Western Michigan University  
Miller Plaza Design Charette  
May 19, 2006  

Team: LTU and DSA Architects  

PROJECT DESCRIPTION  

The Miller Plaza is a central urban space within WMU’s campus, a connector/path to other academic areas and, moreover, a learning environment. The idea of the plaza as ‘a learning garden’ drove the team’s approach. The team identified the various users, including the student and the wider community. The Students, ages 18 – 26, are the NET Generation – this group is experiential and social, web is their oxygen and social interaction is an integral part of the learning.  

The importance of blurring the boundary of classroom and landscape is paramount.  

The project creates a strong path through the plaza while developing a series of plates that create a folded texture across the plaza. The residual space resulting from the weaving/shifting of the plates create areas of activity throughout the space – a basket weaving. Planting beds, gathering spaces, both large and small scale, art installations and points of information gathering and sharing occur within these spaces. Water and light are used in concert to wrap through the plaza, tying the main path with various activity nodes. The water element is a series of streams and pools that collect storm-water from within the plaza and from the neighboring environs to create variety of sounds and visual excitement.
LTU + DSA Architects
VISCERAL
SCALE

MEMORY

BODY

SUSTAINABLE

LEARNING GARDEN

EXPERIENCE
• The Student:
  • Web as oxygen
  • Experiential
  • Social Interaction
• This IS a Learning environment!!
  • Learning Garden
  • Blurred boundary between classroom and landscape
  • Interweaving the experiences
VISCERAL

Path
Node
Compression
Intersection
Ambiguity
Tension
• Landscape
  • Texture
  • Pattern
  • Gathering
  • Auditory
  • Water
• People
  • Arts
  • Music
  • Dance
  • Study
  • Interact
  • Share
  • Collaborate
- Path
- Kiosk
- Movement
  - Sound...music
- Light
• Media
  • Digital Art
  • Information
  • Messaging
Thank You!

Learning Garden Experience

RY

MO

Sustainable

Me

Visceral

Scale

Body