

The New Jersey School of Architecture Learning and Teaching Culture Policy

INTRODUCTION

This document focuses on the New Jersey School of Architecture. We recognize the vital role of the School of Art + Design in creating and maintaining a progressive learning culture at Hillier College. As we receive more feedback from students and faculty in the School of Art + Design we will edit and expand the document to reflect the full breadth of learning communities in the Hillier College of Architecture and Design.

This Learning & Teaching Culture Policy (LTCP) is a living document, maintained by a Committee of students, faculty, and administrators, and designed to guide our learning community toward a productive, ethical, and healthy environment for students and faculty. This goal can only be achieved by ardently working together, both as a team and as committed members of this school. By nature of the institution and the object of our studies, we are all always learning and practicing how to operate and function to the best of our abilities.

In addition to the overarching values and ethics of the university, the New Jersey School of Architecture (NJSoA) is dedicated to: optimism, diversity and solidarity, professional conduct, constructive evaluations and instruction, collaborative community, health and wellbeing, time management and school-life-work balance, respectful stewardship and space management, and well-rounded enrichment. The pedagogy of architecture and design is as complex as it is rewarding, and as dynamically evolving as the people who learn and teach it. That understanding is the core of this document.

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VALUES & ETHICS

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A. Optimism

- i. Students and faculty will 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.
- ii. The NJSoA will provide an atmosphere of encouragement that fosters creativity, risk-taking, and open-mindedness towards the design process.
- iii. Students and faculty will display empathy in discussion and will be kind to their community members while respecting academic freedom.

B. Diversity & Solidarity

- i. The NJSoA recognizes the importance of diversity in and among architecture, and demands its own cultivation of an inclusive culture in the words we speak, the actions we take, the history we teach, the behaviors we model, and the buildings we design. This school will provide opportunities and safe spaces to have those open discussions.
- ii. This school respects the backgrounds (which include any combination of but not limited to: culture, race, ethnicity, religion, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, socioeconomic background, identity) of its students, and is open to accommodations through channels that are in accordance with University policies.
- iii. Students who face financial barriers to their capacity to succeed in class will be provided with appropriate provisions and resources.
- iv. All students will operate in an atmosphere of solidarity, shared effort, and mutual support. This entails meeting expectations for team projects, helping each other learn new skills, and sharing resources. Students are expected to be understanding and supportive of the realities their peers may be facing. A culture of generosity will help ensure the personal growth and collective success of the class.

- v. Similar to the ongoing practice of architecture, this school will always seek to understand and learn more about the evolving stresses of its learning community, and how this institution can ease or solve them. Everyone's right to grow in their learning will be respected.
- vi. This school recognizes the importance of encouraging a diverse range of post-graduation career opportunities and will endeavor to reflect that in curricular instruction.

C. Professional Conduct

- i. Students and faculty will maintain a professional manner of respect among their peers and with each other. Open dialogue and respect for others' identities, property, and personal well-being are always expected.
- ii. In order to maintain a positive work-life balance, productivity and professional readiness and workload expectations of students and faculty will be well-communicated and realistic, and will prioritize health and wellbeing over rigor.
- iii. University-sanctioned breaks and holidays will be honored and designated as time for students and faculty to rest.
- iv. When an absence occurs, the student will contact their critic beforehand on the matter of their absence. The critic will use judgment to determine if the absence is excused or unexcused in line with University Policy.
- v. Students and faculty will always respect each others' time and strive to complete tasks in a timely manner. Students will arrive to class on time, be prepared, and turn in projects before allotted and reasonable deadlines. Faculty will also arrive to class on time and provide information and feedback in a timely manner with respect to the allotted class time.
- vi. Students and faculty will be expected to be fully prepared ahead of time for classes, meetings, projects, and other tasks at the discretion of the critic or professor. Students and faculty will conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful to the time of other sections and class members that is professionally acceptable and acknowledged.
- vii. 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.
- viii. If a student is assigned a critic they already had, the student can contact their advisor to request a change. If the student wishes to switch sections, this request should be made immediately.

D. Constructive Evaluations & Instruction

- i. All members of the community will be free and encouraged to express their ideas, goals, and influences in whatever positive manner they see fit, and will receive constructive feedback on their process and methodology.
- ii. Faculty are expected to be reachable and responsive at pre-designated hours outside of studio-time through pre-established forms of communication.
- iii. Formal or informal reviews or critiques given by instructors or guest jurors will always be discussion-oriented; 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 the NJSoA 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 be engaged with the entire review. Faculty will facilitate opportunity and motivation for all students to remain engaged in all reviews.
- iv. 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. All will operate with the understanding that everyone is doing their best to abide by the policies set forth in this document.
- v. Through all available means of communication (syllabi, class meetings, section meetings, email, and other messages, etc.), students can expect the 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 specifics that are out of the control of the student. Faculty can expect students to receive, read, and retain these messages when they are sent.
- vi. The entire learning community at this school understands the difficulty of evaluating qualitative discipline with quantitative grading. To ensure fairness in grading, evaluations will follow a pre-established rubric made by each section's critic. The section shall be notified of the rubric at the beginning of the semester.
- vii. Grading reviews will be done in a timely manner and grade check-ins will be done quarterly throughout the semester.
- viii. If the students of a core studio believe that unfairness has occurred in grading in one or more sections and mass grading is desired, it can be requested by the students to their respective coordinator. Mass grading will involve all critics of a year's core studio meeting and discussing the grades of all students' projects and coming to a mutual agreement on grades. This process has the potential to lower, raise or not affect a given student's grade.
- ix. If students feel the deliverables interpreted by the critic are unmanageable, this

should be communicated with the critic or the contacts below. Students are encouraged to discuss grades with their critic (or coordinator/administrator if needed), and the reasoning for their marks. The faculty will do its best to be fair and evaluate work without bias.

E. Collaborative Community

- i. This school recognizes the power of the collaborative design process and encourages the creation of allocated time and space for students and faculty to work together in order to better prepare them for professional work and the global issues they encounter.
- ii. This school has a zero-tolerance bullying/harassment policy (www.njit.edu/dos/reporting). This program will not tolerate any kind of physical or emotional bullying by creating overly competitive learning environments or situations that weaken student-to-student relationships. Any behavior that resembles bullying will be addressed and punished per the University Guidelines. Anyone who would like to report an incident can refer to the student resources below and on the school website.
- iii. Students are responsible for embodying academic integrity and shall not participate in or instigate plagiarism among their classmates. Any behavior that resembles plagiarism will be addressed and punished per the University Guidelines.
- iv. Freedom of expression in art, architecture, and design are rights of all students and faculty so long as such expression does not offend or impede another individual's ability to express themselves.
- v. As part of a community, students will actively engage and take pride in their work. Students are encouraged and invited to share their successes with the rest of the school by showcasing in-process and completed work in designated spaces that are facilitated by the school.
- vi. All students will intend to meet expectations for group projects (these expectations will be evenly divided amongst the students by their respective critic) or collaborative discussions by helping each other learn new skills, and sharing resources. Both students and critics shall be flexible in timing but stringent with their expectations of repayment for group projects. Students are encouraged to always uplift rather than tear down other students.

F. Health & Wellbeing

- i. The complex decision-making inherent in architecture education demands the focus and concentration that can only come from effective time management, personal well-being, physical health, mental health, sufficient sleep, and good nutrition. The architecture administration encourages students to operate to the

best of their abilities, something that can only be accomplished with a healthy balance of work, rest, food, and sleep.

- ii. A reasonable number of absences for sickness or wellness-related reasons will be excused with reasonable advance notice. If there are repeated issues, at the discretion of the Critic/Instructor, the student will be referred to the Dean of Students. Students will make up missed work at the discretion of their professor.
- iii. This school provides assistance to those who are struggling with their health and wellbeing and who may need additional accommodations. Students and faculty are encouraged to take advantage of such resources. (www.njit.edu/care).

G. Time Management & School-Life-Work Balance

- i. Time management is a skill that will be taught and exemplified for students in their early curriculum, with the intent of developing responsible habits. Healthy time management allows for a reasonable schedule dedicated to class time, personal time, mental wellness, sleeping, and homework.
- ii. This school recognizes the familial and financial obligations of students and faculty and will respect a time management standard centered around wellness.
- iii. Every assignment will be given enough time to be completed and constructively evaluated by the critic and any guest critic(s).
- iv. Adopting chronically unhealthy sleep patterns in order to complete studio or classwork prevents mental health and is no longer a tolerated facet of this architecture school. Lack of sleep and other noticeably unhealthy time management practices of students or faculty are not encouraged and actively condemned.

H. Respectful Stewardship & Space Management

- i. All members of the NJSoA will respect the rights of others; this includes the property of other individuals, groups, and this school. Classrooms, studios, and other public amenities within the school are for the benefit of all and are expected to be treated with care.
- ii. This school will not knowingly endanger its students, faculty, administration, or the environment by requiring or perpetuating the use of hazardous or toxic materials. As designers, future architects, and stewards of the Earth, it is the responsibility of the school to recycle used materials and mitigate waste.
- iii. 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, cleaning over school breaks, heating, cooling, and appropriate ventilation & sunlight. All members of this school are expected to abide by safety measures and regulations that are instituted by the university.

- iv. It is the responsibility of every member of this school to avoid bringing further damage and wear to critical common resources.
- v. Vandalism and theft of property is not tolerated. Any instances of vandalism or theft should be reported to administration or Public Safety.

I. Well-Rounded Enrichment

- i. 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, this school will do its best to combine fundamental skills with contemporary tools in ways that prioritize students' success and retention of skills.
- ii. An education at NJSoA can lead to a diverse range of career opportunities, and such potential will be reflected in all curricular instruction.
- iii. This school recognizes that in accordance with a healthy school-work-life balance, this curriculum will facilitate enrichment in the education of its students in order to create an environment that matriculates well-rounded graduates.
- iv. Exposure to and preparation for professional opportunities through resources at this school will be included in the curriculum (i.e. firm tours, construction site visits, conferences, field trips, trips to New York City, etc.), with each critic sanctioning their own field trip(s) and the NJSoA sanctioning school-wide field trips during each semester.
- v. The school will utilize its resources to introduce students to the city of Newark and its long-standing history of arts and architecture through the exploration of exemplary works, institutions, and communities.
- vi. The school will encourage the student to be curious and passionate about architecture and its related fields through the various and diverse resources located at the New Jersey School of Architecture, i.e, the Barbara and Leonard Littman Architecture and Design Library, Laser Lab, Model Shop, Print Room, 3D Lab, and the Supply Shop. Additionally, students will be encouraged to explore courses outside of the New Jersey School of Architecture.
- vii. Student participation in extracurricular activities (i.e. student-run organizations, activities, interdisciplinary cohorts, volunteerism, etc.) that enhance and supplement an education and life experience will be encouraged and modeled by faculty and administration.

LEARNING & TEACHING CULTURE TASK FORCE (LTCTF)

As a frequently updated Learning & Teaching Culture Policy is required by the 2020 NAAB Conditions for Accreditation (PC7, page 2), the Committee will revisit this document as often as necessary in order to stay connected and attentive to our learning community. The LTCP is always available to the public via the school's website, email, physical distribution, and included in each studio's syllabus. This committee (a minimum of three students and three faculty members, as well as the Student Engagement Coordinator) will meet once every month to discuss any issues brought up through implementation(see below). In addition to this, over a school year 3 sections of this document will be reviewed and necessary revisions will be made. This will result in the full document being revised every 3 years.

This task force is also responsible for interpreting the document and considering grievances, suggestions, and discussions, and potentially advising in the event of greater violations. Complaints can be submitted to the Learning & Teaching Culture Task Force by emailing the Student Task Force Liaison.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Learning & Teaching Culture Task Force encourages continuous communication throughout the semester with critics, peer mentors, your peers, and faculty. If an issue arises where a student feels a critic, faculty member or another student is not following this policy, it should be communicated to that critic, faculty member or student in order to solve the issue directly. If the issue isn't resolved, the student should contact their Coordinator to solve the issue with them. If that doesn't resolve the issue, the student should go to the Task Force Liaison or Learning Culture Committee who will speak with the Director of the School of Architecture or other administrators to solve the issue.

Before the end of each semester, students and faculty will conduct a Town Hall Meeting to discuss issues that can be addressed in future drafts.

EXISTING POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Student Policies (www.njit.edu/dos/policies/index.php)

NJIT CARE (www.njit.edu/care/)

Title IX (www.njit.edu/titleix/)

C-CAPS (www.njit.edu/counseling/)

Report Concerns (www.njit.edu/dos/reporting)

Faculty Resources (www.njit.edu/provost/faculty-resources/)

Faculty Policies & Procedures (www.njit.edu/provost/faculty-resources/policies.php)

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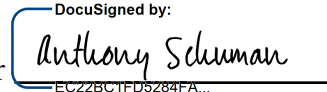
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