



10 November 2020

To Students and Alumni of the School of Architecture,
The many acts of violence and injustice that occurred in 2020 have caused us to learn more about ourselves, our community, and our country. We perceive our nation in a new light because of the societal turmoil we have witnessed, and we choose not to look away from the social and racial injustice that still exists. We acknowledge that those who are perceived as different, and especially persons of color, have historically been the victims of prejudice and deliberate acts of aggression. Through a process of observation and introspection, we have learned that there remains much work to do to achieve a just and equitable society, close to home and across our country.

As a society, we must first publicly and steadfastly condemn any acts of hatred and racism. We must call out any such acts; our goal must be to collectively uphold and advance the primary values of tolerance and mutual respect. We must recognize that we are a part of a culture in which micro-aggressions and more subtle acts of bias disproportionately affect persons of color. We have a responsibility to work together to build the world we wish to see, free of prejudice and bias, by the things we do each day. What we think matters. How we act and interact matters.

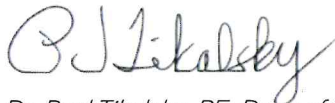
As an educational institution and a school that delivers a design curriculum intended to prepare graduates for the professional world of architecture, we bear a special responsibility in the effort to create a more just society. Our graduates, through their careers, will help shape their own communities and the communities of others. Through design, we have the unique ability to shape a more equitable and inclusive world. This ambition starts within the education of architects and architectural engineers; this is where we form the foundations of compassion and understanding of diverse peoples and viewpoints.

We must also lead the effort to develop a more diverse profession. The profession will not change unless our student body is a reflection of our goals and commitment to a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable society. Administration, faculty, students, and alumni must contribute to this effort in actively encouraging a more heterogeneous population to pursue an architectural education. Within the School of Architecture, we further commit to mitigating barriers for students from underrepresented populations and supporting their success.

At the OSU School of Architecture, we have a faculty committee and a student constituent group, as well as an alumni constituent group, engaged with this task. To move toward our goal of a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive profession and academic environment, we must work together. We recognize that this is an ongoing journey that will be the result of collective and cooperative action born from our earned and mutual trust in one another. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan for the OSU School of Architecture is a starting point, but the document will evolve along the way. With our goals as our compass, we will continually strive toward the society, profession, and the community of graduates that we desire in our quest to achieve a more just world.



Professor Suzanne Bilbeisi, AIA, Head of the School of Architecture



Dr. Paul Tikalsky, PE, Dean of the College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology

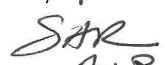
Faculty and Staff of the School of Architecture, Fall 2020:

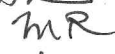
Regents Professor Moh'd Bilbeisi, RA 

Adjunct Professor Adam Lanman, Assoc AIA 

Professor Khaled Mansy, PhD 

Assist Professor Keith Peiffer, AIA 

Assist Professor Sarah Ra, AIA 

Assoc Professor Michael Rabens, PhD 

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DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION PLAN

2020-2024

OSU School of Architecture

Fall 2020 – December 8, 2020

Preamble

On the first day of the Fall 2020 semester, the faculty and administration of the Oklahoma State University School of Architecture were presented with a letter of urgencies written by a core group of students and an alumnus, and endorsed by many other students and alumni. The letter sparked discussions and the beginnings of a focused effort towards the creation of this School of Architecture-centric 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan.' The College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology at OSU has such a plan in place¹, created in 2019, which the School of Architecture supports. This complementary plan contains a series of strategic objectives that are proposed to lead the school towards the continual betterment of our learning community.

This Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan, a strategic plan specific to the School of Architecture, is designed to set out a path over the coming four years with metrics that must be evaluated annually. Over these four years adjustments to the plan will be warranted, such is the nature of any strategic plan in an ever-changing context.

Definitions

DIVERSITY:

The state or fact of being diverse; unlikeness.

It is 'who' is in the space.

EQUITY:

The provision of the unique resources necessary for an individual to reach their potential.

It is how we ensure the possibility of success for all.

INCLUSION:

The practice of including diverse people.

It is how we act and interact with one another.

¹ <http://CEAT.okstate.edu/students/undergraduate>

National AIA Diversity and Inclusion Statement²

Leadership in design and construction requires collaboration. Architects must encourage and celebrate the contributions of those who bring diverse experiences, views, and needs into the design process.

The AIA Supports the promotion of human and civil rights, the universal respect for human dignity, and the unbiased treatment of all persons in employment, civic, and business transactions.

Embracing a culture of equity, all programs and initiatives of the AIA and its members shall reflect the society that we serve, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical abilities, or religious practices.

The American Institute of Architects, as part of the global community, champions a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion within the profession of architecture to create a better environment for all. Achieving this vision has a direct impact on the relevance of our profession and the world's prosperity, health, and future.

OSU Diversity Statement³

Oklahoma State University is a land-grant institution committed to excellence in diversity and inclusion. We strive to maintain a welcoming and inclusive environment that appreciates and values all members of the University community. We define diversity as engagement in meaningful actions, behaviors, and conversations that reflect a commitment to recognizing, understanding, and respecting the differences among students, faculty, staff, and visitors throughout the OSU system. We do not condone acts, behavior, language or symbols that represent or reflect intolerance or discrimination. OSU is dedicated to cultivating and enriching the competitive advantages that diversity and inclusion provides all members of the University community. We identify diversity as a quality of life issue, as well as an important economic driver for the prosperity and well-being of the state, nation, and world.

Introduction to

The School of Architecture Diversity Equity and Inclusion Plan

Universities play a fundamental role in guiding the formation of informed, respectful, collaborative, empathetic, and engaged citizens of our nation and world. As a public land grant university, we are committed to expanding access to education and professional development. We are an educational community dedicated to the critical understanding and the constructive imagining of buildings, landscapes, and communities; in doing so, we recognize that diversity is essential for the survival and flourishing of the planet. We bear a special responsibility for shaping environments and

² <http://aia.org/pages/15346-diversity-and-inclusion-statement>, accessed October 2020.

³ <http://catalog.okstate.edu/about/institutional-diversity/>

experiences of learning and working that are inclusive and equitable in serving all people, regardless of gender, race, physical ability, sexuality, national origin, citizenship status, religion, or socioeconomic standing.

Indeed the mission of the School of Architecture is to cultivate a collaborative learning community focused upon critical thinking and ethical responsibility in the design of the built environment. The School aims to train future leaders in our disciplines, our professions, and our communities who will make shared values manifest in the spaces and places we interpret and create.

To this end, we propose the following strategic objectives in these four areas of concern: Students, Faculty & Staff, Teaching & Curriculum, and Enrichment & Outreach.

Strategic objectives: STUDENTS

To achieve a more diverse profession, we must actively cultivate a diverse student body. A more inclusive profession will result because of our efforts to recruit, retain, and build a robust community that values all points of view.

1. To address diversity within our academic community, we commit to recruit, retain, and develop a student body within our community of learners that is reflective of the relative demographics of our state and region. We note the following:
 - a. The most recent US Census data⁴ lists the state of Oklahoma with 26% of the population non-white; the OSU wide Fall 2020 data⁵ lists 33% non-white, while CEAT holds 34%, and the School of Architecture welcomes 36% non-white students. The marked deficiency in diversity, however, occurs within the Black population where 7% of the population of the state of Oklahoma is Black, while that constituency comprises only 3% of the university and School of Architecture population. Similarly, 9% of the state population is Native American, and only 4% of the university and 3% of the school population is Native American. The state and nation are comprised of 50% female residents; with the university mirroring that statistic, the School of Architecture has 46% women students.

Regionally, the general population is more diverse. Based upon the most recent academic year, 73% of our domestic students are from Oklahoma, 18% of our domestic students are from Texas, and 9% of our domestic students are from other states⁶. By multiplying those numbers by the BIPOC percentages of the general populations for those three areas, we determine a goal reflective of the general

⁴ 2019 Census Data, <https://census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/OK>

⁵ Cowboy Data Round Up, <https://ira.okstate.edu/cdr/index.html>

⁶ Arkansas, Kansas, and Colorado

population based on our student population's home states⁷. At the SOA, not including international students, the student population is 35.6% BIPOC.

Metrics for success, to be reviewed by the DEI committee annually:

- Gender equality;
 - Increase overall ratios of non-white students to exceed state and regional ratios. To reflect regional diversity based upon this weighting, the SOA population diversity should be increased to 39% BIPOC⁸.
 - An increase in population parity of Black students and Native American students within the School of Architecture;
- b. Specific recruitment efforts that intentionally engage underrepresented groups must be further developed. The ASTEK and Discover Architecture programs are two venues that could explore further contact with schools that serve underrepresented populations, as could student organizations within the School of Architecture. Alumni, as ambassadors for the School, can assist this effort.

Metrics for success, supervised by the Head and Academic Advisor:

- Two events per semester supporting recruitment of underrepresented students;
 - Student organizations participate in recruitment efforts.
 - Alumni participate in recruitment efforts. The website for the SoA will provide materials for use in these efforts.
2. To retain and support a diverse population within the School of Architecture, we commit to provide student support to underrepresented populations within the academy and our profession. To this end:
- a. The current snapshot of our efforts includes an annual commitment within the School of Architecture endowments of approximately \$65,000 in place for student scholarships; of that total, 49% of the scholarships are specifically designated to first assist students with documented financial need.⁹ In the period of 2017-2019, an average of 37% of all scholarships were awarded to non-white students¹⁰; the goal is to provide assistance to those most in need, a greater percentage of whom tend to be underrepresented student populations.

Metric for success, monitored by the SoA Scholarship Committee:

⁷ $0.734(\text{census \% BIPOC OK}) + .177(\text{census percent BIPOC TX}) + .089(\text{avg. census percent BIPOC regionally})$

⁸ $0.734(0.35) + 0.177(0.588) + 0.089(0.283^*) = 38.6\% \text{ BIPOC regionally}$ (*Based on Census data avg. for AR, KS, CO)

⁹ School of Architecture fund agreements per scholarship

¹⁰ School of Architecture Scholarship Data Analysis, October 2020

- Every student of an underrepresented population at the School of Architecture who has financial need (documented through the FAFSA process) receives a scholarship.
- b. The cultivation of donors is important in support of this funding source; the student DEI Committee will assist the school leadership in this effort.

Metric for success, monitored by the CEAT Scholarship office:

- Each semester students are involved in OSU Foundation fundraising activities, in coordination with the Head.

- Each Fall the Professional Advisory Boards participate in fundraising for the SoA.

- c. External funding sources for education expenses are available as well, and the School commits to making these resources known to the student body.

Metric for success, provided by the academic advisor of the SoA:

- Opportunities, both internal to OSU as well as external, are advertised in the weekly communications from the school;

- d. The School will purchase and maintain a collection of the more costly textbooks for student use (circulated through the John Rex Cunningham Architecture Library) and/or purchase online access subscriptions, for those books commonly utilized in ARCH coursework.

Metric for success, coordinated by the Cunningham Architecture Librarian:

- The collection of available textbooks (subscriptions, e-books, or hard copy for check out) for ARCH courses is made known to students in the Architecture Library and is published in the ARCH Student Guide.

- e. The School will seek to minimize the cost of required project and other course materials, and seek support from external donors to offset the cost of field trips.

Metrics for success, directed by the faculty and Head of the SoA:

- Students will be provided a credible estimated range of the additional costs required of each studio for project supplies and materials (It must be acknowledged that students bear responsibility in determining what they ultimately spend for project supplies), and any additional costs required for other non-studio ARCH courses;
- Added expenses for course enrichment activities are held to a minimum;
- Stipends for assistance are available from the school via an application process.

- 3. Building a community that is inclusive is paramount. In support of this objective, we commit to:

- a. Providing DEI training for students, to be delivered through student organizations as peer to peer learning, and as a part of the ARCH 1112 Success Team program. Future training opportunities are in development with the OSU Office of the Vice President for Diversity; those resources will be utilized when they become available.

Metric for success, monitored by the Academic Advisor of the SoA:

- Every student at the School of Architecture has received DEI training.

- b. Encouraging opportunities for mentoring, both within the school and between the upper level students and alumni.

Metrics for success, coordinated by student organization leaders and the Head:

- Mentoring program opportunities are publicized in the regularly occurring news briefs.
- Students at every year level of the curriculum have access to a mentor, should they wish to engage with such activity.

- c. Providing financial support for student organizations that promote inclusivity, and connecting students to college and university resources that promote inclusivity.

Metric for success, managed by the Head of the SoA:

- Student organizations with relevant activities that require reasonable funding are provided resources when requested.

Strategic Objectives: FACULTY & STAFF

Faculty and staff are the foundation of the academic program, and the most visible leaders within the school. The behavior of these leaders sets the tone and tenor of the unit.

1. When faculty or staff searches are underway, a priority will be placed upon recruiting a pool of diverse candidates for consideration. All university Human Resources and federal law protocols will be followed.

Metrics for success, committed by the faculty of the SoA:

- Grow our reputation within the academic community through faculty conference attendance/ networking, and by bringing a diverse pool of jurors to OSU.
- The faculty search committee actively recruits persons of diverse backgrounds for open positions.

2. Faculty will be provided with mentoring and professional development opportunities to enhance an understanding of the varied and subtle issues surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion. These opportunities could include conference or workshop participation,

extended learning opportunities relevant to curriculum development, symposia, seminars, etc.

Metric for success, committed by the Head of the SoA:

- Every faculty member participates in activities related to diversity each year.

3. Faculty and staff will be provided with opportunities and required to complete DEI training in the annual quarterly series of OSU Human Resources training.

Metrics for success, committed by the Head of the SoA:

- DEI training for faculty and staff is available through multiple venues every semester.
 - Faculty and staff who have made outstanding advances in supporting DEI will receive recognition at the annual SoA Honors and Awards event.
-

Strategic Objectives: TEACHING & CURRICULUM

All voices will be heard and respected in the design collaboration and critique process. A culture of mutual respect is built upon civil discourse – equal opportunity for interaction and feedback must be provided to every student. Further, when creating course content, the actions, achievements, and even the shortcomings of human endeavors must be examined without prejudice or dismissal.

1. Studio projects, precedent research projects, architecture history/theory courses and other ARCH courses when appropriate will include the accomplishments of other cultures/peoples outside of the realm of the western canons of architecture, as well as investigate issues of diverse communities and social equity.

Metrics for success, committed by the faculty of the SoA:

- Each graduate of the SoA will have the opportunity to investigate and address the issues of diverse users as part of at least five projects during their student career.
- At least one project per semester among all studios addresses underrepresented communities within the U.S. and its territories (BIPOC, LGBTQ, veterans, physically or mentally challenged, low income, immigrants, etc.) and/or investigate projects in different international settings and cultures.
- Precedent research includes examples from underrepresented authors, including those of various educational backgrounds and disciplines.
- Required history/theory courses include topics of non-western architecture and/or address the involvement of underrepresented people in the design and/or construction processes.

- At least one elective history/theory course per year expressly focuses on non-western architecture/engineering. Elective history/theory courses with broader agendas include discourses addressing diversity, equality, and inclusion.
 - Other courses taught by SoA faculty, when possible, address ethics, management, professional practice, etc., through an inclusive lens.
2. The John Rex Cunningham Library will cultivate a collection of resources (books, videos, journals, etc) on racial equity issues as they relate to design issues.
- Metrics for success, committed by the faculty and librarian of the SoA:
- A collection of 100 volumes/videos/journals/articles is available in the Cunningham Architecture Library, in concert with the Edmon Low Library general collection;
 - A database of internal and external resources will be accessible from the Cunningham Architecture Library's website.
3. OSU courses that investigate issues of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and that are most relevant to the design professions, will be made known to School of Architecture students in the academic advising process.
- Metrics for success, provided by the academic advisor of the SoA:
- The list is updated each semester and kept with the Architecture Academic Advisor and accessible on the school's website;
 - Students are introduced to the need to study this topic in group advising meetings each semester.
-

Strategic Objectives: ENRICHMENT & OUTREACH

We understand one another more easily and completely when we interact with diverse groups and exchange viewpoints without prejudice. Learning about others helps us become better designers. And as we broaden our horizons, we become better citizens of our community, nation, and world.

1. The Lecture series provided by the School of Architecture will include a diverse array of speakers, including persons of color as well as culturally and/or intellectually diverse speakers.
- Metric for success, monitored by the Lecture Committee of the SoA:
- One of every three invited guests is a person of color or adds diversity.
2. Invited guest jurors and guest critics will include persons of color and culturally and/or intellectually diverse persons.

Metric for success, monitored by faculty of the SoA:

- One of every three invited guests is a person of color or adds diversity.

3. Student organizations must be open to all who wish to participate regardless of color, sexual orientation, age, gender, national origin, religious beliefs, or identity.

Metric for success, monitored by leaders of student organizations at the SoA:

- Students know that if any discrimination or racially motivated acts of aggression occur, they can report them to the CEAT DEI Coordinator.

4. Students will be encouraged to engage with groups not only within the School of Architecture, but also with groups external to our community.

Metrics for success, observed by the academic advisor of the SoA:

- Information about CEAT and OSU organizations is available in the office and from the academic advisor.
- School of Architecture students are visible participants in various organizations external to the school, and are recognized for their involvement at the annual SoA Honors and Awards Ceremony.

5. Public communications from the School of Architecture will present an inclusive and diverse view of our academic community. The DEI Plan for the School of Architecture will be accessible from the school's website, and a synopsis of it included in the newly created "School of Architecture Student Guide".

Metrics for success, monitored by the Marketing Committee of the SoA:

- Website is up to date and publications are available.

6. Outreach programs will extend a reach to underserved populations – ASTEK, Discover Architecture, and CEAT Summer Bridge are opportunities to more intentionally extend contact to a diverse population. Student organizations are also encouraged to engage in this effort to increase the diversity of the pool coming from the K-12 pipeline.

Metrics for success; managed by the directors of outreach programs that feed the SoA:

- At least 1/2 of all participants in summer outreach programs are of underrepresented populations in the professions of architecture and architectural engineering.

Process for input and implementation

To assist with efforts related to creating the ideal community we seek, a *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee* will be established, comprised of representatives from student organizations and other interested students at the School of Architecture, a faculty member, the Head, and the School of Architecture Academic Advisor. This committee will meet and discuss issues several times per semester. Additionally, open forums with the entire student body at the School of

Architecture will be offered, to ensure that ideas are shared and all voices heard. The committee will develop assessment tools to assist in the understanding of the current culture at the School of Architecture, so that they can identify areas of concern when they arise. The DEI committee is tasked with being the voice for students, to communicate ideas and suggestions to improve the overall quality of life at the school with the school's faculty, head, and college leadership.

As part of faculty governance at the School, a standing faculty committee has been formed, charged with studying the issues, strategies, and metrics related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The Head of the School of Architecture shall serve as committee chair. Annually, this committee will make a report to the faculty of the whole, presenting both accomplishments and any shortcomings evidenced in the previous year. This committee will take the lead in revising the School's DEI plan, when new goals or needs warrant such.

Alumni input is also key to the process. Their reflection upon experiences while a student, as well as the transition to the profession, are valuable lessons that can be shared with current students via mentoring programs. Alumni may engage current students in networking opportunities, or donate their time and expertise to reviews of student work. Alumni also serve as ambassadors for the School and for our profession when they engage in activities in their own communities that further advance the understanding of the role of architects/AEs in society to K-12 students. All of the endowment funding at the School of Architecture comes from alumni – engaging alumni builds a desire to contribute financial resources. The Head of the School of Architecture will continue engaging alumni and discovering potential new donors for the benefit of students.

All constituents are encouraged to reach out to faculty, the Head of the School of Architecture, the academic advisor, or the coordinator of CEAT's Diversity and Inclusion Program with any individual concerns. To submit a concern anonymously, any member of the cowboy family may upload a report to *'Ethics Point'* – an online reporting system of the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma A&M Colleges. Progress for achieving the goals of this strategic plan will be monitored and reviewed annually, by both the faculty as a whole and the DEI Committee. This Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan is a living document open to the development of new initiatives, and to be updated as the culture, needs, and goals of the School of Architecture change.

Conclusion

To achieve and maintain a diverse, inclusive, and equitable experience for all students at the School of Architecture at OSU the work must be embraced by all constituents – administration, faculty, staff, and students. We rise and fall together; we all have a responsibility to eradicate hatred, bigotry, and racism in our communities. Let us question our strengths and weaknesses, and explore our potential. We look forward to coming together with the common goal of the continual improvement of the quality of life within our community at the School of Architecture.

APPENDIX: CONTRIBUTORS TO THE 2020 SOA DEI STRATEGIC PLAN

Head/Professor Suzanne Bilbeisi, AIA
Assoc Professor Jeanne Homer, RA
Assist Professor Jared Macken, D.Sci
Assist Professor Christina McCoy, SE, PE, RA
Professor John Phillips, PE
Assoc Professor Seung Ra, RA
Assoc Professor Carisa Ramming, PE
Assoc Professor Awilda Rodriguez-Carrion, RA
Assoc Dean Randy Seitsinger, FAIA
Assoc Professor Jerry Stivers, RA

Professor Moh'd Bilbeisi, RA
Adjunct Professor Adam Lanman, Assoc AIA
Professor Khaled Mansy, PhD
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Professor Tom Spector, PhD, AIA
Assist Professor Jay Yowell, AIA

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Shop Manager Daniel Ochoa-Morales

Admin Support Specialist Gabrielle Morris
Admin Assistant Chelsea Wooldridge

Dean of the College of Engineering, Architecture, and Technology, Dr. Paul Tikalsky, PE

Most directly contributing to the development of this plan over the Fall semester of 2020 were the SoA Diversity Equity, and Inclusion Committee comprised of Suzanne Bilbeisi, Lori Carroll, Jared Macken, Keith Peiffer, Sarah Ra, Seung Ra, Carisa Ramming, and Paolo Sanza. The faculty participated in discussions of the whole, and contributed ideas and content to the plan as well. From CEAT's Diversity Office, Coordinator Yokolanda Speight participated in multiple meetings and shared important perspectives.

Current SoA students most involved in the discussions included Diana Anda, Ali Hussain, Rodney Jordan, Fabricio Serrano, Rony Ramirez, Emily Tran, Gustavo Villegas, Jacey Watson, and Erin Yen. The Architecture Leadership Council, whose membership overlaps with the previous list of students, was also involved in conversations. Those additional students include Chandler Brown, Madison Clark, Delaney Cole, Cabraile Cooksey, Scott Cornelius, Seth Gunkel, Eli Harris, Daniel House, Blake Lazarus, Anatalia Lopez, Julia Mauk, Andrew Quinn, and Brooke Ryan. An open Town Hall for all SoA students was held virtually on November 16th, 2020 and attended by approximately twenty students.

Alumni that participated in the discussions involved with this plan included Alexandra Barnes, Jeremy Barragan, Anthony Biamont, Marrina Boonthekul, Shayna Borgfeld, Morgan Brun, Alisha Burkman, Alexa Coleman, Yasnov Dawkins, John Dunn, Jenna Grant, Audrey Hampton, Stuart Harper, Olivia Hupy, Josh Kunkel, Cameron Patterson, Maria Prado, Ben Schwarz, Ashley Snelling, and Spencer Wilson. The School's Professional Advisory Council was also presented with the information and a draft of the plan. At each of these events, it was acknowledged that alumni can and must contribute to these efforts.

This Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan was approved by the Faculty of the School of Architecture on December 10, 2020; the plan was approved by a vote of the CEAT Executive Council on the same day.