
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF BUILT ENVIRONMENTS DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

20 April 2015

This letter is written in support of a UW Salvage Wood Initiative proposal. As an Associate Professor in the Department of Architecture and Associate Dean for Technology Transfer in the College of Built Environments, I teach courses that require wood and oversee facilities that allow wood to be used for projects and research by hundreds of students and members of our faculty every year. Our facilities are used primarily, and equally by all students in our Architecture and Landscape Architecture programs. We have long been interested in finding a way to utilize the wood resources on campus when they are available to us, and have been able to do so on a few occasions to very good effect.

Most of the wood we use is construction-grade material, either solid framing or sheet goods such as plywood. These materials are available at local lumber yards. Our Furniture Studios, Design/Build Studios and some of our courses in sustainable technologies go further, identifying sources of fine sustainably-harvested wood, endangered species that have fallen or were harvested to make way for construction and infrastructure development, or alternative wood and plant species. We would be very positively affected by the development of an on-campus resource for some of these materials.

In particular, our Furniture Studios require that our students find and purchase all of the materials required to make the pieces they design. Most students use wood as a primary element of the chairs, tables, chests and other pieces they create. Once they have finished drawing, models and full-scale prototypes of their pieces using 2x4s and plywood they research and purchase wood that can cost up to \$1,000.00 per project. A few of our students have found alternative sources for materials - last quarter one of our graduate students had walnut that her grandfather had cut and dried shipped to the studio. The savings in time and material allowed her to take her project further than other students, and of course the personal connection was critical to how she felt about the outcome.

An on-campus resource could provide a less-expensive alternative to the purchase of materials in the commercial market - a huge boon for our students. It would also provide the rare chance to be able to see where material had grown, how it was made into useful rough shapes and dried to be ready for making into real things. These are things that are discussed in many courses on materials and making but not experienced in person now.

Our students are practiced at discussing the values related to the use of different materials and methods of construction. The on-campus presence of a viable local, ecological, sustainable and affordable resource will help all of us, but particularly students, to experience how the world they live in can be responsibly managed to ensure the highest and best use of resources. That might be the best lesson they get while they are here.

I fully support this effort and will ensure that our students and faculty look for ways to actively engage a Salvage Wood Initiative, from being volunteers to users.

Sincerely,

Kimo Griggs, Associate Professor & Associate Dean for Technology Transfer