To: The Office of University Community

30 January 2019

Re: Overview of diversity and inclusivity practices with respect to faculty, staff and students

I offer an overview of our practices of diversity and inclusivity with respect to faculty, staff and students here at the Christopher C. Gibbs College of Architecture (GCA), in terms of goals, strategies, action plans, activities and programs. Creating spaces and places of inclusion is at the core of what we do in our professions of planning, design, and construction. We recognize that there is more that can be done; and we look forward to partnering with the Office of University Community in the coming months to accomplish our shared goals.

Currently, the GCA does not have the resources to appoint a dedicated diversity coordinator. Instead, our Diversity and Inclusion Strategies are intentionally considered, developed, reviewed and implemented annually by a team of our Deans, Program Directors, and one of our two Academic Advisors. In total, eight members of the GCA faculty and staff shape the college’s strategies regarding diversity and inclusion. Examples of recent GCA Diversity and Inclusion Strategies include student and faculty recruiting initiatives, community engagement programs, our Summer Academy program for socio-economically disadvantaged students, travel study programs supporting out-of-culture experiences for our students, and a dedicated web page stating our commitment to diversity and inclusion, along with a list of resources to this effect.

I sincerely hope the attached provides a helpful overview of our resource allocations that support diversity and inclusion among our faculty, staff, and students, as well as those which promote these core values in the communities across Oklahoma and the globe that we serve.

Sincerely,

Hans E. Butzer, Architect, AIA, AK NW, LEED AP
Dean and A. Blaine Imel, Jr. Professor
Mabrey Presidential Professor of Architecture and Urban Design

Attachments: Highlights of College-wide and Program-specific efforts
College-Wide Efforts (Highlights)

Strategic Planning

A key goal within our current strategic plan is to “Foster an environment of inclusion, diversity, and opportunity.” In support of this goal, we aim to implement training programs that foster diversity and inclusion and to recruit and retain a more diverse student body and faculty. In support of this, the GCA offered in-house Ally Training, open to all staff and faculty. Moving forward, we plan to assess the needs of underrepresented groups in our college to offer resources that best support them. Going forward, the college will reference official demographic reports on an ongoing basis to inform recruiting and retention efforts. We have pulled the available reports from the past nine years as a starting point.

Communication

The Gibbs College of Architecture has drafted a formal statement of its commitment to diversity and inclusion, as well as a comprehensive list of on-campus resources supporting this commitment. This statement is available on our website at https://architecture.ou.edu/diversity-inclusion/.

Recruiting

Our primary strategy to build a more diverse student experience is to support the initiatives of the Office of Admissions and Recruitment (OAR). The College supports the OAR events by hosting information sessions and tables during recruiting events. We also allow OAR to host events in the Buskuhl Gallery or other classroom spaces as the schedule allows.

In addition to OAR events, we host information tables at events, including Camp Crimson sessions, the Tomas Rivera Education Empowerment conference, the 2BanArchitect (Dallas, TX, American Institute of Architects high school event), Women in Engineering and the Oklahoma Technology Student Association state conference. Through these events, we aim to reach a diverse audience of prospective students.

Travel Study

Over the past several years, the GCA has been very intentional about weaving travel study experiences throughout our curricula as a means of preparing students to sensitively engage a wide range of perspectives. Today, the GCA ranks second among colleges on campus in terms of the percentage of its students graduating with international travel study experience.

Examples of investments the GCA has made in support of student travel study experiences include:

- Over $20,000 annually expended on field trips that help students experience different cultures and communities across the American Midwest,
- Over $12,500 annually to support international student travel study awards,
- Over $15,000 annually invested in quality instruction for students travelling internationally.
Program-Specific Efforts (Highlights)

On the following pages, you will find highlights of program-specific efforts in our Architecture, Construction Science, Environmental Design, Interior Design, Landscape Architecture, Regional and City Planning and Urban Design programs.

Architecture

Curriculum

- Methods I, an introductory level freshman course includes lesson plans and activities related to implicit bias
- All three architectural history lecture courses aim to be inclusive by covering a broad range of Western and non-Western historical sites and buildings
- Architectural Theory and Criticism includes readings and discussion from diverse perspectives including feminism and postcolonial studies
- We are currently considering how we might include materials from the Standing Rock syllabus
- Students travel to a broad range of sites and cities including Chicago, Denver, Kansas City, Gulu, Uganda and Rome
- Classes often do service learning studio projects such as a collaboration with the OU Department of African and African American Studies and BlackSpace Oklahoma

Faculty Development

- Faculty have read and discussed Claude Steele’s scholarship on stereotype threat
- We are planning a faculty meeting session to learn about implicit bias
- The Division Director is currently taking part in an outreach initiative led by the University of Michigan, working with architecture programs across the country to develop more robust means of creating inclusive learning environments in architecture schools
Construction Science (CNS)

Curriculum

Over 40 students from the Haskell and Irene Lemon Division of Construction Science helped build two affordable housing duplexes in Norman, Oklahoma. Students built one of the project’s duplexes, which was modeled after an identical duplex built by contractors. Both buildings are ADA-compliant and are under the ownership of the Norman Housing Authority.

Programs in Place

Starting in Fall 2018, CNS hosted monthly “women in construction” luncheons with members of the NAWIC (National Association of Women in Construction). (Participants shown below.)

Research

CNS faculty recently are investigating diversity in electrical construction as well as gender perceptions of construction education (link).
Environmental Design

Curriculum

- Curriculum includes discussion of ways that institutions have historically worked through the built environment to exclude or marginalize groups.
- Classrooms feature guest speakers who are women and minorities in a range of professional roles.
- Classrooms frequently make site visits to underserved areas to learn about ongoing efforts including historic preservation, redevelopment, and affordable housing.
- Gibbs College of Architecture travel study programs are an option to meet degree requirements.

Policies/Practices

- All faculty are LGBTQ Allies through the Gender + Equality Center.
  - Faculty and student body includes members of LGBT community.
- The programs encourage international students.
  - 75% of current IQC graduate assistants are international students.
  - 2 students have been part of UWC Scholars Program.

Activities/Programs

- IQC and EnD programs create community engagement and service learning opportunities in a range of towns, regularly including rural communities and underserved urban areas.
- Activities centered around the concept of placemaking are rooted in the idea that the role of a planning or design professional is to convene and listen to local people to understand culture, assets, and preferences that guide the process throughout.

Case Study: Exploring Racial Bias in Real Estate and Finance

In a 2018 course, environmental design students compared historical perspectives on racial bias in real estate and finance with first-hand stories from current practice, from the bank to the construction site.

Through readings and classroom lectures, students learned about historical institutional practices such as redlining and urban renewal that disadvantaged poor and minority households throughout the 20th Century. A commercial lender spoke to the class about how decision-making bodies at financial institutions continue to overrepresent older, white, male individuals. This pattern of decision-makers representing a narrow band of the perspectives can continue disproportionate impacts on race and socioeconomic status. Finally, students visited a construction site in a historically redlined area impacted by urban renewal. The developers on site, who are African American and women, shared how even in the process of this 2018 housing project, they faced hurdles in securing financing due in large part to the ongoing bias against the geographic area that coincides with high rates of black population and lower-income populations.
Interior Design

Programs

The “Collaborate, Create, Construct: Innovation Shaping the Built Environment 2018 Summer Academy” funded through a grant from the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, as well as previous years of this summer program, has had a goal of targeting students from within the State of Oklahoma that are first-generation college students, minority and underrepresented students and students with financial limitations. OU Precollegiate Programs has helped us target specific high-schools within the state with students that fit these profiles to recruit to apply to the summer program. Student applicants/participants are not limited to this group of students though. Many other schools across the state receive the information about the programs and it is also promoted on the OU Precollegiate Programs website with all other summer programs offered by OU. (Campers shown in the below image.)

Resources

Unfortunately, the OK State Regents cut all funding for summer academies last year and grant funding is no longer available for these programs. Thus, we won’t be offering the program this summer. Last year the grant that we had been awarded was cut by more than half and we were only able to offer a day camp rather than the overnight camp we have had in years past. This greatly impacted the students we were able to have participate. We have offered the program for the past 9 years – each year with the same goal of targeting these types of students. Typically, we have approximately 30 students participate and study and live here on campus for one week. They have hands-on learning activities and projects applying math and science to the study of the built environment disciplines of architecture, interior design and construction. Activities allow the student to expand their skills of problem solving, critical thinking, decision making and team work, while emphasizing creativity.
Landscape Architecture (LA)

Strategic Visioning

Three of the five “Bold Steps” in the LA strategic visioning plan include diversity, inclusion and equity issues:

1. Organize and Develop Curriculum Content: This Bold Step moved us to the creation of our 2-year non-accredited MLA focused on international students.
2. Utilize the Student Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects for Leadership Among Peers
3. Design a Comprehensive Approach to Service/Outreach

Recruiting

The OU Master of Landscape Architecture recruiting plan is also known as the one-third, one-third, one-third plan. Our goal in recruiting students to the OU MLA program is to get one-third of our student body to be from Oklahoma, one-third from the US (outside of OK), and one-third international. Currently (Spring 2019), 80% of the OU MLA students are from diverse and underrepresented populations. (Pictured below: Two of our award-winning students.)

Activities/Programs

LA faculty routinely conduct studio projects that are service-learning projects

- The Student Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects has typically done community projects that revolve around issues of diversity, inclusion and equity

Resources in Place

- The best resources that LA currently has to meet these goals is the funding from the Provost’s Office and the Graduate College to provide GA positions, stipends, and tuition waivers to incoming OU MLA students. This allows us to continue our one-third, one-third, one-third recruiting plan.
- 80% of OU MLA students are from diverse and underrepresented populations.
Regional and City Planning (RCPL)

Faculty

RCPL faculty currently belong to the following Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) Committees and other groups:

- Committee on Diversity (Warnken), which annually holds a pre-doctoral workshop for underrepresented persons of color seeking to increase these students pursuing PhDs.
- Global Planning Educators Interest Group (Harris)
- Persons of Color Interest Group (Warnken, Lee)
- Presidential Committee developing a values statement for ACSP, which is largely about diversity and inclusion issues in both academic and professional planning circles.
- American Planning Association member of the Planning and Black Community Division of the APA (Warnken)
- Our faculty hire in 2018 explicitly targeted “underrepresented” applicants.

Faculty Research

Faculty research in the last few years has dealt with minority homeownership issues, food systems access in low-income and minority communities, working with marginalized populations in Africa and NE OKC, as well as studying change in neighborhoods that housed local chapters of the Black Panther Party.

Coursework

RCPL faculty commit to working with (training people to work with) marginalized groups in the Uganda studios (RCPL 5525) and the creation of a new course (RCPL 5970 currently) Planning with Diverse Communities.
In addition, Food systems planning (RCPL 4293/5293) and Community Development (RCPL 5723) regularly do work with marginalized communities.

RCPL 5013: History and Theory, RCPL 5033: Sociology of Housing and the previously mentioned Planning with Diverse Communities have explicit components about race, class and inequities in urban America.

Students

RCPL commits to recruiting and retaining underrepresented students. This commitment is intended to bolster the educational experience of all students, meet professional advisory board guidelines on enrollment, and exercise the program’s responsibility to American Institute of Certified Planners’ Code of Ethics and Aspirational Principles.

RCPL targets 50% of our available graduate assistantships and scholarships to underrepresented groups and up to 67% of resources when you include international students. We have made a commitment to meet with student groups (namely AIAS, BSA, HASA, Latinos without Borders and a few others) and invite them to have meetings in Gould Hall.
Urban Design

Policy Statement
The Urban Design program regularly carries out community-engaged projects that serve underrepresented groups. It also has the following policy in place:

“The Urban Design Studio actively recruits diverse students and faculty based on a policy of fairness and equal practices regarding race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, age, religion, political beliefs, disability or status as a veteran. Our students and faculty are given full consideration for admission, employment, promotions and participation in all programs.”