

HU GSD Office for Urbanization  
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**Harvard GSD Establishes Office for Urbanization**  
***Initiative will develop design research projects on the contemporary city***

I am pleased to announce the formation of the Harvard University Graduate School of Design Office for Urbanization, a trans-disciplinary initiative that will focus the intellectual and practical capabilities of the School on a range of applied design research projects attendant to the contemporary city. The Office will be led by founding Director Charles Waldheim, John E. Irving Professor of Landscape Architecture.

The Office for Urbanization will build upon the GSD's legacy of innovation in design research to address societal conditions associated with contemporary urbanization. Engaging faculty from the School's three departments, the Office will draw upon the range of disciplinary and professional knowledge embodied in the GSD's research advancement initiatives and design labs to extend the School's impact on the future of cities around the world. The Office will be a continuation of the GSD's historic leadership in applied project-based design research, and an exciting new initiative reconfirming the School's commitment to impactful societal engagement through design. It will work to shorten the distance between innovation in design research and impact in the world.

The Office will provide a venue for the advancement of knowledge on the role of design research in relation to the social and environmental challenges associated with ongoing urbanization. Collaborating with the Center for Green Buildings and Cities, the Joint Center for Housing Studies, and Executive Education, and engaging government agencies, non-government organizations, philanthropic institutions, and community leadership, the Office will articulate and evaluate various scenarios for urbanization through a number of agendas for design research.

Global in its purview, the Office will engage partners on a diverse array of sites and subjects domestically and internationally. Its inaugural project will focus on municipal response to sea level in partnership with the City of Miami Beach. "This foundational project of the Office for Urbanization will examine the implications of rising sea levels and increased storm events on the economy and ecology, infrastructure and identity of Miami Beach in relation to its metropolitan and regional contexts," Waldheim says. "The study will develop design strategies and scenarios to mitigate present threats and to anticipate future potentials facing one of the world's most recognizable and singular cultural landscapes."

We look forward to The Office's engagement in critical issues of urbanization within the School and beyond.

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