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Architecture & Design

Learning & Teaching Culture Policy

INTRODUCTION

This Learning & Teaching Culture Policy (LTCP) is a living document, maintained by School of Architecture and Design (SoAD) student club leaders and faculty advisors in the Architecture, Industrial Design and Interior Design programs, along with the SoAD Leadership team. It is designed to guide our learning community toward an ethical environment that productively educates and champions healthy, capable, and intelligent students and faculty. This goal can only be achieved by ardently working together as an entire team and as committed members of this school. By nature of the institution and the object of our studies, we are all always learning and practicing how to operate and function to the best of our abilities.

In addition to the overarching values and ethics of the university, this School of Architecture and Design is dedicated to optimism, professional growth, constructive evaluations and instructions, collaborative community, health and wellbeing, diversity and solidarity, respectful stewardship and space management, and well-rounded enrichment. The pedagogy of design is as complex as it is rewarding, and as dynamically evolving as the people who learn and teach it. That understanding is the core of this document.

VALUES

a. Optimism

- i. Students and faculty will strive to be curious and academically minded, and to constantly be working toward positive solutions in design, for the profession, and in the method of teaching; the learning process should be continuous.
- ii. This school will provide an atmosphere of enjoyment that fosters creativity.
- iii. Students and faculty will display empathy and strive to be kind to their community members while respecting academic freedom.

b. Professional Growth

- i. Students and faculty will maintain a professional manner of respect with their peers and with each other. Open dialogue and respect of others' identities, property and well-being are always expected.
- ii. To maintain positive work-life balance, productivity and professional readiness, workload expectations of students and faculty will be well-communicated, realistic, and will prioritize health and wellbeing for rigor.
- iii. University-sanctioned breaks and holidays will be honored and will be designated as time for students and faculty to rest.

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- iv. Students and faculty will always respect others' time and strive to complete tasks in a timely manner. Students will arrive to class on time and turn in projects on time, while faculty will also arrive to class on time and provide information and feedback in a timely manner.
- v. Students can expect and trust faculty to be equipped with a reasonable amount of knowledge in or around the class topics they are teaching. Faculty can expect and trust students to recall and be equipped with skills they have been taught up to that point in their education.

c. Constructive Evaluations & Instruction

- i. All members of the community will be free and encouraged to express their ideas and purposes in whatever positive manner they see fit and will receive constructive feedback on their process and methodology.
- ii. Faculty can be expected to make every effort to be available for discussions outside of class during consistently scheduled office hours. Students can be expected to make every effort to attend those office hours if there is a need for additional instruction.
- iii. Formal or informal reviews or critiques given by instructors or guest jurors will always be discussion-oriented; such discussions will never be critical of the person but will always be directed to the work as it stands. It is the responsibility of the faculty at this school to inform guest instructors and jurors of how to conduct themselves during reviews in accordance with the school's mission and this LTCP. The student whose work is being reviewed will arrive on time, be well prepared, adhere to the schedule proposed by the design critic, and will be engaged with the entire review. Faculty will motivate all students to remain engaged in all reviews.
- iv. Faculty and students will always respect each other's physical and emotional boundaries. We are all members of the school community and shall be treated as such. We will operate under the prerequisite understanding that everyone is doing their best to abide by the policies set forth in this document. The culture and process by which concerns are addressed by anyone will reflect that understanding in an open and conscientious way.
- v. Via all communication means available (including syllabi, convocation, class meetings, email and other messages, etc.), students can expect faculty to be transparent and forthright about class details including, but not limited to tentative dates of evaluations, reasonable and proportional deadlines, grading scales, deliverable requirements per project, goals and intents of the class, and other things that are out of the control of the student. Faculty can expect students to receive, read, and retain these messages when they are sent.
- vi. Grading will be based on the quality of the work utilizing rubrics. Work will be evaluated fairly and without bias.

d. Collaborative Community

- i. This school recognizes the power of the collaborative design process and will prepare time and space for students and faculty to work together to better prepare them for the professional work they will achieve and the global issues they will go on to solve.

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- ii. This school has a zero-tolerance bullying/harassment policy. This program will not tolerate physical or emotional bullying by creating overly competitive learning environments or situations that weaken student-to-student relationships. Any behavior that resembles bullying will be addressed and punished per the University Guidelines. Anyone who would like to report an incident can refer to any faculty or staff member.
- iii. Students are responsible for embodying academic integrity and shall not participate in or instigate plagiarism among their classmates. Any behavior that resembles plagiarism will be addressed and punished per the University Guidelines.
- iv. Freedom of expression in art, architecture, and design are rights of all students and faculty so long as such expression does not mitigate another individual's ability to express themselves.
- v. As part of a community, students will be actively engaged and take pride in their work. Students are encouraged and invited to share their successes with the rest of the school by showcasing in-process and completed work in designated spaces that are facilitated by the school.
- vi. All students will intend to meet expectations for team projects or collaborative discussions by helping each other learn new skills and sharing resources. Should a student's work ethic be called into question, a meeting with all group members and the professor should be held to advance the teamwork.

e. Health & Wellbeing

- i. The complex decision-making inherent in design education demands the focus and concentration that can only come from effective time management, personal well-being, physical health, mental health, sufficient sleep, and good nutrition. The School of Architecture and Design encourages students to operate to the best of their abilities, something that can only be accomplished with a healthy balance of work, rest, food, and sleep.
- ii. A reasonable number of absences for sickness or wellness-related reasons will be excused with reasonable advance notice and without documentation or per University Policy. Students will make up missed work at the discretion of their professor.
- iii. This school provides assistance to those who are struggling with their health and wellbeing and taking advantage of those resources is encouraged of both students and faculty.
- iv. Time management is a skill that will be taught and exemplified for students in their early curriculum with the intent of their development of responsible habits. Healthy time management allows for a reasonable schedule dedicated to class time, personal time, or mental wellness, sleeping, and time for homework.
- v. This school recognizes the diversity of obligations that make an education possible and will not expect students or faculty to complete planning or schoolwork as if they have no other (familial, financial, or personal) obligations. Per a time-management standard that centers on wellness, every assignment will be given enough time to be completed and constructively evaluated.
- vi. Adopting chronically unhealthy sleep patterns to complete studio or class work prevents mental health and is no longer a tolerated facet of this design school. Lack of sleep and other noticeably unhealthy time management practices of students or faculty are not encouraged and will not be praised.

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f. Diversity & Solidarity

- i. This school recognizes the importance of diversity in and among design and demands its own cultivation of an inclusive culture in the words we speak, the actions we take, the history we teach, the behaviors we model, and the buildings we design. This school will provide opportunity and safe spaces to have those open discussions.
- ii. This school respects the backgrounds (which could include any combination of but is not limited to: culture, race, ethnicity, religion, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic background, identity) of its students, and is open to accommodations through channels that are in accordance with University policies.
- iii. Financial barriers to succeeding in class will be addressed with provisions for those who are unable to participate financially.
- iv. All students will operate in an atmosphere of solidarity, shared effort, and mutual support. Students are expected to be understanding and supportive of the realities their peers may be facing. Students are encouraged to establish a culture of generosity that will help ensure the personal growth and collective success of the class.
- v. Like the ongoing practice of architecture and design, this school will always seek to understand and learn more about the evolving stresses of its learning community, and how this institution can ease or solve them. Everyone's right to grow in their learning will be respected.
- vi. This school recognizes the importance of encouraging a diverse range of career opportunities post-graduation and will endeavor to reflect that in curricular instruction.

g. Respectful Stewardship & Space Management

- i. All members of this school will respect the rights of others; this includes the property of other individuals, groups, and this school. Classrooms, studios, and other public amenities within the school of architecture and design are for the benefit of all and are expected to be treated with care.
- ii. This school will not endanger its students, faculty, administration, or the environment by requiring or perpetuating the use of hazardous or toxic materials. As designers, future architects, and stewards of the Earth, it is the responsibility of the school to recycle used materials and mitigate waste.
- iii. Faculty and students can expect the school to be upheld and maintained in such a way that protects the HSW of its occupants on a regular basis, including security over school breaks. All members of this school are expected to abide by safety measures and regulations that are instituted by the university.
- iv. It is the responsibility of every member of this school to avoid bringing further damage and wear to critical common resources.

h. Well-Rounded Enrichment

- i. This school will incorporate time in the curriculum to teach students the skills they need to know to succeed in subsequent classes and post-graduate research, experimentation, fulfillment, or employment. In a field with an ever-shifting, technical and professional

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- landscape, this school will do its best to combine fundamental skills with contemporary tools in ways that prioritize student's success and retention of skills.
- ii. An education at this school can lead to a diverse range of career opportunities, and such potential will be reflected in all curricular instruction.
 - iii. This school recognizes that in accordance with a healthy school-work-life balance, this curriculum will facilitate or provide enrichment in the education of its students to create an environment that matriculates well-rounded graduates.
 - iv. Exposure to and preparation for professional opportunities will be included in the curriculum.
 - v. Student participation in extracurricular activities (ie student-run organizations, activities, interdisciplinary cohorts, volunteerism, etc.) that enhance and supplement an education and life experience will be prioritized and modeled by faculty and administration.

PROCESS

This document was created in the spring of 2024 by the School of Architecture and Design (SoAD) student club leaders and faculty advisors in the Architecture, Industrial Design and Interior Design programs, along with the SoAD Leadership team, who have signed below. This group will review and update this document annually to stay connected and attentive to our learning community. The LTCP is available to the public via the school's website.