2021-2025 Strategic Plan

UNC Charlotte School of Architecture

Mission

The Mission of the School of Architecture is to promote excellence in architecture and urban design education, scholarship, and practice in an inclusive and collaborative environment.

Vision

To be a nationally recognized program known for linking academic excellence and access, preparing students to be entrepreneurial change agents, and expanding the disciplinary capacities and contributions of architecture in advancing social, technological, and environmental justice.

Strategic Plan

Goals listed in order of 2021 SoA Environmental Scan priorities: planet, people, progress

GOAL 1: Promote environmental justice and improve our use of physical resources. [planet]

Objective 1.1: Increase environmental literacy in our curriculum and professional development opportunities.

2021 SoA Environmental Scan Priority
  ● *The climate emergency (curriculum)*

Tactics + Timeline
  ● Develop and implement a faculty and staff environmental literacy training plan over a two-year period.
  ● Address both the social and technical implications of climate change (draw tangible connections between architecture, urban design, and biodiversity and non-human ecologies in required and elective courses).
  ● Integrate the content of building science courses and design studios so that both communicate to students the interdependence of design and technology.
  ● Engage climate change issues at multiple scales in curricula: integrate environmental literacy throughout curricula over a five-year period.

Measures
- % of syllabi including environmental literacy content
- Percent of faculty and staff who have completed environmental literacy training

Performance Targets
- Establish a curricular map outlining environmental learning objectives and literacies.
- By the end of a five-year period, all full-time faculty and staff will have had sustainable design training equivalent to introductory LEED coursework.

Objective 1.2: Transform our physical resources and improve material streams.

2021 SoA Environmental Scan Priorities
- *Upgrade environmental performance of facilities (facilities)*
- *Sustainable strategies for resource use (facilities)*
- *Studio desks and spatial layouts that accommodate new modes of teaching (facilities)*
- *Expand current facilities to accommodate growth (facilities)*

Tactics + Timeline
- Develop and implement an annual environmental impact audit within the next year.
- Establish net-zero carbon goals over a two-year period and track progress annually.
- Establish a resource stream monitoring program in the School, including material supplies and waste, and track material flows each semester.
- Develop a recommended list of environmentally responsible feedstock materials and supplies.
- Collaborate with FM to implement operational changes in facilities to reduce environmental impact.
- Develop a master plan for SoA growth and space occupation that includes projected changes.
- Develop a new studio furniture strategy that accommodates current space, technology, and environmental needs.

Measures
- Measure of resource utilization and waste production
- Master plan for growth and space occupation

Performance Targets
- Reduce the Storrs Hall dumpster volume by half over a five-year period.
- Create a sustainable master plan that accommodates planned enrollment growth.

Objective 1.3: Contribute toward city and regional environmental initiatives.

Tactics + Timeline
- Identify and catalog faculty environmental research with external collaborators in the next two years.
- Develop and enhance partnerships with the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, and related stakeholders focused on enhancing community resilience and green infrastructure.
- Contribute to the support and implementation of the Charlotte 2040 Plan.
- Develop sponsored studios on climate-focused issues.
- Plan a summit with City of Charlotte collaborators.
- Host a lecture series or symposium on a post-carbon, post-COVID built environment.

Measures
- Co-hosting environmental summit

Performance Targets
- Partner with local collaborators to host an environmentally focused summit, symposium, or lecture series within the next five years.

GOAL 2: Promote social justice and community health. [people]

Objective 2.1: Model diverse, inclusive, accessible, and antiracist practices in our curriculum, programming, and research.

2021 SoA Environmental Scan Priorities
- *Diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism (challenge/opportunity)*
- *Social justice, equity, and anti-racism (curriculum)*

Tactics + Timeline
- Review curricula for opportunities to increase representation and understanding of diverse designers, clients, and contexts and draw tangible connections between architecture, urban design, anti-racism, and social justice over the next three years.
- Aim for 100% of syllabi to include DEI statements.
- Aim for at least one SLO per degree program to address diversity or social justice.
- Establish learning outcomes in specific courses that address diversity and antiracism.
- Increase funding, personnel, spatial resources, and promotion of faculty research focused on social justice over the next five years.
- Address efforts toward social justice and diversity issues in faculty annual reviews.
- Ensure diverse representation in marketing and promotional materials shared with prospective students.
- Hold at least one training per year for faculty and staff on Disability, Title IX, and other DEI themes.
- Aim for 100% DEI training participation of faculty search committee members, school review committee members, graduate teaching assistants, and supervisors of graduate students.
- Conduct an intercultural competency survey.
- Require ongoing training on diversity, equity, and inclusion for search committees, administrators, graduate student supervisors, and all faculty and staff.

Measures
- % of elements in course syllabi that reflect diverse models
- Intercultural competency survey

Performance Targets
- 30% of course precedents, case studies, models shown or assigned to students to reflect diverse designers, clients, or contexts in three years' time.
- Implement, conduct, and assess the results of a School-wide intercultural competency survey.

Objective 2.2: Diversify our faculty, students, and staff.

Tactics + Timeline
- Establish aspirational personnel representation based on local or regional demographics.
- Increase targeted recruitment of faculty candidates of color.
- Increase targeted recruitment of staff candidates of color.
- Increase BIPOC part-time instructors.
- Aim for the student population to mirror North Carolina or U.S. demographics (40% BIPOC, 50% women).
- Aim for external studio review juries to mirror North Carolina demographics (40% BIPOC, 50% women).
- Aim for faculty and staff search long lists of candidates to mirror North Carolina demographics (40% BIPOC, 50% women).
- Aim for the annual lecture series to mirror North Carolina demographics (40% BIPOC, 50% women).
- Change or eliminate potential structural barriers—such as standardized tests or specific types of portfolios—in degree admissions processes.
- Increase transfer options through Community College articulation agreements.
- Increase scholarship opportunities targeting racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity of our student body.
- Increase DEI student scholarship opportunities.

Measures
- Demographic representation
- North Carolina architecture student transfer facilitation plan

Performance Targets
- Aim for faculty composition (full-time + part-time instructors) to mirror U.S. demographics (40% BIPOC including MENA, 50% women) in five years' time.
- Develop a statewide architecture student transfer facilitation plan in partnership with NC State University and UNC system in five years' time.

Objective 2.3: Foster Health and Belonging.

Tactics + Timeline
- Assess the mental health of our School community through an annual survey.
- Institute a faculty mentorship program.
- Work with student organizations to develop a student peer mentorship program.
- Reduce building access hours and implement a "pencils down" program to encourage healthy work and sleep habits.
- Rewrite our culture statement collaboratively with students, faculty, and staff.
- Support and promote student organizations.
- Develop a harassment, microaggression, and bias incident identification system to support women, BIPOC, and LGBTQ.
- Hold community days in which students, faculty, and staff volunteer together.
- Aim for all first and second-year students to have a third or fourth-year student mentor.

Measures
- Mental health survey
- Number of faculty with mentors

Performance Targets
- Implement, conduct, and assess the results of a School-wide mental health survey.
- All tenure-track faculty members to have a faculty mentor.

Objective 2.4: Strengthen Local and International Community Relationships.

2015 SoA Strategic Plan Objectives
- *Increase relationships with professional partners outside the University that foster innovative design practice models and that prepare students to become design leaders.*
- *Establish international study and global literacy as fundamental to the culture of our School.*

2021 SoA Environmental Scan Priorities
- *Community and professional connectivity (challenge/opportunity)*
- *Connectivity to real-world issues and communities (curriculum)*

Tactics + Timeline
- Support community-engaged scholarship and international research and teaching collaborations.
- Establish student learning outcomes in specific courses that address community engagement.
- Degree programs should have at least one SLO related to community engagement or development.
- Demonstrate the relevance of architecture and urban design to audiences less familiar with our disciplines.

- Establish community research and design partnerships.
- Promote international relationships and experiences.
- Incorporate community, institutional, and governmental engagement into curricula.
- Ground studio design projects in larger urban contexts.
- Encourage and support community-based clients and partnerships in design studios.
- Build curricular and non-curricular connections and opportunities with other College of Arts + Architecture units.
- Revise the School RPT policy to clarify the value and evaluation of community-based work in teaching and research.
- Assess the viability of MS tracks focused on communities (such as heritage preservation, public interest design, etc.).
- Develop a scholarship fund for national and international travel to experience and increase understanding of different communities, cultures, and contexts.

Measures
- % of course syllabi that include opportunities for community engagement

Performance Targets
- Develop a curricular map that establishes strategic opportunities for community engagement.

GOAL 3: Design for innovation. [progress]

Objective 3.1: Instantiate a culture of innovation.

2015 SoA Strategic Plan Objective
- Promote research and interdisciplinary collaboration within the College and across the University.

2021 SoA Environmental Scan Priorities
- Entrepreneurship and innovation (staff)
- Interdisciplinary research and teaching (challenge/opportunity)
- Remove silos between different programs and labs (faculty)
- Professional development (faculty, staff)

Tactics + Timeline
- Emphasize experimental thinking, heuristic approaches, intellectual diversity, and interdisciplinary collaborations in architecture.
- Improve teaching collaborations across disciplines: incentivize the development of co-taught coursework with faculty outside the School of Architecture.
- Create a culture of continual self-development and entrepreneurship.
- Capitalize on synergies between the research labs; increase joint collaborations.
- Develop a database of international research and teaching connections of faculty.
- Support R1 areas of distinction in architecture and align with strategic differentiators.
- Highlight areas of technology transfer: invite allied disciplines to contribute ideas in the lecture series, design reviews, coursework.
- Remove barriers between research and educational spaces; bring research into studios and increase the use of lab spaces as classrooms to elevate students' research skills and expose them to ongoing research opportunities.

Measures
- Communication and dissemination of faculty and staff contributions

Performance Targets
- Highlight faculty and staff research and teaching according to strategic areas of distinction and catalyze new interdisciplinary connections via a new digital platform.

Objective 3.2: Enhance our curricula to anticipate future change.

2015 SoA Strategic Plan Objectives
- *Increase Pre-Professional and Post-Professional Degree Offerings within the School.*
- *Integrate Teaching with Innovative Practices.*
- *Clarify the goals of and relationships between pre-professional, professional and post-professional (research) degree paths.*

2021 SoA Environmental Scan Priorities

Tactics + Timeline
- Expose students to a broader range of design practices.
- Develop new models for the curricular arcs of studios in alignment with our new NAAB conditions of accreditation.
- Develop and test a 'workshop' structure for architectural electives (mix between studio and seminar).
- Connect faculty research more directly to coursework; integrate specific research opportunities within curricula.
- Develop multi-year research studios.
- Borrow design methodologies strategically in non-studio courses (e.g., include design experimentation approaches in building technology courses).
- Introduce non-studio expert collaborators into studio settings (e.g., applied history).
- Support student participation in research methods and design innovation courses in other departments.
- Develop a five-year recruiting plan for our degree programs; enhance MS student recruiting and increase promotion of post-professional graduate programs.
- Assess the viability of a new MS track (e.g., design innovation).
- Assess the viability of a Ph.D. program in architecture.

Measures
- NAAB conditions
- Demand analysis of new programs

Performance Targets
- Develop new NAAB conditions of accreditation in alignment with AIA Framework for Design Excellence and SoA areas of strategic distinction.
- Conduct demand analyses of new MS concentrations and a Ph.D. program.

Objective 3.3: Increase our scholarly capacity and research profile.

2015 SoA Strategic Plan Objective
- *Increase Support for Research Initiatives.*

2021 SoA Environmental Scan Priorities
- *National profile and visible identity (challenge/opportunity)*
- *Research productivity (faculty)*
- *Staff support for research and grants management (staff)*
- *Funded assistantships, internships, and externships (students)*
- *Scholarships, fellowships, and other financial support (students)*

Tactics + Timeline
- Seek to create an endowed visiting fellow faculty position.
- Redesign the Teaching Fellow program in alignment with strategic initiatives.
- Offer funding for students to apply for awards and competitions.
- Aim to minimize the potential damage of the new 50.5 GA rate policy on recruiting efforts and research support.
- Establish a more robust research infrastructure with the College.
- Aim to hire a graduate program manager, a position essential to support our graduate programs.
- Implement an SoA onboarding process for new hires.
- Hold faculty salons to discuss work and share best practices for publication and award submission.
- Increase promotion of work from faculty and staff online.
- Evaluate national and international architecture school performance assessment methods and rankings; develop a plan for data submission and tracking.
- Aim to create school performance and ranking online "dashboard" in three years.

Measures
- National and international school rankings

Performance Targets
- Increase year-over-year performance in established architecture school assessment rankings.