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Corbin President Speaks at Ferris State University's College of Business

Traverse City, MI – Junior-level design students at Ferris State University's College of Business were given an assignment to recruit speakers to round out their educational experience. The assignment required them to contact area leaders in various design disciplines and bring them to Ferris for class discussions.

Mark VanderKlipp, Corbin Design's president, responded to the call by giving the students advice on how to approach design firms as a potential staff member or freelance resource, and how to be better designers themselves.

Key to the discussion was taking a larger view of the design profession as a whole, and what designers can offer community and business leaders that go beyond the development of "artifacts" in design, whether websites, printed collateral or signage elements. The design of the process is as important as the outcome, VanderKlipp explained, and in some cases even more so.

In an environment where client requirements inform the final outcome (via the budget, internal capabilities, approval processes, local regulations and other factors), the design process needs to foster an environment of understanding and an adherence to agreed-upon objectives from start to finish, VanderKlipp explained. He added that while designers are charged with developing the functional and visual aspects of a project, the informational and process design elements that underlie the visual design are just as critical to a project's long-term success.

Designers who understand these business objectives from the start are providing a much more valuable consultative model to clients, he said, and to society.

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