

1.1 LEARNING + TEACHING CULTURE POLICY

NC STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

Optimism | Professional Conduct | Constructive Evaluations and Instruction

Collaborative Community | Health and Wellbeing | Time Management and School-Life-Work Balance

Diversity and Solidarity | Respectful Stewardship and Space Management | Well-Rounded Enrichment

OVERVIEW

TEACHING + LEARNING CULTURE POLICY: PROCESS

The process of creating the Learning and Teaching Culture Policy (LTCP) at the NC State University School of Architecture has been a model of collaboration, involving students, faculty, and administrators at every stage. Central to this effort was the establishment of a new student advisory council, formed to provide a more effective and representative voice for the student body. This council played a crucial role in reviewing the previous Studio Culture Policies and utilizing precedent studies from other institutions to inform our revisions. Through open discussions, we examined various elements of our existing policies—identifying those that were outdated, recognizing parts that required adjustment, and affirming components that should remain. Faculty input was equally valued, resulting in a comprehensive review process that included multiple rounds of writing and editing to shape a LTCP that truly reflects our collective values and aspirations.

Our LTCP integrates the essential values outlined in the 2020 AIAS Learning and Teaching Culture Task Force report, which emphasize optimism, professional conduct, constructive evaluations, collaborative community, health and well-being, and diversity, among others. The policy is structured around key themes, including:

**Our Learning Environment,
Respectful, Supportive, and Productive Relationships,
Care for Our Spaces and One Another,
Health and Wellbeing, and
Student Enrichment Opportunities.**

Recognizing that the LTCP is a living document, we are committed to its ongoing assessment and refinement, ensuring it evolves with the needs of our community. We believe that this policy will serve as a guiding framework for fostering a stronger design community within the School of Architecture, promoting a welcoming and supportive environment where all members can thrive academically, personally, and professionally.

TEACHING + LEARNING CULTURE POLICY: IMPLEMENTATION

The following pages provide an annotated version of our Teaching + Learning Culture Policy and descriptions of our advocacy efforts and impact on the school and our community in the areas of:

**Wellness + Mental Health,
Community Engagement,
Leadership + Professional Development,
School Culture, and
Global Experience.**

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ANNOTATIONS

The School of Architecture Student Advisory Council and faculty have played major roles in creating this document through an iterative process:

- reviewing and assessing existing policies from our school and other schools;
- asking what we do well what we don't do well;
- asking what we should stop doing, what we can improve, and what we should start doing;
- writing new TLCP drafts and gathering feedback from faculty and the advisory council
- completing and ratifying a "final" draft that remains a living document

<https://www.aias.org/aias-learning-teaching-culture-policy-project-2020-summary/>



INTRODUCTION

The NC State University School of Architecture fosters a community of creativity, intellectual curiosity, mental and physical wellbeing, belonging, and personal growth within an atmosphere of mutual respect, belonging, trust, and optimism. The School of Architecture's Learning and Teaching Culture Policy Document (LTCP) outlines our collective values, aspirations, and expectations. This document is designed to meet requirements of the National Architecture Accreditation Board (NAAB) Conditions for Accreditation by establishing a written policy that defines and directs our school's teaching and learning environment. This is a living document. We acknowledge that it will need ongoing interpretation, and the school empowers students, faculty, staff, and administrators to provide feedback and to enact necessary changes to this policy on a regular basis.

In 2020, the AIAS Learning and Teaching Culture Task Force created a model LTCP with the following values:

Optimism

Professional Conduct

Constructive Evaluations and Instruction

Collaborative Community

Health and Wellbeing

Time Management and School-Life-Work Balance

Respectful Stewardship and Space Management

Well-Rounded Enrichment

Students, faculty, staff, and administrators within the School of Architecture affirm these values—along with the overarching values and ethics of NC State University—and have adopted them as a guide for this document.

OUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The School of Architecture's learning environment is a dynamic and shared place where students, faculty, staff, and visitors collaborate to foster experimentation, learning, and innovation. We engage in supportive conversations about design, forging strong bonds that enrich the educational experience. This vibrant environment encourages freedom of speech and expression, allowing creativity to flourish within a framework of mutual respect, care, empathy, and **Optimism**. We seek an understanding of architecture's history and traditions while also challenging established norms, promoting a critical dialogue that enhances our understanding and practice.

While our design studios are hubs of intense energy and hard work, they also serve as nurturing spaces for personal and professional growth, where challenges are embraced and failures are viewed as essential learning opportunities. Integrity is a core value that guides our interactions, ensuring that we approach our work with honesty and responsibility. Together, we celebrate thoughtful design and the joy of learning from one another, cultivating a culture of innovation, exploration, flexible mindsets, **Professional Conduct**, leadership, and ethical practice.

REVISED: 01.2026

RESPECTFUL, SUPPORTIVE, AND PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The relationships formed among students and faculty in the School of Architecture create a vibrant culture of energy and passion, providing valuable opportunities for growth and collaboration. It is essential that students and faculty respect each other's unique perspectives and offer constructive support, fostering an environment of trust where everyone can learn without fear of hostility or judgment. Discrimination of any kind is unacceptable, as we strive to create an welcoming community and a genuine sense of belonging for everyone. An individual must never suffer in the learning environments because of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or national origin. Respectful interactions between students and faculty are vital, as faculty bring expertise and dedication to the educational experience. Students bring energy and intellectual curiosity, deserving of enthusiastic and thoughtful mentorship from faculty.

Critical discourse is a hallmark of architectural education and the design process. Faculty endeavor to provide **Constructive Evaluations and Instruction** while helping students reach their individual goals. As we celebrate accomplishments, we recognize the motivational aspect of competition. It is essential, however, to not allow competition to overshadow camaraderie or become unhealthy, as we aim to grow together through mutual support and encouragement. Together, we cultivate a supportive atmosphere that celebrates individuality, encourages open dialogue, and embraces both challenges and successes in the learning journey.

CARE FOR OUR SPACES AND ONE ANOTHER

As we share our spaces with many fellow students, faculty, staff, and guests from the university and the broader academic and professional communities, it is essential to maintain a **Collaborative Community** environment that is accessible and welcoming to all. All areas of the studios and adjoining spaces must remain clear and passable for maintenance and housekeeping personnel, individuals with disabilities, and emergency responders. Students and faculty should report any building or equipment issues to College of Design Operations or IT staff. **Respectful Stewardship** and effective **Space Management** ensures that our classrooms, labs, studios, and public spaces are welcoming, clean, safe, and functional for all of the educational activities and public events that we host.

To uphold a productive and safe workspace, we must actively care for our built environment, furniture, and equipment, recognizing that stewardship is our collective responsibility. This means using volatile materials and processes—such as spray finishes, adhesives, and foam cutting—only in designated areas like the spray booths and the Materials Lab. Power cutting tools (e.g. saws or routers) are not permitted in the studio.

At the end of each semester, students must restore their workspaces to the condition they received them, allowing for normal wear and tear. In return, students can expect the college and university to maintain well-functioning studio and review spaces and equipment.

For personal safety and to prevent theft, please close all entry doors. Each student is responsible for their belongings and should take care to protect the property of others. Report any thefts to the School of Architecture and to Public Safety. Together, let's foster a culture of respect, responsibility, and care for the spaces and resources we share.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Student and faculty mental and physical health are equally important, and the School of Architecture is dedicated to fostering a community of wellbeing and ongoing discussions around this vital issue. To promote a supportive environment, students and faculty are encouraged to engage in open dialogue about mental and physical wellbeing, and to use resources provided by the school, college, and university.

The curriculum and our studio environments are intentionally rigorous, offering challenging assignments that contribute to students' academic and professional growth. As such students and faculty are encouraged to develop and maintain effective **Time Management** strategies that can achieve a reasonable and healthy **School-Life-Work Balance**. To ensure student success, instructors will clearly define assignments, expectations, and deadlines, providing adequate time for consistent feedback and completion. Students should make efforts to effectively manage their time among personal, professional, and academic responsibilities. University-sanctioned holidays and breaks—including our Wellness Days—will be honored and designated as time for students and faculty to rest.

The School of Architecture values the overall **Health and Wellbeing** of its students, encouraging them to allocate appropriate and reasonable time for work, rest, nutrition, and exercise. If mental or physical health issues arise, students and faculty are urged to seek appropriate care. Resources such as the College of Design embedded counselor, our Wellness Room (lactation, prayer/meditation, mental health), the university Counseling Center, and the Student Health Center are available for counseling services, time management guidance, and basic medical care. Together, we can create a healthy and supportive learning environment.

STUDENT ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES



The School of Architecture holds an uncompromising belief that good design can produce a healthy environment, an improved society, and a better life for all. We are concerned for the broad development of the individual student through academic and extracurricular pursuits. Architectural education prepares students for a diverse range of career opportunities, and this is reflected in our curriculum, programs, and events. The school provides the instruction and skills that students need to know in order to succeed in subsequent classes and post-graduate research, experimentation, fulfillment, or employment. The school endeavors to shape students into creative leaders and committed citizens.

The School of Architecture encourages students and faculty to engage in **Well-Rounded Enrichment** activities and opportunities that are offered in the college, university, and our community at-large. These may include our own SoA Student Advisory Council, student organizations, such as AIAS, NOMAS, Freedom by Design, and the Architecture Graduate Student Association. The school will provide exposure to and preparation for professional opportunities through the curriculum and professional development events and programs. The university offers intramural sports, service clubs, student government, and learning/living villages—among many other opportunities to develop leadership and community service skills along with healthy and productive lifestyles.

PROCESS

A frequently updated LTCP is required by the 2020 NAAB Conditions for Accreditation (PC7), and the school will revisit this document as often as necessary in to stay connected and attentive to our learning community. The LTCP is available to the public via the school's website, and will also be distributed to students, as well as discussed during convocation each year. This document will be reviewed and revised periodically by equally-empowered student representatives, faculty, administrators, and the school head. Concerns or complaints can be submitted by emailing and scheduling a meeting with the school head.

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