MUSoA

Studio Culture Policy

Overview:

At Marywood University's School of Architecture, our goal is to educate a new generation of designers who are self-driven, socially conscious, and environmentally responsible. In doing so, it is our responsibility as a school and community to foster a healthy learning environment structured around core values of **RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, OPTIMISM, COMMITMENT, and INNOVATION**. Working together, **WE** (any constellation of **MU**SoA faculty, students, administration, and staff) can help build and maintain a healthy learning environment.

The Design Studio:

As a School of Architecture, **WE** believe in, value, and support the design studio as a teaching and learning environment that encourages critical thinking, dialogue, collaboration, risk-taking, material speculation, and design innovation. Design studio is an environment where students and faculty ask questions, propose visions, and explore the unknown. In short, **WE** value the design studio as a place to critically reframe and refocus the world through our respective design disciplines.

In this spirit, our studio culture policy highlights the fundamental values that foster a positive learning environment and serves as a series of mutual expectations between and among those who teach, study, and work at the MUSoA.

Core Values:

1. To treat each other, our work, our ideas, our environment, and our differences with mutual **RESPECT**; **WE**:
   - respect, promote, and maintain a culture of mutual respect for each other including the ideas, work, property, and opinions of our peers and coworkers; recognizing that a healthy studio environment is a place that encourages growth and diversity;
   - respect and encourage multicultural perspectives and views;
   - promote respectful, constructive, and productive criticism: faculty listen and respond to students' ideas and design processes, and students respond to such criticism through the consistent development of their work;
   - respect, foster, and value iterative design processes; recognizing that good design is crafted both physically and intellectually;
   - respect each other's personal property, tools, materials, models, drawings, desk space, etc. Do not take things, please ask;

- respect each other's personal space; music, computer games, and/or cell phones that disturb others - during studio hours or otherwise - is too loud;
- respect our workshop and recognize that it is a privilege not an entitlement; any borrowed tools and/or materials shall be returned in their proper condition and in timely fashion;
- respect our workspaces and equipment including, but not limited to: desks, chairs, computers, projectors, printers, plotters, laser cutters, fabrication lab, tools, pin-up areas, classrooms, and all parts of our architecture building - any damage shall be reported to the Dean's Office and/or the Workshop Manager;
- respect our air and our environment; chemicals and sprays (including but not limited to spray paint, stains, glues, and adhesives, etc.) shall be used in the spray booth and not in studios.
- respect the hard work of others - teaching and learning in the design studio is enriched when ideas become public discourse: faculty members shall make criticism constructive and do all they can to make public reviews (juried or otherwise) productive, and students shall give proper consideration to the issues discussed and be prepared to put their own ideas forward for discussion cogently and confidently;

2. To pursue teaching and learning in the design studio with a sense of mutual **RESPONSIBILITY**; **WE**:
   - are responsible for the quality, evolution, and completion of our work: faculty shall clearly articulate their teaching methods and performance expectations through comprehensive syllabi, and students shall be self-driven, committed, and accountable for the work produced - back up files and print on time;
   - are responsible for how we manage our time: faculty shall be mindful of the amount of time required to complete assignments, and students shall use studio time productively, plan for and anticipate deadlines, and aim to exceed expectations. While the school is open 24/7, we recognize that an unbalanced work schedule is not only counterproductive, but can also be avoided with proper time management:
   - are responsible for encouraging healthy, balanced lifestyles; while faculty and students shall expect the best from each other in the studio, both shall also encourage healthy non-academic activities (proper eating, sleeping, exercise, etc.). Such balance is necessary in order to be educated and well-rounded members of the community, both in the studio and beyond;
   - are responsible for our schedules; faculty shall be available during studio and office hours, and students shall come to studio on time, use studio time wisely, and participate in all studio related activities;
   - are responsible to communicate; faculty shall be open to advising and discussing studio work, and students shall openly discuss their process and ideas;
   - are responsible for safety - everyone must follow all posted safety rules in addition to their common sense;

To recognize that design education is empowering and approach our work with **OPTIMISM**; **WE**:

- are optimistic about architecture's environmental and ethical role in the world; while faculty should work hard to foster an environmental and ethical culture through coursework and extracurricular activities, students should optimistically strive toward environmental stewardship and ethics through their work and participate in extracurricular activities when possible.
- are optimistic about the future; recognizing the powerful role that architecture / interior architecture has in shaping both individual and collective lives.

3. To pursue teaching and learning in the design studio with mutual **COMMITMENT**; **WE**:
   - are committed to the MUSoA's educational mission; faculty shall be passionate and dedicated teachers, and students shall be fully committed to their coursework, recognizing that they bear the responsibility to establish personal goals and work toward achieving them;
   - are committed to studio teaching/learning as a form of higher education; faculty shall work hard to be the best teachers they can be, and students shall work hard to be the best learners and doers they can be;
   - are committed to environmental stewardship as both a means of fostering responsible and intelligent design decisions and a shared working culture; that is, we are conscious of our own footprint, use the plotters wisely, and properly recycle and reuse whenever possible;
   - are committed to helping others and sharing knowledge; recognizing that our school will only grow if we mutually support the intellectual growth of future generations. We are willing to help others through critiques when appropriate and possible.

4. To strive toward **INNOVATION**; **WE**:
   - recognize that the design studio is a place of discovery and calculated risk; faculty shall be open to new ideas, and students shall also be willing to venture outside of their comfort zones, to think critically, and to pursue novelty;
   - foster, value, and support collaboration; recognizing that novel ideas are often rooted in the complexities of multiple voices, interests, concerns, and abilities.

Implementation:

1. *The Studio Culture Policy will be reviewed annually by a committee of the SoA Student Council with faculty representation. The committee shall seek faculty and student input when reviewing the Policy.*
2. *The Policy shall be distributed in the following ways:*
   a. *Posted on the SoA website*
   b. *Included as part of the SoA Student Handbook*
   c. *Included with the first year fall semester syllabus, and discussed during the first week of studio.*

3. *Students may formally report infractions to School of Architecture faculty or staff. Complaints shall be addressed first by the offending student's studio instructor, and then, if necessary, by the Dean for resolution and possible sanctions. Sanctions will reflect the severity of the infraction and/or the offending student's past record.*
4. *Students who do not adhere to this policy are subject to a range of sanctions from formal warnings to restricted access to temporary or permanent loss of access to The Center and its facilities.*

History:

In 2005, the National Architectural Accreditation Board (NAAB) issued an additional condition for accreditation: Studio Culture. Each accredited school of architecture is now required to have a written policy addressing and shaping its studio culture. This new condition was inspired by the American Institute of Architecture Students Studio Culture Task Force report, released in December 2001, which encouraged the profession to be more explicit about the pedagogical benefits and purpose of the most unique and memorable aspect of architecture education. Subsequently, the AIAS created another task force to address both the positive and negative aspects of studio culture and issued its report in 2002. In that report the writers call for explicit policies to support the positive aspects of studio culture, while curbing some of the more unhealthy practices. The positive values identified by the report include optimism, respect, sharing, engagement, and innovation - values which are shared and supported fully by the School of Architecture at Marywood University.

To download the AIAS report, go to: http://www.aias.org/website/download.asp?id=314.

Students are also encouraged to consult the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) website for general information on the NAAB Conditions of Accreditation for Professional Degree Programs in Architecture, which includes information on Student Performance Criteria. To download the NAAB Student Performance Criteria, go to: http://www.naab.org.