[*I.1.2* Studio Culture Policy]

Montana State University School of Architecture Studio Culture Policy

The School of Architecture at Montana State University seeks to create a positive, enthused and respectful learning environment.   To achieve this goal the School has developed the Studio Culture Policy to supplement the Montana State University Student Conduct Code and the Montana State University School of Architecture Studio Policies.   The Studio Policy started its development in and is uniquely responsive to the beliefs, attitudes and aspirations of the students, faculty, and administration of the School of Architecture at Montana State University. The Studio Policy document is intended to be the cornerstone of an ongoing process that evaluates the teaching and learning environment of the School annually through a Studio Culture Forum and Studio Culture Survey.   The outcomes, insights and recommendations of the Studio Culture Forum and Studio Culture Survey are intended to guide the students, faculty and administration of the School in maintaining an environment that is responsive and current.   In combination with the Studio Culture Vision Statement and introductions to the Course Content, Pedagogy, and Environment sections of this Policy the annual forum and survey will create a teaching and learning environment responsive to both changing circumstances and the long held values of the Schools' students and faculty.

[STUDIO CULTURE VISION STATEMENT]

As a School of Architecture, we strive for excellence in architectural personal development and a well-rounded education. This is predicated on the belief that truly great architects and professionals possess multiple skills, which enhance their overall capabilities and contributions to society.   These skills include commitment to quality of work, diligence, and competence, as well as efficiency, time management, interpersonal skills, and the development of other abilities through extracurricular pursuits.

It is the responsibility of the faculty and administration to model these skills and to encourage their development in students through course content, pedagogy, and the environment in which we teach and learn.

Students are encouraged to take the initiative to actively design the sequence of courses they take to fit, focus, and broaden their interests. The School of Architecture shall make available a variety of course offerings and will monitor University elective course offerings, such that students may develop a diversity of skills and areas of concentration. Students will be made aware of these, through academic advising.

[COURSE CONTENT]

The nature of the curriculum should be progressive with regards to the direction of the profession of architecture. Traditional skills and the development of artistic abilities must be balanced with cutting edge technologies and an education that is adaptive to current global issues and trends.   Collaboration, coursework balance, and diversity of resources are all beneficial to a multi-disciplinary education.

The following policies associated with course content are intended to optimize the teaching and learning environment within the School of Architecture:

1. The faculty and administration shall coordinate studio and non-studio courses in a manner that maximizes the learning potential of each course and the relationship between courses.
    a. Courses should address the course's relationship to those being taken simultaneously and those taken previously.
    b. Where possible, the studio final reviews should include faculty teaching non-studio courses in parallel with design studio courses.
    c. Where possible schedules should be coordinated between studio and non-studio courses to establish due dates and test dates that do not overlap providing an opportunity for students to demonstrate mastery of subject matter.
2. The design studio experience is cumulative and therefore measuring the success of students within the design studio sequence should reflect both the breadth of the subjects being integrated in any single semester and the depth of knowledge and skills accumulated in previous courses.
    a. The School of Architecture shall identify the goals for each year of the design studio sequence.
    b. Studio faculty shall identify the criteria by which studio projects will be evaluated in the course syllabus.   All studio projects are expected to demonstrate an appropriate level of critical thought.

[PEDAGOGY]

How our courses are taught is as important as course content. The faculty and staff are an integral part of a diverse academic and professional community. As such, their unique attitudes and professional interests should be seen as an asset to a well-rounded education. Professionalism, exemplified in conduct and ethics, serves as a window to the architectural profession. Faculty have a great potential for impacting students and the future of the profession; therefore, they have a direct responsibility, through their interactions with students, communication style, and work patterns, to foster behavior and values supportive of a holistic and balanced education and lifestyle.

The following policies linked to pedagogy are intended to optimize the teaching and learning environment within the School of Architecture:

1. Through its curriculum course descriptions and curriculum planning, the scope and character of studio projects should be coordinated by the School of Architecture to promote a rich variety of design experiences and exploration. Students should have the opportunity to experience both individual assignments and group assignments requiring varying degrees of collaboration, scale and level of detail.

2. Collaborative experiences should be an integral part of the student's architectural education. As deemed appropriate by the instructor of a course or the course coordinator collaboration could occur at various scales including;
   A. Working with a partner or group within an individual studio.
   B. Working between students in other studios, classes or with students in other schools or colleges.
   C. Working with individuals or organizations outside of the University

3. The syllabus should establish the parameters of the course being taught.
   A. Overall goals, policies, and due dates will be included in the syllabus.
   B. Deviations from the syllabus are discouraged but if required should be announced in advance when possible to permit students adequate time to adjust their schedules accordingly.
   C. It is intended that the course schedule provided by faculty will aid students in addressing effective time-management issues throughout the semester.

4. Chief components of the final course grade should be enumerated in the syllabus. Faculty will be available to discuss with students their progress within the course.

5. Due dates for final projects and student presentations shall be coordinated by the School of Architecture administration to provide equality of opportunity for completion of projects, adequate time for preparation of oral presentations by students and to maximize the opportunities for students and faculty to participate in the reviews of all student work. Students will be evaluated based upon the work they have completed at the time at which the project is due.

6. At the end of each semester three separate weeks shall be devoted to studio reviews to provide adequate review time for the review of all student projects. First year shall be given one week, second, third and fourth year one week, and graduate work one week for review.

7. When possible, visiting critics should be utilized for a variety reviews. Visiting critics are encouraged to engage the students in a professional manner and provide constructive criticism.

8. The School of Architecture is responsible for making students aware of the qualifications and expertise of each faculty member. Each faculty members Curriculum vita (as described in the NAAB guidelines) should will be made available on the School of Architecture web site.

[ENVIRONMENT]

A healthy environment for the School of Architecture relies on the integrity of both the physical workspace and the academic community it houses.   The unique nature of the studio should encourage peer evaluation and discourse, self-discipline, collaboration, and critical thought.   Maintaining a positive physical work environment is recognized as a vital component that supports creativity, academic rigor, and productivity.   The stature of the academic institution should be reflected in the behavior of the community, promoting open and timely communication, respect, safety, and character.

The following policies are intended to maintain and enhance the quality of the environment in which the School of Architecture's community of scholars pursue excellence:

1. The "Forum" in which students representatives and faculty review the studio culture document and make recommendations to improve the School of Architecture and the studio culture survey shall occur annually.
    A. All students shall be invited to attend the Forum.
    B. All students shall be afforded the opportunity to respond to the studio culture survey.
    C. The School of Architecture shall proactively address issues and concerns raised by the student body following each Forum and studio culture survey.

2. Student-Faculty liaisons will be elected from each year of the student body. Any student has the opportunity to sign up for any of the School of Architecture committees.
    A. Students will select their representatives each year. Students who join the committees will act as representatives of the student body
    B. The responsibility of the position will be to provide bilateral communication between the student body and the faculty.
    C. Two Selected faculty members are to be appointed by the School of Architecture administration to act as liaisons with the student representatives.
    D. Student and faculty liaisons shall meet on a regular basis to address issues of student and faculty concern.
    E. Student liaisons are invited to attend faculty meetings and communicate to their fellow students the subjects of faculty meetings.

3. Maintain effective channels of communication between students and faculty. Outline current events and deadlines will be made available through the School of Architecture website and make this information available via e-mail or on-line to for all students including those studying abroad or on internships.

4. Guest lectures are of great benefit to student growth and the profession. Students should be are always encouraged to attend.

5. The School of Architecture in coordination with AIAS shall maintain a student mentorship program. The intention of the mentorship program is to link students who have experience within the School to those students following in their footsteps. Students who have experienced the culture, faculty, and course work can help to guide younger students to maximize their potential success within the School.

[CONCLUSION]

This Studio Culture Policy is written to be adaptable and able to be used to assess and resolve any issues that arise within the School of Architecture. Development of the Studio Culture Policy is dependent on long-term maintenance, and education of new faculty and students to ensure longevity and continuation of the ideals detailed within the document.