

WSOA Learning & Teaching Culture Policy – Adopted by WSOA Student Leaders and Administration 4/14/21

INTRODUCTION

This Learning & Teaching Culture Policy (LTCP) is a living document, (maintained by a committee of faculty, students, and administrators) to uphold a positive and respectful academic and professional environment at Woodbury School of Architecture. It replaces our previous Studio Culture policy which focused on only the studio. This new Learning & Teaching Culture policy recognizes important relationships within our community and the responsibility of faculty, students, the administration and student organizations in shaping the culture of the school. Together, we outline common goals for us to achieve as a community.

WSOA CULTURE

DESIGN: We embrace design as an opportunity to effect positive change.

DIVERSITY: We celebrate intellectual diversity and the inclusion of multiple voices in the classroom/studio and in the discourse between students and faculty.

CRITIQUE: We value critique and critical evaluation in respectful dialogue and debate, within the school, and with a commitment to public review of work as a means of public engagement and discourse.

BALANCE: We support creating a stabilized time commitment and time management in our daily lives.

CREATIVITY: We encourage creativity, exploration, and rigor in pursuit of academic development.

PROFESSIONALISM: We create the environment we want to experience in our professional lives.

STUDENT | FACULTY | ADMINISTRATION RELATIONSHIPS

Respect and responsibility are the foundation for strong relations between students, faculty, and the administration, cultivated by each party living up to its responsibilities while respecting the responsibilities of others.

These relationships between the students, faculty and administration are strengthened by open communication about expectations and values.

When conflicts arise in student-faculty-administrative relations, the first step to take is an open conversation with the party with whom they are having difficulty in order to find resolution.

As a collaborative community we support freedom of expression, as long as it does not discriminate against or oppress others, we respect each other's identities and differences, we do not tolerate bullying, we respect each other's property and well-being, we support members of our team on team-projects and we honor academic integrity.

FACULTY RESPONSIBILITY/STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Faculty are responsible for educating, inspiring and mentoring students and to sharing their full passion for their disciplinary expertise and wealth of experience. Faculty have the right to require academic dedication and the critical attention of their students.

Students can expect faculty to be transparent and forthright about class details including, but not limited to: dates of evaluations, grading scales, deliverable requirements per project, grading rubrics that make explicit the criteria for assessing student work, and goals and intents of the class. Likewise, faculty can expect students to receive, read, and retain messages (including syllabi, class meetings, email and other communications, etc.) when they are sent.

We share an environment where students work side-by-side with faculty, fostering unique faculty/student working relationships where each party learns from one another.

The learning and teaching culture require preparedness and enthusiasm for learning in both studio and classroom from faculty and students.

Full participation in studio reviews is beneficial to everyone. Faculty will facilitate opportunity and motivation for all students to remain engaged in all reviews.

The entire learning community at this school understands the difficulty of evaluating a qualitative art with quantitative grading and will do its best to be fair and evaluate work in adherence to an established grading criterion.

Faculty will lead by first practicing the core values of this learning and teaching culture policy. They will provide attention to each student and be available for student-faculty meetings as applicable.

We support students gaining the most from a well-rounded education through participation in lectures, workshops, professional events and volunteer service opportunities offered by the school, by the professional community, and through student initiatives.

WSOA ADMINISTRATION

The Administration is responsible for upholding the vision and direction of the school and engaging faculty and students in decisions about the future of the program.

Our faculty provide a richness to our learning and teaching culture with their qualifications and areas of expertise. Likewise, a relevant curriculum that supports a diverse range of career opportunities is essential.

The administration will always seek to understand and learn more about the evolving stresses of its learning community, and how this institution can ease or solve them. The administration is receptive to students, faculty, staff input in providing for their needs.

Woodbury School of Architecture's goal is to provide access, opportunity, and advancement for all students, faculty, and staff in every stage of Woodbury education and career development, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of underrepresented groups.

WSOA STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

WSOA is proud of our student leaders in all our student-led organizations and encourage participation in their educational programs, social activities, advocacy and professional engagement.

We support the work of AIAS (Burbank and San Diego), CLEA, IIDA CC, NOMAS, Asterisk, and others, each with their independent mission and purpose, and together on behalf of our students and our community.

These organizations care for our community through activities such as stressbuster events and sending care packages, organizing workshops and providing a virtual studio environment. They sponsor lectures and discussions and participate in national competitions. They also provide opportunities for professional engagement, such as firm visits and alumni panels, to foster preparedness for life after graduation.

These organizations also form a leadership council that coordinates activities to promote greater involvement, that advocates for students' well-being, and that engages in policy discussions within the academy and in the profession.

WSOA student organization have taken the lead in drafting this Learning & Teaching Culture Policy, and in putting forward these common goals for School – Life – Work Balance, Health & Well-Being, Diversity & Solidarity, Respectful Stewardship and Space Management, Constructive Evaluation and Well-Rounded Graduates (*Preparing for diverse careers*). WSOA appreciates your support and involvement!

COMMON GOALS

School – Life – Work Balance

Appreciate the value of time

- Time management is a skill that will be taught and exemplified for students in their early curriculum with the intent of their development of responsible habits.
- Healthy time management allows for a reasonable schedule dedicated to class time, personal time or mental wellness, sleeping, time for homework, work and family obligations.
- Every assignment will be given a reasonable time to be completed and constructively evaluated.
- Adopting chronically unhealthy sleep patterns in order to complete studio or class work prevents mental health and is discouraged.
- University-sanctioned breaks and holidays will be honored and will be designated as time for students and faculty to rest.

Health & Well-being

Balance a school-work-life based on every individual's needs to have better relationships, better productivity and to have a greater ability to handle problems as they come up.

The complex decision-making inherent in architecture education demands the focus and concentration that can only come from effective time management, personal well-being, physical health, mental health, sufficient sleep, and good nutrition.

- The architecture department encourages students to operate to the best of their abilities, something that can only be accomplished with a healthy balance of work, rest, food, and sleep.
- WSOA provides assistance to those who are struggling with their health and wellbeing and taking advantage of those resources is encouraged of both students and faculty.

Diversity & Solidarity

Create a climate of respect and diversity where ideas may be freely exchanged among students and faculty

The School fosters a total environment that respects and welcomes differences, amplifies student voices, communicates with transparency and urgency, and celebrates inclusiveness.

- The School works toward the development of a more inclusive pedagogy, and considers all forms of diversity, equity, and inclusion as they affect the educational process.
- Faculty will expand the pool of jurors to provide diverse perspectives that mirror the diversity of WSOA students.
- The school will increase diversity of the faculty.
- This school recognizes the importance of diversity and demands cultivation of an inclusive culture in the words we speak, the actions we take, the history we teach, the behaviors we model, and the projects we undertake.
- This school will work to make itself an inclusive space to have open discussions.
- We respect the backgrounds (which could include any combination of but is not limited to culture, race, ethnicity, religion, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic background, identity) of our students, and are open to accommodations in accordance with University policies.

Refer to WSOA students' statement <https://woodbury.edu/news/wsoa-student-statement/> and to Design Justice Action Plan. <https://woodbury.edu/program/school-of-architecture/soa-design-justice/>

Respectful Stewardship and Space Management

Respect others and take responsibility for our shared facility and for the environment. All members of this school will respect the rights of others including the property of other individuals, groups, and this school.

- Classrooms, studios, and other public amenities within the WSOA are for the benefit of all and are expected to be treated with care.
- This school will not knowingly endanger its students, faculty, administration or the environment by requiring or perpetuating the use of hazardous or toxic materials.
- As designers, future architects, and stewards of the Earth, we recycle used materials and mitigate waste.
- Faculty and students can expect the school to be upheld and maintained in such a way that protects the HSW of its occupants on a regular basis, including security over school breaks.

Constructive Evaluation

Nurture learning environments derived from student/faculty collaboration and the sharing of ideas and concepts through critical discourse.

- Individuals will be free and encouraged to express their ideas and purposes in whatever positive manner they see fit and will receive constructive feedback on their process and methodology.
- Formal or informal reviews or critiques given by instructors or guest jurors will always be discussion-oriented; never critical of the person, but always directed to the work as it stands.
- It is the responsibility of the faculty at this school to inform guest instructors and jurors of how to conduct themselves during reviews in accordance with the school's mission and this LTCP.

Well-Rounded Graduates (*Preparing for diverse careers*)

Support the achievement of architectural design excellence and enable the student to develop individually within the discipline.

- Time will be incorporated in the curriculum to teach students skills needed in order to succeed in subsequent classes and post-graduate research, experimentation, fulfillment, or employment.
- With an ever-shifting technical and professional field, WSOA will do its best to combine fundamental skills with contemporary tools to prioritize students' success and retention of skills.
- An education at this school can lead to a diverse range of career opportunities, and such potential will be reflected in all curricular instruction.

POLICY PROCESS

Although a frequently updated LTCP is required by the 2020 NAAB Conditions for Accreditation (PC7, page 2), the Committee will revisit this document as often as necessary to stay connected and attentive to our learning community. The LTCP is always available to the public via the school's website, and to the WSOA community through the SharePoint site for faculty, students and the administration. A link to the policy will be included in the all course syllabi, which faculty and students review together at the beginning of each semester.

This document will be reviewed and revised annually by a committee composed of equally empowered students, student leaders, faculty, and administrators. This committee is also responsible for interpreting the document and considering grievances, suggestions, and discussions, and may be advised in the event of greater violations. Complaints can be submitted to the LTCP Committee by emailing and scheduling a meeting with the Department Chair. This policy has been agreed to by student leaders, faculty advisors and department chairs from each department as well as the Dean of the School of Architecture. This policy was adopted in Spring 2021.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the original values of optimism, respect, sharing, engagement, and innovation that formed the foundation of the Studio Culture discussion, and the contribution of those who authored the new Learning and Teaching Culture framework. We encourage you to review the origins and developments of this initiative: <https://www.aias.org/about/advocacy/>