

Decolonizing Design Initiative

This initiative expands from TSOA's *Commitment to diversity and actions to inclusivity* statement, made public in 2020. The statement reads as follows:

Our values

The School of Architecture supports the global community that is committed to fostering a culture of diversity, inclusion, and equity among all within higher education and within the profession of architecture. Just as the wellbeing of our society and our built environment in which we exist is, at its core, dependent upon thriving engagement of diverse voices, we acknowledge that a flourishing educational situation only occurs through a disciplined commitment to a robust, diverse human community. We must actively nurture and serve all, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ability, socioeconomic level, religious affiliation, or citizenship status. The School of Architecture seeks to educate future leaders in architecture and design. We encourage them to better our communities and craft our world to be more open, sustainable, and beautiful. Our commitment to human pluralism is to cultivate a community of collaborative, inquiring, informed, empathetic, and socially engaged people.

Our goals

We are an institution in the act of rebirth that is small, efficient, and nimble. We are a brand-new entity, however, with a storied history since our founding in 1932. This process of attaining diversity and inclusion is an ongoing one. We aim to move beyond merely aligning ourselves with broader, more generalized goals and commit ourselves to a sustained, critical reconceptualization of our institutional policies and culture. We shall engage a commission consisting of leadership, faculty, staff, and students to defining specific needs for our community and set goals for positive progression. With this, we commit ourselves to principles of transparency, accountability, and comprehensive self-assessment and governance.

Decolonizing Design Initiative Framework

The following initiative serves as a framework for actions to support not only diversity and inclusion, but an active process of decolonization at The School of Architecture. Decolonization refers to the belief that a diversity of knowledge systems and cultural perspectives is crucial to the growth and culture of a community. A new Decolonizing Design Initiative at the School requires administration, students and faculty to participate in ongoing efforts around the decolonizing of design education and practices, in order to understand existing power structures, systemic exclusions of minority groups in firms and institutions, and to gain tools and language for assessing and enacting positive change. Students and faculty will have the opportunity to take

on leadership roles in assessing current practices at the school, finding opportunities for external engagement, and communicating these to the larger school community through discussions and activities.

Delivery and Assessment

The following outcomes are central the DDI mission:

- **DDI.1 Expanded Engagement**
 - Continual evaluation of current pedagogies at the school to promote critical race/indigenous/gender/queer theories across the curriculum;
 - Creating avenues for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) and queer perspectives in co-curricular lectures, workshops, roundtables, and discussions;
 - Pursuing school partnerships with outside organizations/communities in courses or projects that align with the Decolonizing Design Initiative mission;
 - Creating opportunities for mentorship for current students or by current students;
- **DDI.2 Equity in Practice and Design**
 - Reviewing surveys of representation within and outside of our institution to assess how our community composition, can become a closer reflection of the world at large by identifying current barriers and potential remediations to accessibility within the school's curriculum, co-curriculum, and infrastructure;
 - Promoting active recruitment of students, faculty and staff, whose identities and practices bring greater diversity to TSOA as our school grows;
 - Providing a more comprehensive set of learning resources through the TSOA website;
 - Reconsidering the hierarchy between a teacher and students;
- **DDI.3 Inclusive Pedagogies**
 - Offering learning methods, resources, and infrastructure that accommodate varying levels of mental and physical abilities, and promoting collaborative approaches to learning;

Assessment

- **Curricular/Co-curricular** (Curriculum/Assessment Committee, ACON, Program Review)
 - A new Decolonizing Design Initiative agenda item within the quarterly Curriculum/Assessment Committee and Academic Council (ACON) meetings will be created starting in Fall 2021 to discuss the following items specific to the Decolonizing Design Initiative mission:
 - Curriculum review through DDI Matrix evaluating course objectives delivering DDI.1 Expanded Engagement, DDI.2 Equity in Practice and Design, and DDI.3 Inclusive Pedagogies;
 - Curriculum review through DDI Matrix, evaluating course objectives delivering NAAB PC.8 Social Equity and Inclusion
 - Co-curriculum and community life review focusing on proposals to improve DDI mission-alignment through DDI Matrix (Lectures, workshops, discussions, and mentorships, delivered through TSOA or in partnership with outside organizations/communities);
 - Each year, students and staff will complete an Equity Assessment Survey on the school's effectiveness in achieving Decolonizing Design Initiative goals;
 - Integration of DDI Matrix into Program Review
- **Academic Infrastructure/Resources** (President, Dean, Board of Governors)
 - Annual resource-planning to support DDI outcomes according to goals set forth in Program Review, including facilities, library resource acquisitions, staffing, funding for AP Projects, partnerships, grant applications, etc.
 - Yearly systematic review of accessibility of facilities and IT through new Facilities Matrix, integrated into Program Review and annual budget;
- **Recruitment** (Admissions Committee)
 - Semesterly review of IPEDS survey on student composition;
 - Identify actions to address existing underrepresentation and increasing student diversity as defined in TSOA's Enrollment Management Plan such as semesterly admissions, awards, and scholarship review for incoming and continuing students;
 - Develop Scholarship Matrix tool with goal of increasing ethnic, gender, and economic diversity of student body as defined in TSOA's Enrollment Management Plan;
- **Human Resources** (President, Dean, Board of Governors)
 - Review of yearly IPEDS survey on faculty and staff composition;
 - Identify actions to address existing underrepresentation in current staffing;
 - Develop Affirmative Action Plan to increase faculty and staff diversity supported by national, state and local data;
 - Increase Professional Development Opportunities to support increased cultural competencies among staff and faculty and understand implicit bias;

Equity Assessment Survey

Adapted from Equity Assessment Tool by Cosanti Foundation Equity Immersion Resident Cortina Caldwell, and work done by Western States Center, Coalition of Communities of Color & Annie E. Casey Foundation

Directions: For each question, put a check mark under of the following columns:

- 4** This is part of our routine, and we model It for others
- 3** This is in place and we have some evidence of its use
- 2** Plans exist to use in planning and implementation
- 1** TSOA hasn't started work in this area yet

	4	3	2	1
POWER - The ability to influence and inform decisions, independently of others				
1) Has TSOA made a public commitment to equity and incorporated equity into your mission and/or values statements?				
2) Does TSOA have people of color (POC) in its leadership and board?				
3) Does TSOA ensure that a pipeline of POC leaders is on track to become decision-makers within TSOA?				
4) Does TSOA have authentic and accountable relationships with POC individuals and TSOAs within the region that provide input into your programs?				
5) Does TSOA raise adequate resources for its Racial Equity work?				
6) Are benchmarks around racial equity incorporated into the annual evaluation for the President/CEO? All staff and faculty? Board?				
PROGRAM - The services delivered in conjunction with TSOA's mission				
1) Does TSOA analyze the comprehensive needs of people of color within your geographic area, including meeting with leaders from communities of color, as a part of programming assessment, planning, and implementation?				
2) Does TSOA visibly post materials in languages other than English?				

3) Does TSOA set goals for Racial Equity across program areas that seek to name and address racial disparities and harms of white supremacy culture for all?				
4) Does TSOA advocate and support the inclusion of Racial Equity issues when working in collaborations?				
5) Does TSOA allocate resources for engagement and outreach in communities of color?				
6) Does TSOA have metrics, benchmarks, and indicators for measuring the TSOA's success in Racial Equity?				
POLICIES - The regulations and guidelines adopted to govern TSOA				
1) Does TSOA have a written racial equity plan with clear actions, timelines, people responsible for each action, Indicators of progress, etc.?				
2) Does TSOA have anti-discrimination policies that explicitly prohibit harassment of POC members and stakeholders of TSOA?				
3) Does TSOA use affirmative action in hiring processes?				
4) Does TSOA have benchmarks around leadership development and retention of people of color?				
5) Does TSOA periodically assess the disproportionate impact of TSOA policies on staff and/or constituents of color?				
PEOPLE - The individuals in relationship with TSOA				
1) Does TSOA staff and board reflect the full spectrum of POC communities within the region?				
2) Are white people supported and evaluated in deepening knowledge and building skills around issues of privilege and equity work either within or outside TSOA?				
3) Does TSOA leadership have values-based relationships with POC leaders in the region that work towards building long term alliances?				
4) Are people of color on staff supported in identifying and participating in leadership development opportunities?				
5) Are staff, board, and leadership provided TSOA space, time,				

resources, and structure to discuss and respond to issues of Racial Equity within and outside TSOA?				
CULTURE - The practices, traditions, and behaviors that shape an environment				
1) Are the full identities of all people (race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, immigration status, ability status, age, languages spoken, family formation, etc.) recognized, respected, and taken into consideration In the development of TSOA culture?				
2) Are the staff and board trained in interrupting racism at TSOA events and within TSOA?				
3) When TSOA plans activities and events do you consistently consider basic needs like chlldcare, interpretation, food, proximity to transit lines, or time of day?				
4) Is white culture not treated as the norm or default? Are people of color not expected to assimilate into the existing TSOA culture?				
5) Do staff consistently apply a Racial Equity lens and understanding of power and privilege in everyday program design, client interaction, and problem-solving?				
6) Do you consistently communicate to your members, leaders, donors, and allies the Racial Equity values and work that you do?				
COMMENTS				