

Tyler Architecture Learning Culture

Tyler School of Art and Architecture
Temple University

This document represents the outcome of a series of discussions held between students and faculty of the Temple University, Tyler Architecture Programs in the Spring of 2021.

Introduction

The faculty and students of the Tyler Architecture Programs support the continuation of the design studio as a central focus of the architecture curriculum. It provides opportunity for peer learning, support and inspiration and brings enjoyment to students working together in a relatively unstructured environment. Students and faculty know that a studio learning curriculum is challenging and often demands a tremendous amount of students both in studio and in their non-studio based courses.

This document serves as guidelines and sets out aspirations in order to strengthen our collective learning culture.

1 Core Objectives and Values

1.1 The Tyler School of Art and Architecture educates and inspires students to be active participants in society with the highest aspirations for creative and social achievement, individual expression, scholarly discovery, and innovation.

1.2 Learning at Tyler is a profoundly transformative process in which students exceed their own expectations as creators, scholars, educators, and active citizens. Tyler prepares students to make valuable contributions in a range of fields through the strength of their creative and technical skills, their ability to visualize solutions to problems, and their personal vision informed by social and civic responsibility.

1.3 The Tyler Architecture programs are a diverse group of individuals (students, faculty, and administrators) with a wide range of experience and a common goal of excellence. It is essential that diversity of views, a move towards independent thinking, and individual goals be recognized.

1.4 The core objective of the design studio is that it be a learning environment in which a culture of mutual respect and collaboration between faculty and students and students and students prevails. We chose to emphasize the process, not only on a final product and aim to develop a relationship between thinking and making, giving value to a range of processes, skills, and products.

2 Optimism

2.1 Students and faculty within the Tyler Architecture Programs strive to be curious and academically minded, and to constantly be working toward positive solutions in design, for the profession, and in the method of teaching; the learning process should be continuous.

2.2 Tyler Architecture strives to provide an atmosphere of enjoyment that fosters creativity.

2.3 Students and faculty conduct themselves with empathy and strive to be kind to their community members while respecting academic freedom.

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3 Learning Culture Assessment

3.1 Dialog between students, between faculty, and between students and faculty are an important component to developing and measuring learning culture. Productive, respectful dialog is encouraged.

3.2 As the practice of architecture changes, it is important to recognize shifts in the nature of subject matter of a studio. Most importantly, it is important to recognize the impact of other course work and the potential for integration of related subject matter across courses. It is important to also recognize the role of collaborations between disciplines and within the design studio as part of the process of learning.

3.3 A studio culture committee of students and faculty should be formed. The charge of the committee is to develop a yearly forum as follows:

- 1) student issues will be brought up through student groups.
- 2) after a set date, the committee will meet to discuss and organize the issues, a focused theme for discussion will be announced.
- 3) a date for a discussion forum with a facilitator, a panel of students and faculty, and feedback from the audience will be set
- 4) feedback will be noted, summarized, and acted on accordingly.

3.4 Particular questions about our learning culture should be developed by student groups and faculty to be included as part of assessment on the Student Feedback Forms (SFFs).

3.5 The studio culture document should be revisited and updated biannually.

4 Promoting Learning in the Community

4.1 Mechanisms to facilitate interaction between years should be developed. These include all school design charrettes, mentoring of junior students by senior students, senior students as reviewers of student work in junior years.

4.2 As a community we value our disciplinary dialog. Development of ideas within the community of architecture students is critically important to the program. We also value well rounded, multifaceted interests of each student. It is important to remember classes outside of architecture are as important as those within as is involvement in other university activities. Programs course schedules strive to not coincide with other university activities to promote participation of architecture students as members of the larger University.

Education

5 The Review

5.1 The review of work is a productive asset in the design sequence. Equally, the design studio's culture thrives in its flexibility, and as such, feedback is encouraged to happen before a final public discussion of the work. By reviewing work incrementally, students and faculty share in highlighting the learning and advancement of concepts instrumental in evaluating progress and production in the completed work, leaving room at the end of the semester for self-evaluation and resubmission that incorporates each discussion, even the final one.

5.2 Faculty, visiting instructors, and guests are encouraged not to use the common reference of 'jury' to describe review and discussion with students. The use of the term 'jury' implies that

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students are on trial. Instead, all parties should be encouraged to examine the work with fresh eyes and a reassuring perspective.

5.3 Faculty, visiting instructors, and guests are encouraged, when plausible, to change the final review's expectations, so it is an exhibition of what the student has learned, including rough work, not only a final product.

5.4 The value of the final review and discussion of work is invaluable to the progress of work in design culture. Faculty, visiting instructors, and guests are encouraged to distribute them across many events. Final reviews are encouraged before the end of a semester with a required self-evaluation or resubmission of work thereafter, including the staggering of final reviews, discussions, and hand-in of work for evaluation purposes.

5.5 Faculty, visiting instructors, and guests are encouraged to coordinate the review discussions with Learning. The rubric will define a continuous feedback loop that advances a student's comprehension of material across the semester rather than the presentation of finished products. Project expectations described in the rubric are encouraged to include self-evaluation by students. These include documentation in their notes of both reviews and discussions that show understanding and application of the learning objectives.

6 Pacing

6.1 While each studio is unique in how assignments contribute to advancing the learning and culture of design, the pacing of work offers an opportunity to experience and understand time management's value in linking incremental adjustments to overarching concepts and narratives. By establishing a clear rubric, each study confirms a means for evaluating the progress and the range of strengths developing towards the completed works. Allowing for transitions between projects and adapting the rubric to the studio's pace provides opportunities to cushion different activities at different stages of the work incrementally and help students value their efforts each step of the way.

6.2 The pacing of work across the semester will reflect, encourage, and help students develop essential time management skills.

6.3 The faculty will consider the ability, comprehension, and understanding of students in a studio's pacing. The rubric should articulate how a variety of learning activities contribute to different stages in the design process.

6.4 The rubric and cumulative studio work will be structured to contribute to a range of strengths by diversifying the learning objectives. The course criteria will encourage a range of student skills to be valued, developed, and mature.

6.5 When possible, faculty are encouraged to dissuade students from the 'heroism' of the sleepless night. Students are encouraged to instead value a more productive process across the semester in response to the rubric's timing.

7 Studio Grading

7.1 In creating a constructive environment centered on design, rubrics inform students when and how the discussions across the semester will contribute to advancing their learning. The objectives of both the rubric and the corresponding evaluation of work rely on transparency in the studio's goals and clarity in the articulation of expectations on the part of the studio instructors.

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7.2 Tyler Architecture students value their competition and culture of sharing but recognize the difference between grades and individual assessment. Student self-assessment is widely encouraged so that students can learn to see their strengths and lesser strengths.

7.3 Studio grading will include rubrics or other devices that allow measured feedback, including comments. The learning objectives provide transparency to the studio's goals with clarity and articulation of instructors' studio culture.

7.4 The incremental updating of grades with students across the semester will help clarify the grading process. By providing a rubric, faculty and students can more readily find consensus on how the grading system contributes to the studio's learning objectives and structure.

7.5 Faculty, visiting instructors, and guests are encouraged to avoid the perplexity associated with grading and help students recognize design education's value and goals.

8 Documentation

8.1 The entire learning community at this school acknowledges the difficulty of evaluating a qualitative art with quantitative grading. And while the review of work relies heavily on the presentation of materials, the documentation of the process and progress is encouraged to contribute to the participants' successful engagement in the discussion of the work. Faculty are encouraged to clearly define the expectations of documenting the process and progress of work in the 'Core Objectives and Values' statement of the syllabus. Together, faculty and students are encouraged to fair and unbiased sharing of strengths and lesser strengths in assessing the best course of action to document the work process and progress.

9 Implementation

9.1 As a learning community, faculty and students are encouraged to coordinate schedules and deadlines to prevent undue anxiety or stress as derived from conflicts between course deadlines. Faculty are encouraged to submit course schedules to the program director in advance of the semester's start to provide ample time to coordinate documentation, facility utilization, and guest instructors' participation that benefits the successful completion of course material.

9.2 Studio coordinators must start each academic year by discussing studio culture issues that pertain to the particular year and studio with their faculty. A return to the preliminary discussion and its relevant issues should be encouraged throughout the semester.

9.3 Course syllabi must factor in peer-to-peer learning activities such as 1) student pre-review of work to anticipate critique issues, 2) written student-student critique, and 3) self-assessment of critical comments from formal review sessions, focusing the conversations on what has been said about work, its drawbacks, and potential within further interrogation of the work concerning the learning objectives.

9.4 It is vital for faculty, visiting instructors, and guests to recognize their role as role models and be consciously aware of studio habits/practices and comments, encouraging a positive and self-affirming culture in place of isolation and overproduction.

9.5 Faculty assignments and studio coordination are encouraged to recognize the importance of faculty-to-faculty mentoring.

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10 Constructive Evaluation and Instruction

10.1 Formal and informal reviews or critiques by instructors or guest jurors are encouraged to be discussion-oriented, with the assessment focused on the project's strengths and lesser strengths. With the shared understanding that the discussions advance the student work, faculty are encouraged to inform guest instructors of the studio culture and expectation that their constructive criticism contributes to a positive learning culture.

10.2 All members of the community 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.

10.3 Faculty can be expected to make every effort to be available for discussions outside of class during consistently scheduled office hours. Students can be expected to make every effort to attend those office hours if there is a need for additional instruction.

10.4 Formal or informal reviews or critiques given by instructors or guest jurors will always be discussion-oriented; such discussions will never be critical of the person, but will always be 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. The student whose work is being reviewed will arrive on time, be well prepared, adhere to the schedule proposed by the design critic, and will be engaged with the entire review. Faculty will facilitate opportunity and motivation for all students to remain engaged in all reviews.

10.5 Via all communication means available (including syllabi, convocation, class meetings, email and other messages, etc.), students can expect faculty to be transparent and forthright about class details including, but not limited to: tentative dates of evaluations, grading scales, deliverable requirements per project, goals and intents of the class, and other things that are out of the control of the student. Faculty can expect students to receive, read, and retain these messages when they are sent.

10.6 The entire learning community at this school understands the difficulty of evaluating a qualitative art with quantitative grading but will do its best to be fair and evaluate work without bias.

11 Well-Rounded Enrichment

11.1 In advancing students' education in design and architecture, the faculty and students are collectively committed to exhibiting the potential of Temple University's commonwealth commitment. The program is committed to leadership across the disciplinary practices of architecture that contribute to a diverse range of career opportunities and position our students to succeed beyond the classroom. Faculty are encouraged to incorporate time in the curriculum to teach students the skills they need to know to succeed in subsequent classes and post-graduate research, experimentation, fulfillment, or employment. In a field with an ever-shifting, technical and professional landscape, this school will do its best to combine fundamental skills with contemporary tools in ways that prioritize student's success and retention of skills.

11.2 This school will incorporate time in the curriculum to teach students the skills they need to know in order to succeed in subsequent classes and post-graduate research, experimentation, fulfillment, or employment. In a field with an ever-shifting, technical and professional landscape,

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this school will do its best to combine fundamental skills with contemporary tools in ways that prioritize student's success and retention of skills.

11.32 An education at this school can lead to a diverse range of career opportunities, and such potential will be reflected in all curricular instruction.

11.4 Exposure to and preparation for professional opportunities will be included in the curriculum or available resources at this school.

11.5 Student participation in extracurricular activities (ie student-run organizations, activities, interdisciplinary cohorts, volunteerism, etc.) that enhance and supplement an education and life experience will be prioritized and modeled by faculty and administration.

Wellness

12 Time Management

12.1 Our time management standard is centered on wellness. Assignments will be scheduled with sufficient time for completion by students and evaluation by faculty. We recognize that a diversity of obligations make education possible, and we do not expect students or faculty to complete their planning or schoolwork by disregarding other obligations.

12.2 Time management is a skill that should be taught to develop responsible habits. This allows for a reasonable schedule dedicated to class time, assignments, personal time, wellness, and adequate sleep.

12.3 Unhealthy time management practices to complete class assignments will not be tolerated since this affects the wellness of our students. Lack of sleep and other noticeable unhealthy patterns should be discussed with the student and may be resolved with an adjusted work plan.

12.4 Dangers of over tiredness should be discussed with students. They should not drive when sleep deprived since they put themselves and others at risk. Students should alert one another to situations when they should not drive that might compromise the safety of the students.

12.5 This curriculum will facilitate a healthy school-work-life balance and provide enrichment in the education of its students in order to create an environment that matriculates well-rounded graduates.

13 Feedback

13.1 Instructors should explain and model how to provide constructive criticism when reviewing student work. This enables students to benefit from comments provided, assess how to value the insights offered, and hone student skills in offering their own opinions through constructive criticism.

13.2 Gaining meaningful feedback through various forms of reviews will assist students, this can include a range of formats: faculty-student desk crits, student-student crits, group pin-up and discussion, and formal reviews.

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13.3 Peer learning is a benefit for the student community and should be encouraged throughout the semester with student peer reviews.

13.4 Studios should pace project requirements successively, ensuring students progress from ideas to design in structured stages. Explain how design encompasses iterations of conceptual ideas that develop into a tectonic design project. Schedule time for students to formulate and develop their ideas, as well as time for critical reflection and production.

Community

14 Diversity

14.1 Tyler Architecture is situated within a large public university located in one of the largest metropolitan regions in the country. The university community includes individuals (students, faculty and staff) from a wide spectrum of backgrounds and perspectives. This provides a good foundation for continual efforts to shape a diverse community that reflects the richness that is found in the region, state, nation and beyond.

14.2 We believe that diversity adds to the richness of our programs. We strive to cultivate an environment that values differences and recognizes the importance of our collective identities in the creation of a rigorous academic environment.

14.3 We recognize the importance of diversity in our past successes and our current reality. We also strive to cultivate an environment that celebrates our differences and recognizes the importance of our collective identities that contribute to our academic environment. Efforts to maintain and expand our diversity include how we communicate, what we teach and behaviors we endorse. Encouraging frank and open discourse is an important objective.

14.4 The studio learning setting of design education is inherently and communal. Within this environment of interaction, it is important to maintain solidarity. Key components of this effort include fostering respect for others, encouraging generosity and working together.

14.5 We recognize that members of our community come from backgrounds where cultural expressions are different from those commonly found in academic environments. Individuals might also express themselves differently for other reasons. We believe it is important to permit different expressions if they are not intended to offend or make others uncomfortable. When expressions do cause discomfort, we seek to understand why and how we can address them.

14.6 We recognize that participation in our programs can lead to different career trajectories and outcomes. Because of this, we seek to support students in traditional career activities and non-traditional pursuits.

14.7 We acknowledge working toward diversity and defining diversity is a work in progress. Diversity can be found in measurable signifiers such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and social economics. However, notions of diversity evolve, so we seek to evolve and expand how we acknowledge diversity while attending to what has already been identified as important.

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15 Collaboration

15.1 We recognize that the practice of architecture evolves, and that the nature of studio education should evolve too.

15.2 As successful practice environments become more collaborative, a collaborative culture should be encouraged in all of our programs. Opportunities for group work within and without sections reflects the nature of collaboration and the connections between different courses, including courses outside of the architectural discipline.

15.3 Opportunities for students to gain from exposure to work outside of their studios should be encouraged. Central to this objective is the staggering of review times. Staggered review times also eases congestion of printers and shop facilities.

15.4 Mechanisms to facilitate interaction between members of our programs, especially between years, should be supported. Examples of activities included charrettes, student mentoring and inclusion of graduate and upper-level students in reviews.

15.5 Enrollment of coursework outside of the program should be supported. Likewise, enrollment of non-majors in architectural programs should be facilitated.

15.6 Non-course specific experiences in the university and beyond are important to the development of well-rounded students. Course schedules and assignments should accommodate participation in university wide events.

15.7 We recognize that bullying and intimidation are counter to a healthy academic environment, and within the rules of our institution, seek to prevent them.

16 Conduct

16.1 We recognize that respect for the rights of others requires consideration that our activities impact others. Similarly, we understand that the school facilities and equipment are for common benefit and are to be treated with care.

16.2 Members of our community strive to support the health and wellness of others by moderating the use of hazardous and toxic materials. We seek to avoid using materials that are harmful, by following published guidelines from both manufactures and the school. If material use is relegated to specific spaces, we strive to follow these rules, bring the rules to the attention of others who appear to violate them and seek authoritative answers to questions of proper use before engaging in potentially inappropriate behaviors.

16.3 We realize that human actions have an impact on the health of natural and constructed environments. Although we do not control all aspects of our impact, we recognize that individual actions matter and seek to use recycle and reuse materials when feasible.

16.4 Our educational experiences are not confined to boundaries of campus facilities. We see ourselves as ambassadors of our school and programs when conducting ourselves

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off-campus. Within this, we acknowledge that our actions impact the perceptions of our shared community.

Appendix

The Learning Culture of our Architecture Programs is often derived from, and expressed through, the course syllabi. The elements below should be considered and articulated in each course syllabi in a way fitting to the course content and pedagogy.

A1 Professional Conduct

A1.1 Students and faculty will maintain a professional manner of respect with their peers and with each other. Open dialogue and respect of others' identities, property and well-being are always expected.

A1.2 In order to maintain positive work-life balance, productivity and professional readiness, workload expectations of students and faculty will be well-communicated and realistic, and will prioritize health and wellbeing for rigor.

A1.3 University-sanctioned breaks and holidays will be honored and will be designated as time for students and faculty to rest.

A1.4 iv. Students and faculty will always respect others' time and strive to complete tasks in a timely manner. Students will arrive to class on time and turn in projects on time, while faculty will also arrive to class on time and provide information and feedback in a timely manner.

A1.5 Students and faculty will be prepared ahead of time for classes, meetings, projects and other tasks in a manner that is respectful to the time of other community members and is professionally acceptable.

A1.6 Students can expect and trust faculty to be equipped with a reasonable amount of knowledge in or around the particular class topic they are teaching. Faculty can expect and trust students to recall and be equipped with skills they have been taught up to that point in their education.

A1.7 Faculty and students will respect each other's physical and emotional boundaries at all times. Faculty and students can expect each other to be attentive to the other party's material and emotional complexities in ways that seek to help before they condemn. We are all members of the school community and shall be treated as such. We will operate under the understanding that everyone is doing their best to abide by the policies set forth in this document. The culture and process by which concerns are addressed by anyone will reflect that understanding in an open and conscientious way.

A2 Financial Barrier

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A2.1 Financial barriers to succeeding in class will be addressed with provisions for those who are unable to participate financially.

A3 Health & Safety

A3.1 Faculty and students can expect the school to be upheld and maintained in such a way that protects the health, safety, and wellness of its occupants on a regular basis, including security over school breaks. All members of this school are expected to abide by safety measures and regulations that are instituted by the university.