

# OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

## LEARNING & TEACHING CULTURE POLICY



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The Learning & Teaching Culture Policy is an agreement between all students and faculty in the Oklahoma State University School of Architecture, and was created in order to assure a positive and healthy academic, social and professional environment within the unique culture of the School of Architecture. This Policy represents a cultural change and conservation agreement, and does not constitute official University policy. The basis and power of this Policy lies in action and discussion; it represents a set of values and goals, and the actions necessary to achieve them.

This Policy was adopted in 2010 and was rewritten in 2019. It is a living and evolving document that will be revisited periodically to better represent the needs of the students, professors, and the profession.

# EDUCATION

## Communication & Critiques

In every course within the School of Architecture objectives will be outlined in the syllabus to define the educational goals for the semester. A clear grading system will be provided in each class as a basis for evaluation; grades and feedback will be provided in a timely manner as a basis for open communication and development. In the design studio critical evaluations, known as critiques, are an integral means to addressing the educational requirements of a studio course entailing collaboration among all involved faculty and students where all parties communicate through honest, clear and constructive feedback to promote comprehensive design exploration and success. Informal desk critiques will occur on a regular basis throughout the course of a design project so students have the guidance of experience to aid in developing their designs before final evaluations. This process is an integral component of our educational philosophy and allows for continued growth throughout the student's educational career. Students and faculty will strive for clear communication in a classroom setting as well; both parties are responsible to ensure that they understand and are understood.

## Collaboration

The culture at the School of Architecture celebrates discussion and collaboration between all faculty and students. All will be enabled and encouraged to share and adapt their own ideas and methodologies in order to better understand and solve problems and to expand the boundaries of design in Architecture and Architectural Engineering. Effective collaboration between faculty and students depends on open and honest communication, clearly articulated expectations, and constructive project evaluations. The close relationship of Architecture

and Architectural Engineering programs provides a special opportunity for understanding and collaboration between students and faculty in these respective programs. Collaboration between disciplines will be facilitated and encouraged to maintain a wide and well-rounded worldview. Students and faculty are encouraged to participate in student organizations and school events, where both leadership and collaboration skills can be developed.

## Competition

The unique culture and educational process at the School of Architecture is strengthened by a constructive sense of competition, in constant balance with the values of collaboration. Design competitions as well as other competitive projects and events serve to push the boundaries of success and excellence. The positive, healthy and purposeful application of these competitions to the curriculum must be well-balanced with the collaborative mission inherent in architectural education and in the profession.

## The Design Process

Students will be encouraged and expected to learn through the exploration and application of many ideas and design processes through thorough personal investigation, guided by professors and their experience. The final product in a project should be a tangible representation of a strong concept, clear process, and fully explored idea.

## Balance of Courses

The successful practice of Architecture and Architectural Engineering depends on broadly educated professionals. It is important that students

and faculty- especially in an advisory capacity- give equal emphasis and consideration to all courses and relate them to projects in other courses and studios whenever possible. In addition, students will have the opportunity to take courses offered outside the School of Architecture, and are encouraged to do so. Interdisciplinary study is the foundation of a well-rounded graduate; it prepares them for leadership in the profession and to be able to communicate with clients from many backgrounds and with many interests.

### **Professional Development**

A major goal of higher education is the development of students into well-rounded and responsible professionals who will have a positive and lasting impact on their profession and on the world around them. A focus on and communication of this goal is an integral part of the educational process. Programs, projects and other opportunities pertaining to professional development will be provided and encouraged in the interest of meeting this goal and affecting a positive change through and within the School of Architecture.

### **Lifelong Learning**

A positive attitude toward life-long learning is critical for continued success and growth in our education and the profession. Professors and students are encouraged to share their diverse knowledge, ongoing research, and creative investigations with one another through various venues whenever possible.

### **Academic Integrity**

No violations of the University's Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found at the link below, will be permitted in the School of Architecture. While the process of design often begins with inspiration from an outside source, students and faculty are responsible for determining the boundary between inspiration and plagiarism. Where it is found by faculty and/or school administration that a student has plagiarized the work of another person or group the violation will be treated in accordance to the University's Academic Integrity Policy.

OSU Academic Integrity Policy:  
<https://stw.sp.okstate.edu/policies/Shared%20Documents/Academic%20Integrity%20Policy.pdf>

# HEALTH & WELLNESS

## Healthy Habits

While the process of architectural education is inherently intensive, healthy physical, mental and social habits are encouraged by all faculty and students within the School of Architecture. These include healthy eating, sleeping and social habits, as well as habits to facilitate overall well-being. Learning healthy habits is of equal importance to development as a designer and professional, and will be treated as such within the School of Architecture. Unhealthy habits and practices are not to be encouraged or passed on, as these hinder positive development and learning. Alcohol and drug abuse of any kind are not tolerated.

## Time Management

Just as architectural education is intensive, it is also time consuming by nature. Time management skills are taught and encouraged throughout the educational process. Students and faculty will collaborate and communicate to maintain a healthy workload and facilitate a healthy lifestyle inside and outside school, preparing them for future success due to effective time management.

## Support

Architectural education, and the university experience as a whole, can be challenging and sometimes overwhelming. In the interest of maintaining mental and physical health, support will be offered whenever possible at the School of Architecture. Also in this interest, accommodation in certain areas can and should be given when both students and faculty involved in an issue deem it appropriate. It is understood that not all situations will warrant accommodation, but these situations should be reviewed with care and constructive intent. Numerous University resources also exist to support students, and these should be utilized when needed.

## Financial Health

Higher education can often be financially taxing, and students should be aware of and prepared for the financial requirements of college. In order to minimize financial strain students and faculty should communicate openly about financial requirements of courses and activities within the School of Architecture. All parties should make an effort to reduce this strain whenever possible, and when it will not hinder the learning or teaching experience.

# SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

## Community

The community of the School of Architecture is of paramount importance to the growth and development of students and faculty as individuals and the school as a whole. In order to maintain a socially positive and resilient community, students and faculty are encouraged and expected not only to participate in this community, but to facilitate its maintenance and growth. Collaboration and positivity between faculty and students, different year levels and different disciplines is expected and encouraged. Interpersonal relationships, school events and school organizations are large parts of the School of Architecture community, and every effort will be made to ensure the healthy development and continuation of these activities.

## Respect & Diversity

Shared respect is important to a healthy learning and teaching culture. Differing of opinions is an expected and important aspect of design; both students and faculty are expected to approach the educational experience with a mutual respect for the rights and personal dignity of those around them. This mutual respect for diversity encourages strong relationships between all students and faculty within the school. No disrespect, persecution or discrimination based on any form of diversity will be tolerated within the school.

## Mentorship

The School of Architecture encourages and facilitates mentorship at the student, faculty and professional levels. Healthy relationships with knowledgeable mentors is an important part of educational and professional development, and while programs are in place for the creation and facilitation of mentor-mentee relationships, each student is encouraged to find a mentor in their own way.

## Relationship with Faculty

The OSU School of Architecture prides itself on its unique community and relationships between faculty and students. Healthy and close ties with faculty are encouraged as a way to maintain open communication between students and faculty on the subjects of education and positive development. Students and faculty are encouraged to openly discuss issues pertaining to these subjects and to the improvement of our school, community and profession.



# PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

## Respect & Cleanliness

As a direct result of the nature of architectural education the design studios and other spaces within the School of Architecture are heavily inhabited and utilized. In the interest of maintaining a functional, healthy and enjoyable environment all students are expected to keep their own space and studio as clean as possible, as well as the building as a whole. Respecting the boundaries and space of peers is of utmost importance to the maintenance of a healthy culture. Students and faculty are also responsible for the maintenance of facilities and equipment in the school. Damaged facilities or equipment should be reported to staff at once.

## Student Freedoms

To quote a well-known faculty member, "Your freedom stops when it starts to affect someone else." Within the rules and regulations of Oklahoma State University, the School of Architecture and school faculty, students are free to inhabit and utilize the studio in any way- unless this freedom negatively affects those around you or otherwise creates an unhealthy or uncomfortable environment.

## Sustainability & Resiliency

The School of Architecture acknowledges a responsibility to educate its students and faculty on the subject of environmental consciousness and conservation. Students and faculty will encourage, teach and practice environmental responsibility and resiliency. Students understand that these practices and values should be carried into the profession in order to create a lasting impact on the industry and on society.

## Safety

School of Architecture facilities and equipment are heavily utilized by students and faculty alike. All inhabitants of the School of Architecture should make an effort to ensure that the activities, projects and tasks performed in the school do not endanger anyone. Students should always be officially trained before utilizing any potentially hazardous equipment, and safety precautions should be taken at all times.

# POLICY

Below are outlined the goals and regulations pertaining to the ongoing development and implementation of the Policy.

## Presentation & Discussion

To ensure the continual strengthening and improvement of a healthy culture within the School of Architecture, this document will be presented to students by students three times annually. It will be presented to the first year class upon their entrance into the design studio, to the third year class upon their entrance to Professional School, and in a student Town Hall at which issues pertaining to the maintenance of a positive and healthy culture will be discussed. The results of this discussion will be presented to the faculty with the objective of maintaining an open line of dialogue between students and faculty pertaining to issues facing the School. This document, or an abridged version of it approved by students and faculty, will also be included in the syllabus of each architecture or architectural engineering design studio.

## Amendment

To ensure a culture that remains strong and healthy as the education and profession of Architecture progress, this document will be reviewed by the Architecture Leadership Council and amended every four (4) years. This time period ensures that there will always be a group of students in the school who previously had the opportunity to be involved in the process.

## Enforcement

Infringements on this policy constitute a disregard for maintenance of a healthy culture, and will be reviewed by a committee of student representatives from each class. There will be one representative each, chosen by the students of the year level, from first and second year, and one representative each from third through fifth year architecture students and third through fifth year architectural engineering students. This committee will be advised by the Presidents of the student organizations listed below as well as a faculty member, chosen by the committee. The purpose of this committee will be to review potential infringements upon the Policy, determine the validity of the infringements, and decide on an appropriate course of action. Typical courses of action will include discussing infringements with and proposing resolutions to involved parties or reporting infringements to the University Student Conduct Committee. Any other course of action must be approved by the committee and school administration.

## Commitment

To represent the commitment of the students and faculty of the Oklahoma State University School of Architecture to the implementation and ongoing development of this document, it will be signed below by the Head of the School of Architecture, representing the faculty, and the Presidents of the School of Architecture Student Organizations listed below, representing the student body.