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**Collaborators** Donna Denio, Business Development Manager, GEI Consultants, Inc. and Co-Founder Center for Balance by Design, Inc.; Vicky Sirianni, Chief Facilities Officer, MIT; Kevin Kampschroer, Director Research & Workplace 20-20, U.S. General Services Administration; Sarah Kuhn, Ph.D., Associate Professor University of Massachusetts at Lowell; Jeanne Colachico, Esq., Principal Jeanne Colachico and Associates; Robert Rasmussen, President and COO, LEGO Executive Discovery LLC; Sandra DiBernardo, Assistant Regional Director, U.S. General Services Administration, New England Region, Karen Panetta, Ph.D., Associate Professor Tufts University; and Karen Guenther, FIIDA, Principal Karen Guenther Partnership, Inc., display LEGO process models and celebrate GSA Partnership.

## **U.S. Government To Research What Constitutes “Optimal Work Culture”** Boston Society of Architects To Partner with Tufts University, Others To Increase Team Productivity

MEDFORD/SOMERVILLE, Mass.– The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) announced today that it will partner with the Center for Balance by Design, a project of the Boston Society of Architects, to undertake research that will determine how to achieve optimal team productivity. This research, conducted jointly by a team of academic and industry representatives, could have a far-reaching impact on workplace design in the 21st century, and could save taxpayers billions by increasing the productivity of government operations.

The research will be conducted by the Center for Balance by Design in partnership with the GSA “Workplace 20-20”, Tufts University School of Engineering, Lyme Properties, Executive Discovery LLC, and Knoll, Inc. By connecting the industry partners with academic and research partners, the collaboration will provide opportunities for “real world” applications for process improvements.

The GSA’s Public Buildings Service created the Workplace 20-20 program to find a new process for developing work environments as well as to create new environments in which to work. It’s a new way of thinking about how and where people work.

“By bringing together this diverse group of partners, we intend to use a ‘systems’ approach to workplace creation, and develop workplace design practices that will maximize team creativity and productivity,” said Kevin Kampschroer, GSA Director of Research. “As the workplace evolves into a faster-paced environment that relies on technology to meet increasing demands, we need to stop and assess our physical work environments, and ensure that they are beneficial to our goals.”

The consortium will develop a “living model” of the future of work at its new “Co-Design Studio” located at Lyme Properties Kendall Square complex. The Co-Design Studio will be used for a variety of projects, such as hosting GSA workgroups as a place to rethink their work practices and helping Knoll Inc. incorporate technological innovation in their product designs. The Studio will serve as a laboratory for the Workplace 20-20 partnership to study how people use the space to interact with one another and achieve common goals. This office space/laboratory will allow the research team to test and refine the work environment while measuring productivity and developing a set of work-process design and workplace-design guidelines for optimal creativity and productivity.

“Work is a social process supported by technology. In today’s culture, sometimes we feel ‘out of control’, like technology is running the show. Our model will put people first, incorporate processes that help groups with a variety of personalities and skills to better understand each other and then support the team with technology that builds on the social dynamic,” said Center for Balance by Design co-founder Donna Denio. Tufts School of Engineering faculty and students will be working with consortium partners to develop and test technology solutions that can optimally support and enhance the “workplace of the future.”

**Dr. Karen Panetta**, Associate Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering will lead the Tufts team in simulating and developing new technologies that will ultimately allow work teams to be more productive and disseminate their ideas using multimedia technology. Dr. Panetta states, “This partnership demonstrates the interdisciplinary research capabilities that Tufts is known for. We will partner with engineers, government agencies, architects and designers to create the ultimate work environment.” Tufts students will have the opportunity to interact with government officials and a diversity of professionals to apply their engineering and management skills to develop the enabling technologies. The Tufts team also includes faculty and students in its Gordon Institute, which grants “engineering MBAs” to mid-career professionals.

### About the Collaborators

**The U. S. General Services Administration**, one of three central management agencies in the Federal Government, provides workspace, security, furniture, equipment, and telecommunication services to Federal Government agencies. GSA is the largest public real estate organization in the United States, maintaining more than 339 million square feet of workspace for more than a million federal employees in over 1,600 American communities. The New England Region of GSA’s Public Building Service manages over 10 million square feet of office space in federal buildings and leased facilities.

The Center for Balance by Design is sponsored and administered by the **Boston Society of Architects**, the oldest and largest chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in the United States. Center “partners” will include a continually expanding group of collaborating colleges, private-sector companies, public agencies and authorities, and professional associations.

**Tufts University**, located on three Massachusetts campuses in Boston, Medford/Somerville, and Grafton, and in Talloires, France, is recognized among the premier research universities in the United States. Tufts enjoys a global reputation for academic excellence and for the preparation of students as leaders in a wide range of professions. A growing number of innovative teaching and research initiatives span all Tufts campuses, and collaboration among the faculty and students in the undergraduate, graduate and professional programs across the University’s eight schools is widely encouraged.

**Executive Discovery LLC** is associated with the LEGO® Company in managing the “Serious Play” brand. Executive Discovery is committed to continuing development of both the art and science of playing well for a purpose.

**Knoll, Inc.**, is a worldwide leader in the design and manufacture of office furnishings, and offers elegantly conceived, creative products for office and residential use.

**Lyme Properties** is an established developer with a central focus on the development of research laboratory space.