



Media Release, 3.12.10

The Culture of New Generation Student Centered Learning Emerges

New ways of learning driven by changes in pedagogies and mobile communication technologies are demanding a new approach to designing educational spaces, according to leading Melbourne architect Adrian Stanic.

Mr Stanic, director of Lyons, told the inaugural Learning Spaces Design Summit in Sydney 29-30 November, that design for new generation student centered learning needed to be underpinned by a design approach that embraced and developed the teaching and learning culture of the educational institution.

“The design of teaching and learning spaces has an important role to play in enriching the student experience within the learning environment, whilst also integrating it with new technologies”

“As designers working in this space, not only do we have to understand current academic thinking on improved learning models, but also we need to contribute to the debate through lateral innovative design concepts that synthesize these ideas into something more focused on building a unique student culture.

“Developing diversity and richness of the student experience through different types of social spaces and a range of different teaching configurations are key to the Lyons approach.

“Themed student and staff social spaces can become a way to promote unique manifestations of culture in the building allowing students and staff to identify with different spaces within the building,” Mr Stanic said.

Mr Stanic reported that ‘a desire to create a unique culture’ was one of the driving force behind Lyons’ recent work in designing the RMIT SAB building in Melbourne CBD, which is currently under construction.

“In designing RMIT SAB, our prime focus was to create a flexible environment that could extend the teaching and learning ‘culture’, not only to provide for current needs but to facilitate the future evolution of pedagogical approaches. A broad palette of teaching and learning spaces in the building reinforces this concept. Such spaces include curved, tiered format lecture theatres with natural light and views to out to the street, through to interactive multimodal learning spaces and conversational style learning areas.

“A key part of the design process for the RMIT SAB building was the implementation of Lyons’ unique client briefing system, which is utilized throughout the design phases to capture client input. As part of this process the Lyons undertook over 500 stakeholder meetings ranging from students to the Vice Chancellor, through to academic and technical support staff.

“This workshop process enabled Lyons to tap into the teaching and learning culture of RMIT and to understand future aspirations for their culture – it’s a highly inclusive process that draws in representation from across the whole University.

“It’s an essential part of getting the teaching and learning culture right in designing new generation student centre learning spaces,” Mr Stanic said.

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