited for being a "comprehensive and practical online tool" that was "stunning, intriguing, fun."

About NEXT.cc

NEXT.cc is an eco web <http://www.NEXT.cc> that develops ethical imagination and environmental stewardship. NEXT.cc introduces what design is, what design does, and why design is important. It offers activities across nine scales- nano, pattern, object, space, architecture, neighborhood, urban, region, and world. **NEXT.cc's** 150+ journeys integrate more than 1,500 museums, institutions, and contemporary practices. NEXT.cc plans to reach 45 million third-grade through twelfth-grade students, their teachers, and their families with meaningful learning experiences that create positive influence on lives.

About the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

A leader in educating artists, designers, and scholars since 1866, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) offers nationally accredited undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate programs to nearly 3,200 students from around the globe. Located in the heart of Chicago, SAIC has an educational philosophy that is built upon an interdisciplinary approach to art and design, giving students unparalleled opportunities to develop their creative and critical abilities, while working with renowned faculty who include many of the leading practitioners in their fields. SAIC's resources include the Art Institute of Chicago and its new Modern Wing; numerous special collections and programming venues provide students with exceptional exhibitions, screenings, lectures, and performances. For more information, please visit www.saic.edu.