University of Earth

Questing for a more comprehensive dream

(Unabridged version – including illustrations)

Spirit of the Land Foundation
Union of International Associations
http://www.spiritofland.org/SL_unie.html
The “Impossible” Bridge
bridging across very great differences

- Women
- Conservative
- Environment
- Old people
- Indigenous thinking
- Secular thinking
- Wealth
- Men
- Liberal
- Industry
- Young people
- Western thinking
- Spiritual thinking
- Poverty
Possession of the Whole?
learning from a ball game

- Gaining possession -- attacking and tackling
- Keeping the ball -- “its mine”!
- Keeping it moving -- “running with the ball”
- Preventing access of others to the ball
- Passing the ball -- to my team only
- Scoring against the others -- making them lose
- What is a good game?
Two hands to support the whole?
One place? -- Small paths?
More places? -- Few paths?
Many places? -- One path?
Many places? -- Many paths?
Aboriginal Songlines of Australia?
Aboriginal Songlines of Australia?
One country -- many songlines
Many countries -- Songlines between
Two hands to support the whole?
Symbolic Dimensions

- Architecture
  - buildings
  - institutions and management structures
  - knowledge and information
- Image - Dream - Story
- Personal and social dynamics
- Learning pathways and representation
- Honouring traditional patterns
A Pattern of Meaningful Dreams

- A university *about* the Earth and the Land
- A university *for* People of the Land
- A university *of* planet Earth as a whole
- A university *made of* earth
- The Earth *as a* university of life and learning
- An emerging image of a potential university
- A framework for the diversity of present dreams
Dream Pattern 1:

A university *about* the Earth and the Land

- Academic study of the Earth and the Land
- Resource management
- Healing the Land
- etc
- Models: “Rural university”
Dream Pattern 2:
A university *for* People of the Land

- For those people attached to the land
- For Aboriginal people
- For wilderness people
- For deep ecology people
- etc
- Models: “Ecostery”
Dream Pattern 3:
A university of planet Earth as a whole

- Beyond the “international” university model
- Reflecting the diversity of the globe
- Symbolizing the Earth
Dream Pattern 4: A university *made of* earth

- Constructed using earth
- In a style blending with the earth
- Integrated into the local environment
- Using, and developing, local skills
- etc
Dream Pattern 5:

The Earth *as a* university of life and learning

- The Earth as the curriculum
- Living as learning
- Relating to knowledge embodied in the Earth
- etc
Dream Pattern 6:
An emerging image of a potential university

- University of Earth as an emerging archetype
- Relating to an implicit, potential framework
- Embodying the future through dreaming
- Enriching the present with the future
- Clarifying understanding of a future university
- etc
Dream Pattern 7:
A framework for the diversity of present dreams

- Developing a holistic conceptual framework
- Relating conflicting dreams
- Recognizing mutually irrelevant concerns
- Discovering richer frameworks
- Embodying polarities and paradoxes
- etc
Aboriginal Kinship Model (draft)
return over 4 generations

North ("Them")
Tjanampamiri
Inyurpa

By Lee Brady & Diana James

South ("Us")
Nganampamiri

Great-grandfather
Grandfather
Father
Son

Tjamu
Pakali
Father
Son

Brother
Brother
Katja
Mama

Grandfather
Grandson
Mama
Katja
Kuta
Malanypa
G-gr.father
G.gr.son
Design Challenges
Building the “impossible” bridge

- Embodying traditional understanding
- Relating incompatible understandings
- Comprehending the architecture of the whole
- Blending science and art
- Wealth and Poverty
- Politics and Personalities
- Perfection and Imperfection
- Working with paradoxes
Design Challenge 1: Embodying traditional understanding

- Honouring learning from the past
- Embodying living insight
- Creating bridges to alternative perspectives
- Expressing cultural identity
Design Challenge 2: Relating incompatible understandings

- Recognizing different perspectives
- Facilitating transition to other modes
- Ways of understanding such transitions
  - Dancing between paradigms
  - Tethering for decompression
  - Stepping stones across a river
- Bridges between different languages
Using differences creatively
Design Challenge 3: Comprehending the architecture of the whole

- Allowing for future creativity and insight
- Pragmatics of present opportunity
- Relating the incompatible appropriately
- Learning from past architectural exercises
Relating differences
Design Challenge 4: Science and Art

- Ready answers may be part of the problem
  - Scientific rationality
  - Artistic elegance
- Marrying “Beauty” and the “Beast”
- Involving both hemispheres in a solution
- “Music of the hemispheres”
Relating differences
Design Challenge 5: Wealth and Poverty

- Building anew with few resources
- Sustaining initiatives with limited resources
- Managing use of funds
Relating differences
Design Challenge 6: Politics and Personalities

- Conflicts and disagreements are in the dream
- Creation needs the tension of opposites
- Leaders also carry conflicts
- Leaders are also learners
- Leaders in conflict are part of a learning pattern
- Real diversity requires real disagreement
- Design is a power play
New structures from differences
Design Challenge 7: Perfection and Imperfection

- The ideal does not encompass the real
- Need to work with real limitations
  - resources
  - people
  - knowledge
- Harmony
  - of perfection
  - of imperfections
K. Snelson, Twelve-Strut, Aluminum & Steelon, 10" x 10" x 10" 1967
Design Challenge 8: Working with paradoxes

- Part explaining the whole
- Local vs Global
- Frail connections vs Massive contradictions
- Dancing with paradoxes
- Design as a constraint on future freedom
- Relating antagonistic skills & insights
Different Ways of Knowing
7 complementary initiatives

- Lifestyle initiative
- Healing initiative
- Information initiative
- Arts & culture initiative
- Adventure initiative
- Retreat initiative
- Research & educ. initiat.

- Bush camp experience
- Healing camp
- Songlines and computers
- Artists’ camp
- Adventure camp
- Retreat camp
- Research & educ. camp
Lifestyle initiative
Bush camp experience

- Intentional community
- Eco-tourism facility
- Eco-village
- Alternative lifestyle
- Cultural interaction
- Eco-tourism
- Semi-permanent places
- Developing friendships
- Keeping tradition alive
- Awareness of the land
- Learning western ways
Healing initiative
Healing camp

- Desert sanatorium
- Alternative therapies
- Counselling
- ‘Dry-out’ centre
- Hospice function
- Camphill community

- Desert healing centre
- Traditional remedies
- Counselling
- ‘Dry out’ centre
- Terminally ill
- Sickness of spirit
Information initiative
Songlines and computers

- Studying oral culture
- Adapting interfaces
- Representing knowledge
- Visualization techniques
- Rural networking
- Tradition onto CD & Web
- Adapting game technology
- New ways of learning
- Kinship patterns on CD
- Recording song & dance
- Developing insight
- Artistic possibilities
Art, design and culture initiative
Artists’ camp

- Encourage art & culture
- Artist colony model
- Desert architecture
- Art in context
- Art and the land
- Art and knowing
- Art as part of life process
- Sharing approaches
- Art and kinship
- Continuous creation
- Learning to listen
Adventure initiative
Adventure camp

- Eco-camping tours
- Eco-trekking
- Graded experiences
- Management education
- Survival trails
- Vision quests

- Survival together
- Respect for sacredness
- Reading the land
- Creating survival songlines
- Listening to the land
Retreat initiative

Retreat camp

- Desert retreat centre
- Contemplation centre
- Secular retreat
- Shared or isolated
- Personal growth

- Place for peace & quiet
- Time alone
- Spiritual renewal
- Different practices
- Honouring the land
- Celebrating kinship
Research & education initiative

Research & education camp

- Relationship to the land
- Ways of knowing
- Different paradigms
- Resource management
- Strategic thinking
- Mytho-poetic dimensions
- Cultural boundaries

- Ways of knowing the land
- Indigenous knowledge
- Ethno-botany studies
- Earth architecture
- Cosmology and mythology
- Low-resource development
- Exploring imaginal reality
- Language teaching