

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE, Howard University Studio, Teaching and Learning Culture Policy

Overview

The Howard University Department of Architecture is invested in the continued development of its teaching and learning culture as it relates to the continued evolution of the students, faculty, and staff that it serves. The goal of the department is to inspire students to partake in a life-long journey of study, discovery, innovation, and execution; culminating into a graduate that is prepared to address the current and future challenges within the design profession. A healthy studio, teaching and learning culture is the foundation for creating an ideal learning environment. This policy will serve to set the standards and expectations for students, faculty, and staff as it relates to fostering a positive, healthy, and productive setting for education.

Time Management and Studio Hours

The design studio is a unique learning environment that is the foundation to any architectural degree program and should be held in high esteem. Our department currently requires 9 contact hours of studio per week (3 hours below the typical 12 hours /week). It is essential that the environment in the studio during these hours are focused, productive, and conducive towards critical thinking and execution. The studio professor serves an important role by: developing and distributing the curriculum; guiding and nurturing all of the students toward the most positive outcome; setting the standard for quality work and professionalism; and being the prime example of the given standard. The student also serves an important role by: taking responsibility for his/her own education; utilizing the resources and information provided by the professor and other classmates; striving to perform at maximum potential; and contributing to the positive outcome for all parties within the design studio. During studio hours, the expectations are as follows:

- Students and faculty are expected to be present and progressively functioning during ALL of the posted hours of studio time.
- All students should be present in their specific studio space and not casually consorting with other students or other studios during class time.
- Distractions such as texting/chatting/social media, among others, shall be conducted outside of studio hours.
- If communication outside of studio is a legitimate need, it should be done promptly and discreetly so not to become a distraction to the group.
- No visitation is allowed during studio class time.
- It is reasonable to expect food consumption during studio hours but “food runs” should be made outside of studio time; and
- Faculty should provide all students (who come to studio on time and prepared) with adequate time for critique and necessary feedback to continue progressing through their design work.

Extended Studio Hours

The extended hours outside of the studio/class time serve as a direct support to the design studio structure. Much of the work assigned in studio is dependent upon effective use of time outside of studio. These hours are essential for development as it allows students to think independently while creating a synergy within the student body that will elevate the level of discourse and diversify the modes of learning. The design studio will strive to maximize the potential of this time while setting the appropriate boundaries for maintaining a healthy balance.

Establishing a consistent standard of time spent outside of studio will serve to: maintain a high standard of production for all students within a given design studio; provide students with a clear expectation of studio work production and allow for better management of time as it relates to work/life balance; gauge exceptions of faculty as it relates to student production. A 2015 AIAS survey (of more than 1,300 people from 130 design schools) states that the average time spent on studio work is 31.8 hours per week.

During extended studio hours, the expectations are as follows:

- For every hour spent in design studio a minimum of two hours should be spent on extended studio hours (i.e. 9 hours per week studio time plus 18 hours per week extended time equals 27 hours per week minimum).
- Work produced during extended hours should reflect the amount of time stated above as a base satisfactory standard.
- To maximize collaboration and continued learning, it is strongly recommended that extended studio hours be spent within the design studio amongst fellow classmates; and
- Students should understand the difference between focused/productive hours versus distracted/wasted hours to further develop critical thinking skills, it is expected for students to apply focused/productive hours to given design work.

Work-School-Life Balance

The academic structure within the department of architecture is heavily supported by a diverse environment of learning and growth. Student organizations, professional partnerships, and lectures/symposia give students, faculty, and staff avenues of continued learning while providing relief from the traditional classroom setting.

Student Organizations

- Each student organization is to have elected officers and at least 1 faculty advisor.
- Each student organization shall have a mission statement that reflects the goals of the group on a national and chapter level.
- Students shall take the initiative in developing the organization through meetings, events, and other such activities.
- All events shall be consistent with the given mission statement and meet the approval of the faculty advisor.
- The faculty advisor is expected to: help students navigate the most ideal path toward success; provide resources to the organization as they become available, meet regularly with students to discuss planning, and be a vested member in the organization.
- Each established organization is to meet a minimum of 3 times per semester to coordinate events and develop student leadership bonds.
- AIAS and NOMAS are foundational organizations within the department and must be fully functional before priority is given to any other student organizations; and
- Before becoming a member of another organization, a student must first have one year of membership in AIAS or NOMAS.

Professional Partnerships

- The department shall provide opportunities to visit local architecture firms, related businesses, and construction sites.
- Critiques and lectures shall consist of working professional in architecture; and
- The architecture degree program shall adopt a system that allows students to earn up to 6 credit hours for working at a job related to the profession.

Lectures/Symposia/Events

- All students and faculty are expected to be present at extra-curricular events
- When studio/class time is given to partake in events, absences will be counted against the student with regards to their specific class.

General Health and Well-Being

The Howard University Department of Architecture is invested in developing students that are capable within the profession and well-functioning human beings within today's society. This requires

communication and learning principles that go beyond the traditional academic curriculum. To do this, it is imperative that faculty, students, and staff maintain an open dialogue and communicate frequently on topics related to the health of individual students, the entire student body, the university collective, and the general society that they live in. Students should seek to learn from the faculty not only as it relates to their expertise and knowledge on academic subject matter but also from the experiences and challenges, they face as a functioning member in today's society. The faculty should also seek to learn from students of today by understanding the unique challenges they encounter in a fast-evolving world.

To maintain a continued open dialogue between faculty students, please adhere to the following:

- All relevant faculty committees and meetings shall have student representatives present and involved.
- A faculty mentor/guidance counselor shall be assigned to each student with a minimum of 1 meeting scheduled per semester.
- A minimum of 2 forums shall be provided in each academic year addressing non-traditional topics related to stress management, healthy living, community issues, social/political issues, etc.;
- All faculty, students, and staff are expected to participate in monthly town hall meetings where all parties are given the opportunity to bring forth comments and concerns (first Friday's 4-6 pm); and
- Opportunity shall be given for anonymous comments and concerns to be heard.

Professional Conduct

In regard to professional conduct, all university policies shall be upheld and supported within this policy. Professors are always to model professional behavior when dealing with students. Professors are, in most cases, the first professional that students interact with in their given career path. Professors are to be available to students during designated days, outside of their teaching hours to assist with mastery of subjects. Students are to respect their professors as the general authority within the classroom. Students are also expected to respect fellow classmates and the building.

Formal Pin-Ups

A publication of all tentative jury dates will be published at the beginning of each semester. The schedule will give rough speculations of dates, locations, and jurors. The publication of information is to allow students to gauge the outlook of the semester.

- All individuals within the studio are expected to attend the formal pin-up.
- All required material is to be put up by the start of the pin-up and not removed until the pin-up is completed.
- All students and professors are to be on time and stay throughout the duration of the pin-up.
- As continued development of soft skills, students are expected to dress in business attire as if they were in a professional interview.
- Reviewers shall allow students to give a complete presentation of their work (within a given time frame) before opening for comments and critique.
- Critique should always serve as constructive criticism and combative or personal; and
- Students should accept positive and negative feedback and always respect it as a professional opinion.

Building/Facilities

The traditional studio fosters interaction between faculty and students. It also enables students to exchange ideas, learn from, and contribute to each other's work. This peer-to-peer exchange is important to the study of architecture. Each student is allocated space within the studio depending on his/her level of study. The Mackey Building is accessible to students 24-hours a day. This privilege of access may be revoked at any time for cause. All use of the Architecture design studios is subject to the Studio Culture Policy and other policies of Howard University. Students are expected to always respect the building/facilities.

- Proper use of studio space is expected, and the misuse of space will result in loss of studio privileges.

- The use of plaster, aerosol spray paints, hand-held torches, or toxic resins is absolutely prohibited.
- Studio workspaces are for groups of people, and it is expected that individuals will respect the need of the group for a good working environment.
- All students in studio are provided with a desk with a lockable drawer. Students furnish their own padlocks. At the end of each term padlocks must be removed and drawers or lockers cleaned out; otherwise, padlocks will be removed, and personal materials left in drawers or lockers will be removed and discarded.
- Students are responsible for removing all materials from classrooms (including review rooms) at the end of each class period and must ensure that no materials are left in public corridors, lobbies, stairs, or other paths of egress.
- Smoking and the use of intoxicating liquors in the building is always prohibited; and
- Radios and personal stereos may not be played during scheduled class time.

Grading

Thorough grading and feedback are an essential part of student growth and learning. Professors should make every effort apply consistent and transparent grading criteria as this will help student to understand how they measure up and where they must improve. Students must also realize that the evaluation of design work is not an exact science and will always be subject to its ability to sell to other people. Design is creation and it must be presented in a way that justifies its presence in the built environment. This holds true on a professional and academic level.

- A grading rubric should be established by the professor at the beginning of a design project to give students clear definition of design criteria.
- The grading process should be completely impartial and focused only on the work, not the student; and
- Grading and feedback should be given to students on a frequent basis so they may be made aware of their academic standing and make necessary adjustments.

Conflict Resolution

Confrontation is to be dealt with in a respectable and professional manner. If conflict is an issue, the use of third parties should be considered to avoid high emotions. Professors are seen as authority however their presence should not be held over student's head to make them apprehensive in approaching issues. Students should be assured that personal conflict should not impact the impartial treatment, development, and grading of each student.

Additional information about studio culture is available on the [AIAS Website](#).