



MERGE TEAM

2017 DESIGN-BUILD ARCHITECTURE & GLAZING TEAM

By: Amanda Gibney Weko

SPOTLIGHT



Team Leaders

Jeffrey Kansler | Jefferson University
Steve Metzger | FTI

Jefferson Students

Ryan Mann (competition winner)
Raymond Bracy
Rebecca Caddick
Michael Jose
Jessica Schell
Morgan Young

FTI Glaziers

Neil Amadio
Jerry Kots
Phil Rothwell
Patrick O'Connor
Joseph Wojtkielewicz

Project Managers

James Doerfler | Jefferson University
Stephanie Staub | AGI

ABOUT MERGE

MERGE was a collaborative design-build project between the Architectural Glass Institute (AGI), the Finishing Trades Institute of the Mid-Atlantic Region (FTI), and Jefferson University. Third-year architecture students, journeymen and apprentice glaziers, and a cadre of professionals worked together to execute the hands-on glass installation constructed on Lubert Plaza at Jefferson's Center City campus. MERGE was the signature project of DesignPhiladelphia 2017, debuting with the festival's opening night party.

Read more about MERGE in the AGI Project Case Study on www.theagi.org.

MERGE represents a figurative and architectural link between Philadelphia University and Thomas Jefferson University, now known as Jefferson University. The project also linked young design and construction professionals who gained valuable experience and perspective through the project. In their own words, MERGE participants describe the project and the lessons learned:





TEAM LEADERS

The MERGE team was co-led by Jeffrey Kansler and Steve Metzger, who guided students in both design execution and the highly technical aspects of figuring out details and choosing fabrication methods. The effort was a full collaboration.

Jeffrey Kansler

Assistant Professor | Jefferson University

"Simulating a professional project delivery process is invaluable to architecture students because in school, we focus on the creative process, but the pragmatics and logistics of projects are rarely engaged on any deep level. Likewise, I'm always talking to students about the importance of tectonics and structures in a successful design, but it's difficult to convince students of that when you don't have the impetus to deliver a project on time or work with real materials. That real world aspect was beneficial for conveying these lessons."

Steve Metzger

**Instructor | Finishing Trades Institute of the Mid-Atlantic Region
Foreman | Eureka Metal & Glass Services, Inc.**

"Interdisciplinary collaboration is extremely important when it comes to the schedule. When the fabricator/installer is involved with the design phase, s/he has a better understanding of the project and therefore fewer questions or problems that can be addressed early in the design phase, way before crunch time."

ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS

Raymond Bracy

Architecture major

"Being able to walk through something you designed is almost every young architect's dream. I saw MERGE as an opportunity to get exposed to a deeper level of the design process. This was a chance to see the project from start to finish."

Rebecca Caddick

Architecture major

"It was a valuable lesson in understanding budget not just of materials but also labor. It was the first time I was forced to realize that a simple seeming design might require more labor than its more bulky, and easier to build counterpart. MERGE taught me the value of working closely with the people who are going to build it."

Michael Jose

Architecture major

"Being a part of MERGE taught me a lot about the entire design/build process. I realized that, in this field, things do not always work out perfectly. Trying to create something that is structurally stable, able to be constructed in a short time period, and is still compelling was a lot more difficult than I originally anticipated. More importantly, I learned how incredible collaboration between job fields can be."

Ryan Mann (competition winner)

Architecture major | Real Estate minor

"I won the original design build-competition and, of course, wanted to continue with the project until the end. It is very rare for students of my year or all architecture students in general to have an opportunity like this to actually have a design constructed."

Jessica Schell

Architecture major | Psychology minor

"In the end, we have the same goals. We are building and creating for people and in order to accomplish that, we need to communicate and be clear about how we need all different aspects and details done so that it can come together to benefit and be safe for the users."



Morgan Young
Master of Architecture candidate

"Interdisciplinary collaboration is imperative for any architecture student and should be a requirement before finishing your degree. As students, we always draw things in a very specific and detailed manner, but the reality is that things change and fixes have to be made. Participating in the construction process gives a hands-on experience of how things are actually put together and provides you with a knowledge of how things should actually be drawn."

FTI GLAZIERS

Neil Amadio
Shop Steward and Foreman | Reilly Glazing, Inc.

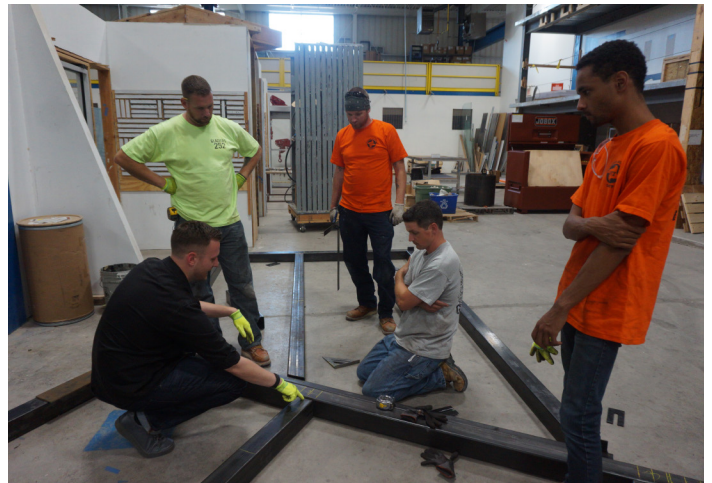
"I learned how much this project would mean for the glazing and construction industry. Being able to design a project with my peers and the students from Jefferson was an amazing experience. If we can build relationships that are reciprocal, we will build bridges that will last a lifetime and help the future workforce."

Jerry Kots
Shop Steward | GMI Contractors, Inc.

"I learned a lot more about AGI and the collaboration between AGI and the new Jefferson University, along with gaining some insight on what their students are taught. I have a newly gained respect for what it is they do and how they think when designing."

Phil Rothwell
Journeyman Glazier | Paul Rabinowitz Glass Co., Inc.

"Collaboration between design and the construction industry is pivotal in the success of any project. I got involved with the MERGE project because of the opportunity to put the spotlight on our Union Local and to give people just a little look at what trained Union glaziers are capable of."



Patrick O'Connor

Fourth-Year Apprentice | Eureka Metal & Glass Services, Inc.

"Continuing to bridge the gap between design and build professionals will ensure that both the most innovative designs and the most safe, cost effective avenues to construct them will mold the ever-changing skylines in the 21st century."

Joseph Wojtkielewicz

Third-Year Apprentice | Bucks County Glass

"I learned through this experience that both the architects and glaziers working together was very beneficial. We were able to see how they come up with their ideas and specifications, and then tell them through building experience what ways were more practical. I recognize the importance of bringing the two viewpoints together to problem solve and overcome any issues."

PROJECT MANAGERS

James A. Doerfler, AIA

Director of Architecture Programs | Jefferson University

"The big picture in introducing different disciplines and trades together on a project early allows the project to be more successful. Innovation often occurs where the fruits of expertise in different camps comes together. I'm a firm believer in having open team members that can freely discuss issues, and usually the outcomes lead to innovation and very lovely completed projects."

Stephanie Staub,

Marketing Director, Architectural Glass Institute

"The MERGE installation not only demonstrates what can be accomplished in a design/build setting, but also the impact programs like this have on the academic experience of future architects and builders. Bridging the knowledge gap between what is drawn and how those drawings are ultimately built will positively impact future projects' designs, costs, and schedules."

MERGE was funded through a Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services grant received by FTI and managed by AGI.

