

Tec and University of Illinois to design furniture trends



[Tec de Monterrey](#) and the [University of Illinois at Chicago \(UIC\)](#) have signed a **collaboration agreement** in order for students to **design innovative and flexible furniture** for the new normal.

The “*Workplaces in new spaces*” agreement was signed between the **School of Architecture, Art, and Design (EAAD) at the Tec** and the *College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts (CADA)* at UIC.

Both schools will also be working with **furniture companies Versa Concept**, located in Guadalajara, and *Interior Innovations*, in New York.

Juan Ignacio Michel Zepeda, Professor of Industrial Design at the Tec’s EAAD, explained that, “*this valuable exchange of ideas will take place between Guadalajara, Chicago, and New York.*”

“*It is a huge opportunity to work together in this region,*” he said.

Product Design,
Strategic Design,
and Research
Collaborative Program

Value Chain
Guadalajara - Chicago - New York

Tecnológico de Monterrey
Escuela de Arquitectura,
Arte y Diseño

College of
ArchDesigArts

INTERIOR
INNOVATIONS

versa

Juan Ignacio Michel Zepeda

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He explained that this partnership will impart **value to design** because it will further reinforce the hallmarks of **UIC-CADA** and **EAAD** at the Tec in important aspects such as:

- Product design,
- User experience,
- Strategic design, and
- Research.

Juan José Cabrera Lazarini, a research professor at UIC, explained that he has identified **5 main objectives** for this relationship:

1. Faculty exchanges,
2. Student exchanges,
3. Shared research projects,
4. Academic course exchanges, and
5. Academic material exchanges.

Michel Zepeda explained that the **value chain** between **Guadalajara-Chicago-New York** means that projects contribute to an important **economic** region.

He added that Chicago is one of the **most important cities in the United States**, not only in terms of size, but also for the **design and marketing of office furniture**.

Guadalajara is also recognized as the center of the most important **furniture industry cluster in Mexico**, he said.

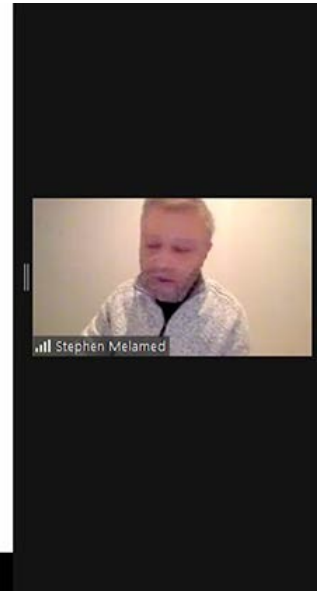
UIC

Interdisciplinary
Product
Development

Overview

The IPD courses focus on the early stages of the product development process (Fuzzy Front End).

Project teams are directed in conducting in-depth Human-Centered Research and developing targeted, innovative concepts and prototypes for physical, digital, and/or service based solutions.



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He also mentioned that **adapting workspaces** to meet different trends, such as the **remote collaborative hybrid model**, is a tangible design opportunity.

In other words, **virtual collaboration** has become a **common global practice** in the new normal.

This opportunity can leverage initial projects more efficiently, both in terms of **cost** and **time**, by incorporating **collaborative designs** made using **digital platforms**.

Therefore, an important niche in the adaptation of workplaces will be the trend towards **new spaces and furniture** for **offices, health centers, schools, and homes**, he explained.

Each of the projects will be carried out remotely following guidelines from the “**Professional Practice and Product Design 4**” class.

The process will be led by Tec professors Juan Ignacio Michel and Claudio Monterrubio.

Stephen Melamed, founding professor at the UIC School of Design, explained that the UIC Innovation Center works on **innovation** based on **advanced technologies and needs**.

“It’s an honor and pleasure to be able to partner with the Tec and be part of this future collaboration,” he said.

Laura Cueva and Michael Kearbey, president and director of **Interior Innovations** respectively, said they were excited to participate in these concepts, which will allow each of the participants to be successful.

Finally, Alonso López, CEO of **Versa Concept** and a Tec graduate, said, “I’m happy to form part of this collaborative team with all of you.”

He added that this collaboration will be a **new experience** for students and for those involved in **developing different projects** together.

Product Design,
Strategic Design,
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Collaborative Program



Laura Cueva, President/CEO
Interior Innovations



Alonso López, General Director
Versa Concepto




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Versa Concept is known as one of the best companies in the **office furniture industry**. It is a **Jalisco-based company** which **exports its products**.

Since opening its one-stop **office furniture** firm, *Interior Innovations'* goal has been to create innovative spaces for commercial **and private clients**.

It is important to note that UIC is a **research institution** dedicated to **the discovery and distribution of knowledge**.

The Tec's EAAD offers degrees such as **Industrial Design (LDI)**, **Architecture (ARQ)**, and **Civil Engineering (IC)**, to name but a few.

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