

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE DIVERSITY PLAN

This document received the unanimous support of our School of Architecture faculty at its final meeting of the 1999-2000 academic year on May 2, 2000. The Affirmative Action Committee received approval to begin implementing this plan during the 2000-2001 academic year.

Our 1999-2000 committee included the following:

Kathryn Anthony, Chair and Coordinator of Minority Recruitment
Ellen Colfax, student representative from Women in Architecture organization
Jeff Gordon
Amos Heath, student representative from the National Organization of Minority Architecture Students (NOMAS)
Kevin Hinders
Joy Malnar
Barbara Schaede
Rob Schultz, student representative from NOMAS
Rebecca Williamson

The School of Architecture is committed to creating a workplace in which all faculty, staff, and students are valued for their contributions to accomplishing the School's mission. The School of Architecture strives to create an equitable and inclusive environment for persons of all races, genders, levels of physical abilities, and sexual orientations. This Diversity Plan is designed to provide a mechanism for creating plans, measures, and milestones to ensure that establishing and maintaining diversity remain a high priority for the School.

The five major diversity principles are accountability, inclusiveness, evaluation, shared responsibility, and institutionalization. With these in mind, specific outcomes, objectives, and actions for achieving greater diversity in the School are described below.

1) Emphasizing Diversity in the School's Promotional Materials

Expected Outcome: Underrepresented architects will become a prominent part of the School's promotional materials.

Objectives: Identify the extent to which the School promotes women, persons of color, persons with physical disabilities, and gays and lesbians in its promotional materials.

Actions: The Office of Media and Communications, with the assistance of the School Affirmative Action Committee, will seek out underrepresented persons in architecture to feature in its media communications. For example, the School Web pages will include prominent female alumni and alumni of color. A separate section on diversity will be linked with relevant work from school projects such as:

- Illinois Action Research
- the Building Research Council's Lead Hazard Reduction program in low-income neighborhoods in Illinois, and HUD's Healthy Home pilot project in low-income housing in Chicago

- NOMAS and the annual NOMAS symposium
- Women in Architecture student organization
- Architecture/Women's Studies 324 course
- Other efforts to promote diversity

2) Recruiting a More Diverse Student Body

Expected Outcome: Increased public outreach in key arenas will increase the numbers of students of color in the School of Architecture.

Objectives: Representatives of the School will establish contact with key high schools with large populations of students of color, including those which submit student work to the annual Newhouse Foundation design competition, sponsored by the Chicago Architectural Foundation, in Chicago.

Actions: Invite students who win awards at the Newhouse Foundation design competition to visit our School of Architecture, and encourage them to apply. In addition, a team of faculty and minority students will visit Illinois high schools with high minority populations. The purpose of the visit will be to interest talented students in pursuing a career in architecture at the University of Illinois. If possible, a web-based presentation highlighting the School's efforts at promoting diversity will be shown at each school.

3) Retaining a More Diverse Student Body

Expected Outcome: The School will learn about the attrition rates of underrepresented groups (i.e. persons of color, women, persons with physical disabilities, and gays and lesbians) among its students. Based on this information, it will begin to outline steps to retain a more diverse body of faculty, staff and students.

Objectives: Identify where retention of underrepresented groups has been most problematic, and reverse that pattern.

Actions: On an annual basis, both the undergraduate and the graduate office will monitor the attrition rates of underrepresented students, and how these compare with the attrition rates of majority students. The staff at each of these offices, in consultation with the School Affirmative Action Committee, will conduct systematic exit interviews with a sample of underrepresented students who dropped out of the architecture major. Ascertain what, if anything, the School could have done differently so that they would have wanted to remain. Analyze this information and summarize in a report to our School administrators.

4) Retaining a More Diverse Faculty

Expected Outcome: The School will learn about the attrition rates of underrepresented groups (i.e. persons of color, women, persons with physical disabilities, and gays and lesbians) among its faculty, staff, and students. Based on this information, it will begin to outline steps to retain a more diverse body of faculty, staff and students.

Objectives: Identify where retention of underrepresented groups has been most problematic, and reverse that pattern.

Actions: Conduct systematic exit interviews with persons who have left the School during a specified time frame to find out why they left. Ascertain what, if anything, the School could have

done differently so that they would have wanted to remain. Analyze this information and summarize in a report to our School administrators.

5) Teaching a More Diverse Curriculum

Expected Outcome: The School will include the work of underrepresented individuals in the profession throughout its curriculum, and especially in its required courses.

Objectives: Increase the extent to which the contributions of women, persons of color, persons with physical disabilities, and gays and lesbians are included in our architecture course offerings.

Actions: The School Affirmative Action Committee will work with the Design Committee to suggest how information about underrepresented individuals can become an integral part of studio courses. For example, a design studio could focus especially on creating environments for persons with physical disabilities. In examining design precedents, students could be pointed to the work of women architects and architects of color.

6) Stressing Diversity in the School's Extracurricular Activities

Expected Outcome: Underrepresented architects will become a prominent part of the School's extracurricular activities.

Objectives: Identify the extent to which the School has invited women, persons of color, persons with physical disabilities, and gays and lesbians to participate in such School events as the Plym professorship, the School lecture series, on-campus gallery exhibitions, I Space exhibitions, brown bag talks, alumni gatherings, its Advisory Board, etc.

Actions: The School Lectures, Gallery and I Space Committees, with the assistance of the School Affirmative Action Committee, will seek out underrepresented persons in architecture to participate in each of these events in upcoming academic years. For example, an exhibit and lecture featuring the work of U of I School of Architecture women alumni could be planned for the month of March, Women's History month. Similarly, an exhibit and lecture of U of I School of Architecture African-American alumni could be offered during February, African-American History month.

7) Increasing Diversity among Design Reviewers

Expected Outcome: Underrepresented architects will become a prominent part of the School's student evaluation process.

Objectives: Identify the extent to which the School has invited women, persons of color, persons with physical disabilities, and gays and lesbians to participate in student design reviews and thesis reviews.

Actions: The Design Committee and the Design Thesis faculty, with the assistance of the School Affirmative Action Committee, will actively seek out underrepresented persons in architecture to participate in design and thesis reviews in upcoming academic years. Establish a system whereby Chicago Women in Architecture and the Illinois Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects can involve its members in our School's design reviews.

8) Soliciting Awards for Underrepresented Students

Expected Outcome: The School of Architecture will substantially augment its present student awards program with a series of awards specifically targeted to underrepresented students. These will be awarded publicly at the Annual Architecture Awards Banquet.

Objectives: Identify the extent to which the School has offered awards programs targeted to underrepresented students.

Actions: Together with the Associate Director of Development, identify potential alumni, corporate sponsors, and professional organizations to donate awards aimed at underrepresented students. Among the organizations that could be targeted are Chicago Women in Architecture and the Illinois National Organization of Minority Architects. If such awards are already in place, invite representatives from such organizations to participate in the Annual Architecture Awards Banquet.

9) Mainstreaming "Fringe" Events into the School

Expected Outcome: The annual National Organization of Minority Architecture Students (NOMAS) symposium will become a centerpiece of the School's activities.

Objectives: Building upon the success of this year's NOMAS symposium, turn this into a School-wide event. Publicize it widely in School promotional materials.

Actions: Consider different scheduling options for the NOMAS symposium, including offering this event mid-week when other classes are not in session, canceling afternoon studio courses, or making the symposium part of a course assignment in order to boost attendance and participation.