

ACADEMIC CULTURE AGREEMENT

OVERVIEW

The Architecture Program (hereafter referred to as the program) at the University of Maryland School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation has established the Academic Culture Agreement as an accord between the students, faculty, and administration to promote and maintain a positive, supportive, and academically prosperous environment. A healthy studio and academic culture empowers its students with creativity, confidence, and problem solving skills so they may innovate with today's knowledge to address tomorrow's challenges. Therefore, the program's community is dedicated to upholding the values of Communication & Collaboration, Wellbeing & Balance, Diversity & Respect, and Constructive Evaluation & Instruction. The intention of the Academic Culture Agreement is to dissuade all participants from adopting chronically unhealthy sleeping patterns in order to complete studio, classwork, or other work is not a tolerated facet of this school and will not be encouraged or praised. Together, in pursuit of academic excellence we are committed to uplifting and continually improving the program and our community. The Academic Culture Agreement is a living document which will be reviewed and edited annually to reflect the program's continuous development and growth as a community.

VALUES

1. Communication & Collaboration

- i. Students are encouraged to build a culture of excellence through generosity, shared-knowledge, and collaboration in conjunction with healthy competition that encourages outside-of-the-box thinking.
- ii. Students will reach out to faculty members when conflicts occur between courses and coursework. All parties will work in good faith to resolve unreasonable conflicts.
- iii. Faculty will facilitate and guide healthy debate and discussion during class time. Students will be open-minded about criticism and engage in healthy discussion and debate. Both will communicate issues and concerns as they arise.
- iv. In support of a productive and well-managed studio/classroom environment, faculty will communicate goals, expectations, and deadlines of the course at the beginning of the semester and as they change throughout the course. They will provide documentation of schedule for classes at the beginning of the semester and be timely in their grading and feedback. Faculty will strive to collaborate with other courses—studio and non-studio—to create an intertwined, interdisciplinary and encompassing learning experience, where appropriate.
- v. The program is composed of students and faculty hold a wide-range of perspectives, come from diverse backgrounds, and are at a variety of stages in their academic/professional development. Faculty and students will exhibit respect for the rich variety of viewpoints, and faculty will include multiple voices in discussions and activities inside the classroom and beyond it.
- vi. The administration will be responsible for communicating the tenets of the Academic Culture Agreement to students and faculty at the beginning of every semester.
- vii. Faculty and administration will communicate and collaborate proactively to support a fair and transparent learning environment.

2. Well-being & Balance

- i. The program will create an atmosphere which fosters creativity, positivity, and empathy among its community members. Time management will be taught and exemplified for students early in their curriculum with the intent to develop responsible habits.
- ii. The program's community supports a balance between academic, work, and personal life—emphasizing mental wellness, sleep, and self-care to support everyone's best efforts.
- iii. The program recognizes the diverse range of obligations that make an education possible and will not expect students, faculty, or administration to complete planning or schoolwork as if they have no other (familial, financial, etc.) obligations.
- iv. The program supports and encourages a well-rounded enrichment of different course types, extracurricular activities, and exposure to diverse career opportunities.
- v. Adopting chronically unhealthy sleeping patterns in order to complete studio, classwork, or other work is not a tolerated facet of this school and will not be encouraged or praised.
- vi. Workload expectations of students and faculty will be well-communicated, realistic, and will prioritize health and wellbeing for rigor. Faculty will recognize the intense demands of time, money, and concentration from the students that architecture education requires. Students will recognize the demands of time, responsibilities, and efforts from the faculty and administration that the operating the program requires. Everyone will respond with empathy and solutions when challenges arise.
- vii. The Administration will advocate for the faculty and students with the means to fulfill their responsibilities. They will provide and maintain a healthy, safe, and accessible environment. They will ensure that physical spaces meet or exceed ADA standards, including accessibility to classrooms, restrooms, and studio spaces. They will maintain the condition of the building and physical resources.

3. Diversity & Respect

- i. The program values and respects multiple perspectives of gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc. in its community members, in its teachings, and in its academic discourse. Every member of the community will acknowledge and respect the differences in values, background, and interests of other students, faculty, and administration.
- ii. The program recognizes the importance of encouraging a diverse range of career opportunities post-graduation, and will endeavor to reflect that in curricular instruction.
- iii. Students will operate in an atmosphere of solidarity, shared effort, and mutual support. They are expected to be understanding and supportive of the realities their peers may be facing.
- iv. The faculty and administration will lead by example in upholding these values of respect and professionalism as well as the others listed in this document.
- v. Students, faculty, and administration will respect each other's property and space and will strive to keep common areas clean and functional for all. Studio space is a privilege and resource for students to use outside of class time, and they should be respectful of others working in the space.

4. Constructive Evaluation & Instruction

- i. The measurement of student performance transcends letter grading. Public review of work is a means of constructive engagement and discourse to be held in respectful dialogues of debate and discussion. Such discussions will never be critical of the person, but always be directed to the work as it stands.
- ii. Students will be evaluated and be given feedback according to clearly defined criteria which advances their skills in clarity of communication. For example, in design studios this includes

creating tangible results from conceptual solutions to a posed problem or condition and embracing design as an opportunity to affect positive change. In non-studio courses, this includes writing assignments, research papers, and other forms of verbal expression. Faculty and administration will support creativity and exploration of new ideas across the curriculum.

- iii. Faculty will provide students with the academic support and individual feedback needed to promote students' continuous learning, progress, and improvement. During synchronous feedback, faculty and students will work collaboratively to advance progress and to support critical engagement in the learning process. Interactions and evaluations will be guided by fairness, inclusivity, and an awareness of bias. Faculty will provide each student with academic support and individual attention as appropriate. They will devote equal time for providing feedback and help every student progress their work forward. They will provide engaging and up-to-date academic information in their courses. They will build off of their predecessors resources with their own knowledge and experience when possible.
- iv. Faculty will recognize that students benefit the most from a variety of academic activities and strive to diversify the learning experience with field trips, collaborative activities, guest lectures, etc. Faculty will build off of their predecessors resources with their own knowledge and experience when possible.
- v. The Administration will manage resources to provide as many opportunities as possible for scholarships and education abroad.
- vi. Students, faculty, and administration will respect class time, each other's time, and strive to complete tasks in a timely manner. Students and faculty will come prepared to class, meetings, and other tasks, and be ready to participate in academic discourse.
- vii. Students, faculty, and administration can all be expected to put in their best efforts in their academics and work. Assignments will be given enough time to be completed based on a time management standard which centers on wellness.
- viii. The Students, Faculty, and Administration will support a challenging and diverse curriculum (lectures, gallery events, field trips, etc).

EXECUTION & IMPLEMENTATION

Policy Review

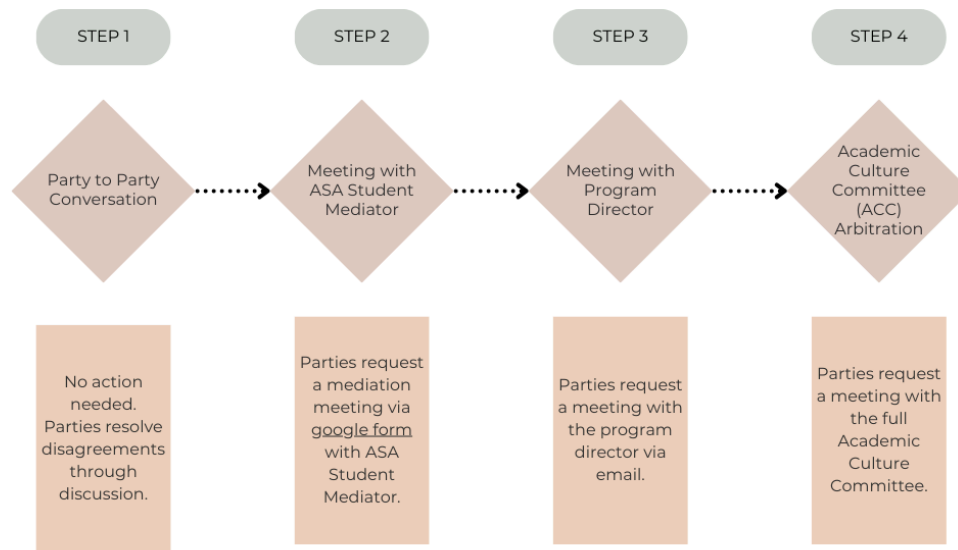
The explicit goal of the Academic Culture Agreement is to support a positive academic and work environment within the Architecture Program Community. This goal requires the commitment of the school administration, faculty, and students. The Academic Culture Agreement must be reviewed annually by the Academic Culture Committee. This review will ensure that the policy reflects the school's continuous development and that all existing values are being upheld.

The Architecture Program Plan of Organization states that the Director shall appoint the members of the Academic Culture Committee. It will be composed of no more than three Faculty members and no more than three Student representatives (at least one undergraduate and one graduate) to serve one-year renewable appointments. The Director shall designate two chairpersons, one faculty and one student, from the committee to co-chair the Academic Culture Committee. The Architecture Student Assembly (ASA) Ombuds officers (graduate and undergraduate) and one faculty representative from the Architecture Program Curriculum Committee (APCC) shall be ex-officio members of the Academic Culture Committee. The committee shall report its actions to the Director and Assembly.

The Academic Culture Committee shall be responsible to:

- A. Meet once per academic year to review the Academic Culture Agreement (ACA), act to serve the Policy Implementation conditions, and modify the ACA to reflect the shared aspirations of the students and faculty of the Architecture Program.
- B. Meet at the request of students, faculty or administration to review or discuss the ACA. Requests to review the ACA shall be granted within one month.
- C. Hold one Town Hall Meeting per academic year to solicit ideas and feedback from students and faculty.

Process for Disagreement Resolution



If any party (student, faculty, admin) feels that another party is not operating in accordance with the Academic Culture Agreement and the Values set forth within this document they have the right and opportunity to raise their concerns with the necessary parties in order to resolve the issue.

Step 1: Party to Party Conversation:

No action needed. Parties may resolve disagreements as they normally would. If the nature of the disagreement does not allow for party to party discussion, parties may pursue Step 2 immediately.

Step 2: Meeting with ASA Student Mediator

If Step 1 does not resolve the disagreement, parties are entitled to request a mediation meeting with a program appointed ASA (Architecture Student Assembly) student representative. Student mediators are impartial and the information disclosed is confidential to the parties involved, unless information is disclosed that must be reported per University guidelines. Requests for meetings shall be submitted through the form below, and are monitored by the student mediator.

<https://forms.gle/gxNnEtTbtXmJSEpf6>

The intent of mediation meetings is that all parties are present in order to arrive at a resolution in a respectful manner consistent with the values of this document. However, individual parties may meet with the ASA Student Mediator if more appropriate for the context of the disagreement.

The outcomes of this meeting can include: 1) advice on how parties may reach a resolution 2) a follow up meeting with all parties involved in order to reach a resolution, or 3) a recommendation to meet with the program director if a resolution is not reached.

Meetings with ASA Student Mediators are informal, and there is no record of the meeting beyond contact with the ASA student. If issues arise in discussion that are beyond the boundaries of the Academic Culture Agreement, the ASA Student may consult with the Director of Student Services for advice on how to continue.

Step 3: Meeting with Program Director

If Step 2 does not resolve the disagreement, parties are entitled to request a meeting with the program

director, directly via email. The email subject shall contain "Academic Culture Agreement" in order to indicate the specificity of the request. The Program Director shall use their discretion to determine if Steps 1 and 2 have taken place, and may recommend these steps occur first if that has not occurred. The Program Director's proposed resolution is not binding, and parties may decide to proceed with Step 4.

Step 4: Academic Culture Committee (ACC) Arbitration

If Step 3 does not resolve the disagreement, parties are entitled to request a meeting of the full Academic Culture Committee. The ACC will set a time within two weeks of the request, and assess the information provided in the previous steps. The ACC will hear both parties explain their point of view on the issue(s) raised by the Arbitration Request individually and bring the parties together only after the ACC has completed their recommendation. The committee recommendation is presented verbally at the arbitration session and serves as a guide for both parties to clarify and/or resolve the issue(s) at hand. Once the ACC convenes to hear the issue from all involved parties, they have one week to complete an arbitration report.

Resources

If at any point during this process a party feels that the issue goes beyond the boundaries of the Academic Culture Agreement, they are encouraged to utilize University resources.

University Confidential Resources:

- <https://ocrsm.umd.edu/campus-confidential-resources>

University Reporting Resources:

- Undergraduate Reporting Options can be found [here](#).
- Graduate School Reporting Options can be found [here](#).
- Kristen Stack (kstack@umd.edu), MAPP+D Title IX Liaison [QCRSM Information](#).