

Overview

The National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) asks that all schools of architecture have a written policy that describes the culture of the design studio and the expectations of students and faculty involved in studio-based education. This policy should be based on the fundamental values of optimism, respect, sharing, engagement, and innovation between and among the members of its faculty, student body, administration, and staff. The goal of UMA Architecture is to have a stimulating studio culture that is accessible to its students. The corner stone of studio is our downtown facility, Handley Hall. As our “space,” it is the uniting factor that brings us together in real time. The UMA design studio is governed by the three guiding principles of being Engaging, Supportive, and Productive.

Program Mission

UMA Architecture’s Mission: ***Architecture through Engagement.***

Our mission expresses who we are: SMALL...INTEGRATED...HANDS-ON. This fundamentally means we are about people: our students, our faculty, and our community partners. We teach architecture through engagement, educating and empowering students to explore, investigate, and analyze the built environment. Engagement brings students into active contact with each other, their coursework, and our community partners.

Program Philosophy

The vision of the UMA B.Arch program is to instruct our students to view architecture as a humanistic and professional discipline, which synthesizes an integrated understanding of various disciplines. We see the education of an architect as an investigation into how the designed environment affects psychological and social behavior.

The UMA B.Arch achieves this through teaching, scholarship, creative work, research, service to the greater community, and an integrated curriculum. The program is committed to the highest ideals of the profession and culture of architecture. Our goal is to create lifelong learners and problem solvers, while preparing our graduates for employment or advanced study.

Core Values

- UMA/ARC is committed to involvement with the greater social and professional community.
- UMA/ARC is committed to instill in students the importance of architectural process as an exploration and investigation, and that this process is a combination of thought and action.
- UMA/ARC is committed to work-by-hand as a means to understand design solutions, as well as the integration of computer technology in the design and testing process.
- UMA/ARC is committed to the investigation and implementation of sustainable ideals.
- UMA/ARC is committed to a liberal and fine arts base for architectural education in light of today’s complex society that demands a well-rounded practitioner with knowledge beyond architecture.
- UMA/ARC is committed to designing with intention, reflecting the awareness that there is a connection between designed space and the quality of the user’s experience, and that designed environments affect behavior.
- UMA/ARC is committed to its own academic growth and evolution in maintaining the high standards expected in professional degrees, and to a high standard of student work and faculty instruction toward that end.
- UMA/ARC is committed to the values of mutual respect, cooperation and communication, creativity and innovation, the pursuit of excellence, effective communication and diversity.

Studio Environment

Studio learning and instruction comes in many forms: informal conversation, formal presentation,

individual desk critiques, group pin-ups, and final reviews. Students must be supported to work individually and in groups. Studio brings together research, analysis, iteration, investigation, and making to help create independent and creative designers.

Studio functions as a community made of students, with the support of full-time and part-time faculty. As shared space, studio should advance faculty-student interaction as well as peer-to-peer learning. Studio is a model for collaboration, integration, and the testing of learning. Studio should support discovery, exploration, and creativity. Studio exists in support of student work during and outside of class times.

Setting the example, professors should lead students to talk and work across their respective class years. Professors also teach skills needed for future success in the architecture profession; through collaborative discussion, peers help to develop these skills. This exchange is fostered by proximity to knowledge and a desire to attain that knowledge. Within classes, students learn with each other; across classes, students share learning. Studio culture should promote an environment in which students feel comfortable to freely engage and exchange in learning with each other and faculty.

UMA/ARC Studio Culture is...

Engaging

Studio may be understood as conversations between students and faculty, where students propose ideas and faculty encourage development through formal and informal critique. Students should value the professional expertise of the faculty, while faculty members value the viewpoints and interests of students. As a collaborative space, all discussion and debate should be conducted in a respectful manner.

Through studio students gain an understanding of an architect's responsibilities toward their communities, as well as the significance of other disciplines outside of architecture. In studio, students feed off each other without unreasonable pressure from peers. Studio should allow students to comfortably work, while encouraging a healthy level of competition and peer building.

The architectural issues of today are complex and unprecedented, asking students to envision new and creative solutions. Value is placed on a student's ability to develop new methods of investigation and experimentation; studio should build an atmosphere conducive to freely engaging these questions, and a freedom of inquiry allowing for exploration in finding possible solutions.

Supportive

In studio, professors and peers are to be accessible and helpful. With proper facilities, students can come together to share knowledge and resources. Studio should be a common ground that facilitates best work. Critiques should be constructive and about the work; no personal attacks are to be tolerated.

Studio should support open dialogue, and create an environment where diverse life experiences and opinions are welcome. It is expected that all show respect for each other's ideas, work, and work areas that will cultivate a strong community. Be courteous and kind, and respectful of gender, sexual orientation, and religious affiliations.

Productive

In studio, appropriate resources and environment should be made available to students. Proper

equipment and supplies should be provided and maintained. The physical space of studio is to remain a healthy work environment with adequate lighting, furnishings, and heating. It is to be an environment where students can work, design, and produce. To accomplish these aims, cleanliness is key. It is the responsibility of all students, staff, and faculty to help maintain a clean working environment. This includes cleaning up after oneself, as well as proactively cleaning up shared spaces. Respect for another's supplies and tools is also key to a healthy work environment. To this end, no student should take or 'borrow' from another's work area with explicitly asking and getting permission first.

It is the responsibility of all that the environment remains well ordered and maintained to allow for the best work. Studio is at once collaborative, while supporting individual investigation. Studio should strive for a balance between idea-sharing and focused work, and recognizes that the ability to concentrate while working in studio is essential. Partially to this end, all students are required to use headphones for all music or other listening while in studio.

In addition, students should understand that studio learning must be balanced with other forms of learning, as well as the importance of knowledge gained outside the discipline of architecture. Faculty must be conscious of these needs, and allow students appropriate time for learning outside the studio, particularly in non-studio classes.

For studio to be its most successful, students are expected to attend all classes and critiques, as well as commit the appropriate amount of time to develop their designs. Quality of time spent on studio work is more important than quantity, and students should make every effort to manage their time wisely in order to successfully complete their work.

Studio culture at UMA should facilitate dialog among students about their work. It is a mentoring process and an edifying exchange of knowledge. On top of honing the skills of students, this exchange of knowledge and ideas hones design reasoning. This in turn prepares students for professional practice through the cultivation of the ability to articulately discuss design ideas verbally and visually.

Plan for Implementation and Maintenance

This Studio Culture Policy is a working document and should reflect changes in the culture and work of its students. To this end, the Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the needs and goals of students and department are being addressed. This will be done in the April or May (end-of-year) addition of "The Meeting," allowing all interested students and faculty to comment and suggest recommendations for review, which can then be considered and implemented before the next fall's classes begin.

Most recent assessment: Spring 2021

Most recent changes made due to assessment: AY 2019-20 (no changes for AY2021-22)