University of Maine at Augusta
Bachelor of Architecture Learning and Teaching Culture Policy

The formation and support of the learning and teaching culture in UMA's Bachelor of Architecture program is approached with the same intention as our mission: *Architecture through Engagement*.

In general, our studio culture, in both studio as well as support classes, is one of collaboration and community. In order to stay abreast of our learning culture, and to ensure open dialog between students and faculty, we conduct periodic discussions between students and faculty. This forum, called "The Meeting," is held several times over the course of the academic year, and is one of our primary means of connecting with our student body. This program-wide get-together allows faculty and program administration to disseminate information in a face-to-face forum, while allowing students the opportunity to share questions, ideas, and concerns about the program.

Our small size allows the faculty and students to form close working relationships. In fact, faculty often teach the same student over several years, for example in a studio course in first-year, then a design principles course in second-year, then a building technology course in third-year, and as a thesis advisor in the fifth-year. Full-time faculty are available for one-on-one advising and coursework support outside of class, during office hours, as well as during informal studio time. In these ways, we truly get to know each individual student. This allows us in many cases to teach to the student as well as the subject, and often allows us to tailor aspects of an assignment or studio to best serve the learning of the individual.

We work hard to make sure students have multiple ways of engaging with the profession in and outside of the classroom: by inviting guest lecturers and critics to the school in both design and technology courses; through field trips to manufacturing facilities, studio sites, and projects under construction; by scholarships to lecture series; through partially-funded international and domestic travel; through AIAS connections with the professional community; and by connecting students with volunteer opportunities. By the time our students graduate, we have taught them in multiple different courses, we have written recommendations for them for their first internships and watched them find success in the industry, we have traveled with them domestically or internationally, and we have seen them grow and mature as thinkers and designers in multiple different ways.

In the program, innovation is fostered through coursework integration found across the curriculum for each year. Our integration means that full-time and adjunct professors, working in collaboration with each other to develop coursework, structure due dates and assessments so that the student work in one course can support and reinforce the parallel studio work. We have seen that this kind of synthesis and applied integration yields a better understanding of the subject matter, and helps avoid the crisis for students of having four or five assessments due in the same week. Furthermore, our course sequences are intentionally structured so that students can build on the knowledge from one course to the next course in the sequence, cycling back to reinforcing core ideas, and moving forward to extend and apply their understanding. This integration and sequencing allows for a more comprehensive understanding over the course of the five-year program, and fosters new and interesting connections in the design studio as well as other coursework.

We believe that the shared studio environment of our Handley Hall facility is at the core of our community. While it is the place where teaching and learning happens, it is also the place where students and faculty meet, converse, challenge each other, and support each other. Since the donation of Handley in 2010, we have worked hard to leverage the space, as well as its equipment and technology, to foster our students' architectural explorations in a positive and respectful environment.

Toward these varied goals, UMA Architecture commits to the following:

That our Pedagogy:
- Be built on the integration of studio and non-studio coursework, thereby giving our students exposure to the complexity, collaboration, and layered nature of architectural process
- Make hands-on learning a goal so that students are actively engaged in the learning and exploration of their education and profession
- Use our sequentially structured coursework to progress from an introduction of ideas, to a development of learning, and ultimately to an understanding and/or ability to put one's learning into practice
- Have an appropriate exposure to community-based design work so our students gradate having experienced the responsibility of our profession to give back

That our Faculty:
- Demonstrate and encourage a learning environment of mutual support and respect
- Respect the varied and diverse backgrounds of UMA colleagues, staff, and students
- Provide constructive and supportive critiques to the overall benefit of student learning
- Challenge and support students and their work to promote growth, responsibility, and self-discipline
- Encourage communication between students, faculty, and staff.

That our Students:
- Recognize the responsibilities of the architectural profession, as well as the dedication and hard work the profession calls for
- Acknowledge the role of studio and other coursework in building and reinforcing this sense of dedication and professionalism
- Understand their role in maintaining a healthy and safe studio environment
- Accept responsibility for managing their time appropriately
- Recognize that the studio is a place of learning, as well as teaching, and that they, through their actions and attention, are primarily responsible for their studio and non-studio outcomes
- Respect the dedication, experience, and knowledge of the architecture faculty, as well as the traditions of the program
- Recognize that students are diverse in many ways, appreciate these differences, and treat each other with mutual respect
- Engage in open communication between students, faculty, and staff

That the Department:
- Support a healthy and safe studio environment through proper attention to facilities, security, and teaching methodologies
- Provide an atmosphere that encourages communication between students, faculty, and staff
- Leverage our small size to the benefit and growth of our students and faculty
- Recognize and value the many types of diversity of our students, faculty, and staff
- Accept the responsibility to educate future architects, including topics of public health and safety
- Support UMA's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Review and assess this policy with students, faculty and staff to ensure that these values are supported and practiced

-UMA B.Arch Degree Program