School of Architecture
University of Utah

Architectural Design Learning and Teaching Culture Statement

The Architectural Design Studio is a public academic space at the University of Utah. A unique aspect to studio culture is that the physical, psychological, and intellectual environment should result in the productive generation and investigation of ideas. Students and faculty recognize the strength of studio culture depends upon the level of engagement of each participant, and commit to contributing to a positive learning atmosphere that fosters healthy collaboration. Activities which challenge this environment undermine the academic mission of the School of Architecture.

Through pedagogy and engagement, faculty encourage and sustain intensity and commitment while fostering inquiry and experimentation that respond to a diversity of views and positions.

Faculty have the right to expect that students will:

- Come to the studio with the desire to learn from others, assist others with their learning needs, and work toward a robust shared experience where thoughts, ideas, and concerns are advanced.
- Be willing to take risks in the design process in seeking ideas that create new knowledge.
- Value and benefit from the diversity of each individual in the class, and respect each person's cultural history, educational background, ideas, beliefs, and experiences.
- Promote a sense of optimism, and value the efforts and contributions of colleagues.
- During Architectural Design Studio hours, be fully engaged in the tasks at hand, and be prepared for studio activities (pin-ups, desk crits, reviews, field trips, etc.).
- Endeavor to meet the course expectations and specific assignments in a timely and efficient manner.

Students have the right to expect that the faculty will:

- Regard each student as a unique individual deserving of concern and attention, and value each student's contributions to the studio.
- Come with the best interests of each student, and treat each student fairly and in a respectful, consistent and supportive manner.
- Share their knowledge, and assist students to find other resources (faculty, professionals, literature, examples etc.) that will aid student understanding and enrichment.
- Provide evaluation criteria in the syllabus, and provide timely and detailed feedback of their work to support their growth and development.
- Provide expectations for documentation and collection of work.
- Value the time of students by establishing and adhering to fair and reasonable schedules for class time activities and by assignments that are directed toward learning and knowledge acquisition as well as product.

Students have the right to expect that other students will:

- Come to the studio with the desire to learn from others, assist others with their learning needs, and work toward a robust shared experience where thoughts, ideas, and concerns are advanced.
- Regard each other as unique individuals deserving of concern and attention, and value each student's contributions to the Architectural Design Studio.
- Value and benefit from the diversity of each individual in the class, and respect each person's cultural history, educational background, ideas, beliefs, and experiences.
- Promote a sense of optimism, and value the efforts and contributions of other classmates.
- Respect the personal work space of their peers, and the public space of the Architectural Design Studio.

Students and faculty are responsible for reading and abiding by the Student Code written and maintained by the University of Utah.

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Studio Activities

The Architectural Design Studio employs a variety of means and formats to review the ideas and work of students and is an essential element of the culture of the Architectural Design Studio. Reviews are simultaneously an opportunity to facilitate discussion of greater issues and relationships such as those between theory and practice, idea and realization, and ethics and responsibilities, as well as the occasion to consider differing viewpoints and possibilities.

For formal reviews, students and faculty are expected to arrive on time and stay engaged as active participants throughout the review process. In advance of the reviews, faculty are responsible for informing invited guests and reviewers about the project intentions and background, as well the expectation that the review will reflect the School's commitment to a culture of respect, engagement, diversity and professionalism. Students are expected to be prepared to discuss their work, as well as to participate in the discussions of their peers' work.

Students and faculty are expected to use shared resources in a courteous and respectful manner. This includes responsible use of studio spaces, meeting areas, pin up spaces, shop facilities, and printing alcoves. Students are highly encouraged to utilize the variety of Student Services provided by the University that are available to help support academic success and wellness.

Work-Life Balance and Health

The architectural program requires a time-intensive commitment within the studio setting, which reflects the intensive engagement of architects in their professional lives. To support a healthy life–work balance for its students and faculty, the School of Architecture asks both students and faculty to examine the critical aspect of good time management. A well-organized schedule that incorporates short as well as longer-term goals, events and deadlines within each semester is the essence towards a well-adjusted life-work balance.

Students should talk to their instructors about expectations and strategies that ensure an intelligent and efficient time management, which, if done right, does not require 'all-nighters', which are usually evidence of rather poor time planning. Do not plan to work on assignments or towards deadlines 'last-minute,' since such strategy results in a considerably higher stress level, and in lower-quality outcomes, or, in the worst case, in missing a deadline entirely. Since the work needs to be done at some point anyway, make sure to finish assignments one or two days before the actual deadline, and finish your review assignments and work towards reviews in the same manner. This allows you to be more relaxed, get appropriate sleep before juried reviews, thus allowing you to perform much better and concentrated at the moment where you present the work of up to an entire semester to the jury.

Values

A Place of Synthesis: In the School of Architecture, we believe in the importance of the Architectural Design Studio as *an essential point of engagement, convergence, and integration for the educational and personal experiences of our students*. A positive, strong, respectful and shared Architectural Design Studio Culture supports the School's endeavor towards a well-educated, diverse, socially just, environmentally conscious and innovative student body. This culture encourages **optimism, mutual respect, the idea of sharing and engagement, and innovation** within the work and activities that happen in the Architectural Design Studio and beyond.

Studio culture encourages **integrative experiences that synthesize coursework, research, and observations into creative work through processes of critical thinking, engaged action, and understanding**. The Architectural Design Studio model is critical and central to the educational mission of the School of Architecture, for it is intended to foster the exchange of ideas, the cultivation of critical thought, and the development of a variety of skills needed to prepare the next generation of design professionals for changing professional roles and responsibilities within the context of increasing cultural diversity.

Studio culture recognizes a common set of values that align with the core beliefs outlined in the School of Architecture's Mission.

Iterative Nature of Design: Architectural design is a creative and intellectual process, simultaneously intuitive and reasoned, aesthetic and utilitarian, as well as experimental. Design ideas are subject to formal, functional, physical, historical, and cultural principles and knowledge. Design ideas are continually assessed and reassessed through an intensive and critically self-evaluated thinking and making progression. Such critical inquiry and self-examination processes are fundamental for growth and development for students and faculty. Design is therefore iterative and requires a simultaneous objective and subjective learning and evaluation process within the Architectural Design Studio.

Social Contribution and Collaboration: Architectural design is ultimately an activity intended for the improvement of environments, societies, and individuals. Design is an activity enhanced by the opportunity for dialogue, reflection, and experimentation, which should occur freely. The design process is accentuated by collaboration between students, faculty, guests, and reviewers, and is supported by working resources (field trips, fabrication shops, computer labs, the library, review space, etc.) that enhance dimensions of social contribution through design.

Sustainability and Resiliency: The School of Architecture recognizes that design must inherently be relevant and responsible to the environmental issues that challenge social, ecological, and economic sustainability. Systems thinking approaches to design, building performance, and adaption support a holistic view of built and natural environments. Studio investigations embrace the responsibility that designers have to mitigate climate change and to protect the health, safety, and welfare of both the planet and its people.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Studio culture fosters and supports a diverse student, faculty, guest, and reviewer body. As such, the Architectural Design Studio environment should be centered on sharing, engagement, innovation, collaboration, and respect among all participants. Through such approach, the Architectural Design Studio is a space that deepens a student's understanding of diverse cultural and social contexts, which help the students to translate that understanding into a built environment that supports and includes people of different cultures, backgrounds, resources, and abilities. Studio culture recognizes that engagement is fueled by individual ideas and experiences, as well as collective interests and interpretations which add richness to the Architectural Design Studio process.

Implementation

Ultimately, the goal of a highly positive Architectural Design Learning and Teaching Culture can be achieved only through all stakeholders' appreciation of the benefits of this shared interest, as well as a long-term commitment to its attainment. With that in mind, the School's chair shall periodically review and update this policy as a collaborative process that engages students, faculty and staff. Revisions to the Architectural Design Learning and Teaching Culture Statement shall be part of the ongoing Assessment and Curricular Development Plan.

Annual responsibilities of the School of Architecture to support this Architectural Design Learning and Teaching Culture Statement include:
1. To ensure that all students and faculty teaching design studio receive and review this document at the start of each semester.
2. To advise students or faculty who believe that the policy rules may have been violated.
3. To respond to concerns or questions that may arise around this document in a timely and collaborative manner.
4. To ensure the School of Architecture will have an Architectural Design Learning and Teaching Culture Statement link on its web site that will house the document and include links to other sites and information as appropriate.
5. To ensure that all architectural design studio syllabi include the Architectural Design Learning and Teaching Culture Statement link and include links to other sites and information as appropriate.