

Questions for IAUD Review Meeting

1. What do you think of our IAUD session at Rio Conference on December 10?

From all reports, the session was excellent as were the papers that accompanied these presentations that were included in the Conference Proceedings. There is no debate that Japanese corporations are well ahead on universal design of any other manufacturers worldwide. We are deeply grateful for IAUD member's commitment of time and resources to bring so many important leaders as presenters to Rio.

I know that there were frustrations with less than a full complement of attendees and with the coming and going of some participants. I certainly regret that. Part of the issue is the simple fact that an increasing number of delegates come with an interest in universal design from very specific perspective: the urban designers want to know what is going on in cities; the landscape designers want landscape; the housing designers and developers want housing; transportation people want transportation. It has resulted in some rather narrow choices by some participants. It is also true that we were surprised by the cultural differences among Latin American delegates. They were more informal, social and talkative and came in and out of sessions throughout the conference. I was at a loss as to how to control it during the event but regret that I failed to anticipate the problem and develop a plan to manage it.

2. What do you think of our strength and weakness of Japanese UD activities from your viewpoint of UD specialist?

The Japanese have integrated universal design into Japanese society more successfully than any other nation. I've watched with respect - and more than a little envy - the evolving sophistication in research and marketing. The integration of green and UD is outstanding and it's particularly significant that such important multi-nationals are committed. No other nation has come close to this commitment. I would like to see the companies begin to market their UD - and UD/Green products - internationally. Marketing is inevitably tailored to the particular nation and market segment but there are products that have intrinsic appeal that other parts of the world are able to appreciate the logic and social impact of this approach. I do think that there is a challenge and opportunity to thinking through the relationship between the corporate commitment to Universal Design and rest of the spectrum of Universal Design in the

built environment and in policy.

3. What is the direction of US or Europe trend of UD activities?

From my perspective, the EU, or at least Western Europe, is evolving to more integration across the traditional catalysts to UD of aging and disability. The EU Commission and some countries have invested in research to consider broad integration of UD with policy and infrastructure planning and, potentially, a standard curriculum for design education. Discussions of a Design-for-All label continue and may one day soon result in agreement about standards for a label.

The US is seeing more filtering through the society of the concept and definitely more in the design professions. Many more young designers and students are interested. The media pays more attention with each passing year. The US is slow to take seriously the need to face a higher proportion of older people and the coming reality of the 74M aging 'baby-boomers' but attention is growing steadily. Our organizational priority is to create the Institute on Human Centered Design in Boston where we can offer a structure for on-going international dialogue and shared work and where we can undertake a combination of education and R & D. We will look at home, work, school and healthcare settings. Among our interests will be research on design that supports and enhances brain performance.

4. What is your expectation for our 2006 Conference at Kyoto?

I have no specific information about the plans for the conference but we would promote the event to the international community in whatever way we can. We have not yet decided about a next Designing for the 21st Century Conference but would be careful not to conflict with the Kyoto conference. Given the scope of our plans for the Institute, it is not likely that it would be possible for us to organize an international conference in 2006.

I hope that these answers are useful to you.

Best regards,

Valerie Fletcher, Executive Director, Adaptive Environments, USA

Thank you very much for your cooperation.