



THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS

STUDIO CULTURE: STORIES AND INTERPRETATIONS

A Product of the 2015-2016 AIAS Advocacy Advisory Group

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

Studio Culture is a topic that has been studied by the AIAS for over a decade now. Over the years we have attempted to define it, redesign what we thought it was, write guidelines for preparing studio culture policies, and spread awareness about all the negative things that have led to a need for these policies. After all of these efforts, it has come time to take a new approach, a celebratory one. It is time to celebrate how studio culture has defined itself among students, faculty, and professionals alike, all across the country and the globe. It's time to talk about what makes it unique, just slightly different in the mind of every individual who experiences it, why they love it, and how it helps them. Studio culture is an ever changing presence in architectural education and the profession, and it is important to talk about how greatly it impacts our lives, not only in the classroom or the office, but in day-to-day life.

*“...WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE, JUST SLIGHTLY
DIFFERENT IN THE MIND OF EVERY
INDIVIDUAL WHO EXPERIENCES IT...”*

WHAT IS STUDIO CULTURE?

“The collective set of ideas and actions by a group of people, typically students or coworkers, that are influenced by their education, goals, peers, current events, and communities”

-Marissa Gray
Drexel University



“Studio culture can only evolve when people become aware and motivated to improve the current situation.”

-Rashidat Momoh
Mississippi State University

“As we think about trying to figure out ways to spark these conversations between students, faculty and professionals, we should consider the positive intentions behind studio culture so that all parties can share ideas to move forward and ensure a good learning environment and later a fruitful and enjoyable career.”

-Joel Jassu
University of Memphis



“To me, studio culture is the set of ideas and actions for students, faculty, and staff to go by, in order to work symbiotically toward a common goal and an educational atmosphere.”

-Michael Kemner
University of Hartford

IS THE CURRENT LEVEL OF INTENSITY FOR ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION NECESSARY?

“I think it is. Architecture is an intense profession, and I feel like it would be doing the world a disservice by making architecture school less intense.”

-Emily Turner
Mississippi State University

“I think our level of intensity is good to have but I also think it can be way more stressful on the students than it should be at times. So no I do not think it is necessary at all times.”

-Garrett Yelverton
Mississippi State University

“I'm not sure. I think it sometimes hinders creativity but on the other hand it's hard for me to see an appropriate alternative to the fast paced environment the architecture school promotes.”

-Asher Paxton
Mississippi State University

“Yes. The things that we, as architects, are asked to do require an incredible amount of thought, detail, and contemplation. This field is intensive, so the education of those entering the field need to be properly trained and ready.”

-Student
Mississippi State University

HOW CAN WE BETTER EDUCATE THOSE OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF ARCHITECTURE SCHOOL ABOUT OUR “STUDIO CULTURE”?

“I think we need a good, well written TV comedy/drama about what we do and how we do it.”

-Barbara A. Field, FAIA
Georgia Tech Alumni

“Invite others in, Greater contribution/involvement in university activities”

-Student
University of Texas at Arlington

“Engage in your community, work with a local design collaborative or non-profit to gain exposure with people outside of the field.”

-Marissa Gray
Drexel University

“Video(tape) it! Document it and show it somehow in a formal way for the school.”

-Student
University of Texas at Arlington

WHAT MAKES YOUR STUDIO AN INCUBATOR FOR GOOD DESIGN?

“A curriculum in architecture is very unique because of projects like these – architecture students don’t attend the traditional twice weekly class with desks and a blackboard – the studio becomes the heart of its unique curriculum as a place for students to collaborate, challenge each other’s ideas, and learn from practicing professionals who serve as faculty.”

-Holly Henderix
Looney Ricks Kiss

“Urban studio culture is looking outward. Students are constantly looking around the city sketching buildings. Education takes root in precedent and architectural history.

Studio Culture in Costa Rica was more about nature, and by being surrounded by nature, students become more sensitive to the natural versus built environment.”

-Esteban Beita, Professor
CUNY City Tech & NYIT Manhattan

“Lots of people dedicated to the same thing at the same time in the same place. I think when positive conversations happen about work and what work means, studio culture is at its best. I think it’s at its worst when negativity or conflict arise due to workload or clashing personalities.”

-Jacob Lotkowski
Drexel University

HOW HAS YOUR ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION BENEFITED OR IMPROVED YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE?

“Of course it has. Perhaps, most important to me, has been problem solving skills and understanding of how to see all sides of a situation. At the time I went to Georgia Tech I got a pretty traditional architectural education, a “Renaissance Man” approach. I am well grounded in the arts, history, mathematics, physics, structures, materials, methods, as well as engineering and design.”

-Barbara A. Field, FAIA
Georgia Tech Alumni

*“THE EDUCATION HAS MADE ME MORE
CONFIDENT, EXTROVERTED,
AND CURIOUS.”*

-IAN GROHSGAL
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

“It has made me aware of pervasive issues in the urban environment that I was ignorant towards before, so in a way my architectural education has made me more receptive towards change. I have also learned to stand up for my designs/ question/ evaluate why one option is better than another.”

-Meghan Higgins
Temple University Alumni



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***WANT TO GET INVOLVED?**

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