A fall lecture series co-sponsored by the School of Architecture and the Murphy Institute will examine how to address common problems found in the inner cities from a design and policy standpoint. The “Urban Innovations” lecture series kicks off on Monday (Sept. 19) with David Smith, founder of the Affordable Housing Institute.

David Smith, founder of the Affordable Housing Institute, will lead off the new “Urban Innovations” lecture series on Monday (Sept. 19), speaking on turning slums into assets. (Photo from the Affordable Housing Institute)

Smith, who will discuss “Turning Slums Into Assets,” has 30 years of experience developing “sustainable financial ecosystems.” His successes will offer insight into how to handle similar problems in New Orleans, says Scott Bernhard, director of the Tulane City Center at the School of Architecture and one of the coordinators of the lecture series.

“The people we invited are thinking in innovative ways about solutions to common urban problems,” Bernhard says. “We are all deeply impacted by the urban environment. Whether we work or live in the city â€” we're deeply impacted by the success and healthy operation of the urban core.”

Bernhard says the idea to co-host the lectures with the Murphy Institute makes perfect sense in that future architects and policy makers should be cognizant of how government and private action affects design in the urban centers.

“We're hoping that these lectures will bring together groups of people who might not be familiar with what the other is doing,” Bernhard says. “One of the goals of this lecture series is to expose architecture students and faculty to the larger policy realms that come to bear on our design issues, and also to expose what we're doing in the community to those interested in policy.”

The lecture will be held in Richardson Memorial Hall, room 201 at 6 p.m. Information on subsequent lectures in the series can be found on both the School of Architecture and Murphy institute websites.