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STUDIO CULTURE

In fall 2005, the NAAB added a condition for accreditation: all schools of architecture are now required to have a written policy describing and implementing its Studio Culture policy. The NAAB requirement follows an initiative by the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS), who created a task force addressing the merits and shortcomings of studio culture. The AIAS issued a report, "The Redesign of Studio Culture: A Report of the AIAS Studio Culture Task Force" in 2002.

The NAAB policy and the AIAS report emphasize five key values (optimism, respect, sharing, engagement and innovation), which we incorporate in this policy under the following three headings:

- ENRICHMENT, which addresses the personal and professional development of the design student;
- RESPECT, which addresses the learning environment within the studio; and
- ENGAGEMENT, which addresses the capacity of studio teaching to reach beyond the classroom.

In the spring of 2009, the Department initiated a series of discussions within and among the Student Affairs Committee of the Department of Architecture, the Department Advisory Board, student representatives and the faculty. The Student Affairs Committee drafted a Studio Culture Policy. The Department of Architecture Faculty at Kansas State University voted to adopt this policy at its meeting on Tuesday 5 May 2009. That semester, the Studio Culture Policy was posted on the Departmental website and incorporated into the M. ARCH Handbook beginning in 2010-2011.

Henceforth, studio culture shall emphasize the following:

ENRICHMENT

In studio, students learn to resolve architectural design problems using multi-modal design skills, including effective public speaking, persuasive writing, communicative graphics, and the ability to synthesize information in image, model, and text. Studio assignments are crafted to allow students to apply their skills and knowledge, in critical and creative ways, to the development of three-dimensional architectural projects in which they integrate the lessons of other courses including history, structures, environmental controls, the social and behavioral aspects of design, and more. The studio environment itself is structured to build optimism and confidence, encouraging students to explore the formal, representational, tectonic, poetic and/or social potential(s) of their design.

In studio, students learn to incorporate multiple components of their lives into their architectural education. Either as guides or exemplars, faculty can encourage learning in different venues, as students attend lectures, fabricate artifacts in the shop, visit the Chang Gallery, and/or conduct research at Weigel Library. Such extra-curricular activities and engagement refine and enhance the well-being of the architecture student, inform the design process, and help the student make a more meaningful contribution to their discipline, community, and society at large.

RESPECT

In studio, students work in a shared environment of respect, self-realization, peer encouragement, and professional guidance. Faculty and administrators encourage students to balance competing interests, attend to their mental and physical health, manage their time, and enhance their modes and methods of making decisions. Students are taught to prepare work in a timely manner and to consider the contributions of their peers and their teachers. The studio environment is structured to embrace social and intellectual diversity and be an equitable and collaborative space in which students feel safe in their opinions and secure with their belongings.

In studio, students work iteratively with regular guidance, commentary and direction from peers and educators. In the collaborative learning environment of the studio, whether in conversations at the student's workspace, during formal critiques, or at public presentations, equity and fairness prevail. The studio is structured to allow students to seek out and employ the knowledge of peers and faculty in disciplines both within and outside Seaton Hall, respecting the expertise available across campus.

ENGAGEMENT

In studio, students learn to work cooperatively and collaboratively both within and outside the classroom. Whether working independently, in tandem or on a team, students learn to rely on the strengths of a College in which collaborators from our allied disciplines share not just coursework and facilities but also design values, obligations and opportunities. Where possible, faculty and administration deploy alternative teaching methods to refine and advance architectural education, including study abroad, community service projects and sponsored studios.

In studio, students learn to contribute positively to the built environment and thereby prepare to serve as leaders within the profession and within their communities. The studio encourages students to consult outside practitioners, suppliers and/or manufacturers. The studio sequence encourages opportunities to engage in community service, so that students may come to understand the trials and benefits of working with collaborators, clients and/or the public. Overall, the studio experience should help students acquire the knowledge and skills to create excellent design, which they can use to enrich public life, promote the design professions, contribute to sustainable communities, and engage social issues.