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CCAD Students Help Smart Columbus Turn Electric Vehicle Charging Stations into Art

COLUMBUS, Ohio — To artists and designers, everything is a canvas — even electric vehicle charging stations.

Smart Columbus recently partnered with Columbus College of Art & Design to turn charging stations for electric vehicles into art with a purpose.

A group of CCAD's Advertising & Graphic Design students designed wraps for electric vehicle charging stations for corporate partners, including AEP. The designs will be unveiled Friday, June 8, at the Columbus Arts Festival during the community preview of the Smart Columbus Experience Center (170 Civic Center Drive), opening to the public on June 30.

The wrap designs will be available to Smart Columbus' Acceleration Partners — large employers committed to influencing mobility patterns in central Ohio — for customization and deployment. Installations of the wrap designs are expected later this summer.

“A recent study by UC Davis found that electric vehicle charging infrastructure doubled in California from 2014 to 2017, but residents' awareness of charging infrastructure went unchanged. The Smart Columbus initiative is committed to increasing electric vehicle adoption five-fold by 2020 — to achieve this bold goal, we need to do things differently,” says Jordan Davis, Director, Smart Cities for the Columbus Partnership. “This inspired our commitment to public art, and made CCAD a natural partner for the initiative.”

CCAD leaders agreed.

“At Columbus College of Art & Design, our students learn to change culture and commerce. Smart Columbus is changing culture and commerce, so the partnership seemed like a perfect fit,” says Dr. Melanie Corn, President of CCAD.

Getting corporations on board with the project, and allowing students to come up with bold, fresh designs was a new experience for many involved.

“Charging stations aren't new to the area, but by making them stand out, we can help people understand that charging an EV is becoming as easy as filling up your tank,” said Julie Sloat, president and COO of AEP Ohio. “Working with the students and experiencing the passion and energy they put into their designs was refreshing for our team. It really helped us understand that we need to be bold as we undertake a project as big and important as this one.”

Three Advertising & Graphic Design students in the Advanced Designed Concepts II came up with concepts and presented them to Smart Columbus.

“Smart Columbus enabled our students to work on a co-branded client project for electric vehicle charging stations,” says Jim Lutz, Associate Professor of Advertising & Graphic Design, who taught the course. “Students were able to collaborate and explore the EV industry and related infrastructure that continues to grow in Columbus.”

The students say the experience helped them prepare for life after graduation.



Columbus College
of Art & Design



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“We really enjoyed working with a real-world client and getting feedback from a real client,” says Matty McClelland, a Pickerington native who worked on the project with fellow CCAD Advertising & Graphic Design rising seniors Amanda Burnside and Anthony Damico.

The spring program cost \$10,000 and was funded through the \$10 million grant awarded to Columbus by the Paul G. Allen Philanthropies as the winner of the Smart City Challenge.

But the project isn't over yet.

In the fall, students at CCAD will continue the project by designing wraps for public electric vehicle charging stations. The fall program is funded by a \$15,000 grant from the Columbus Foundation and \$10,000 from Smart Columbus.

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About Columbus College of Art & Design

Columbus College of Art & Design teaches undergraduate and graduate students in the midst of a thriving creative community in Columbus, Ohio. Founded in 1879, CCAD is one of the oldest private, nonprofit art and design colleges in the United States, offering 12 four-year undergraduate programs and two graduate programs in art and design that produce graduates equipped to shape culture and business at the highest level. For more information, visit ccad.edu.

About Smart Columbus

The City of Columbus' Smart Columbus plan won the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) \$40 million Smart City Challenge in June 2016 after competing against 77 cities nationwide to become the country's first city to fully integrate innovative technologies — self-driving cars, connected vehicles and smart sensors — into its transportation network. Columbus was also awarded an additional \$10 million grant from the Paul G. Allen Philanthropies to accelerate the transition to an electrified, low-emissions transportation system. Aligned investments totaling more than \$500 million have been made by the private, public and academic institutions in the region to support technology and infrastructure investments that upgrade Columbus' transportation network and help make Columbus the model connected city of the future. Smart Columbus is a regional smart city initiative co-led by the City of Columbus and Columbus Partnership that includes partnerships with The Ohio State University, Battelle, American Electric Power and many more.

For more information, visit the Smart Columbus website at columbus.gov/smartcolumbus.