



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

Department Activities and Initiatives
engaging with equity, diversity and inclusion

2021-2022

The IAD Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Task Force and the Color in Design Group

Since summer of 2020, students, faculty and staff within the Department have examined, discussed and initiated actions that seek to bring new awareness about the role, contributions and inequities of persons of color with regard to the design field. The EDI Task Force and the student-initiated Color in Design Group exist to propose and facilitate various activities that seek to move the dial on equity in the design field, broaden its diversity and increase its inclusivity of all voices in the Department with both students and faculty.

Teaching

Awareness building in Social & Psychological Aspects of Design class

Each fall, sophomore students in this class experience a 2.5 hour workshop, titled *Identity 101 & 201*, that is provided by FSU's Representation, Inclusion & Student Equity (RISE) Office in the Center for Leadership & Social Change (a Division of Student Affairs). This workshop facilitates conversations regarding identity, assumptions, privilege, and intersectionality. Students are encouraged to understand the multiple levels of identity that each person has – most of them not apparent based on outward appearances. This process helps students understand themselves better and encourages open communication between students to find commonalities and appreciate differences.

Goodwood Memorial engagement

In fall of 2021, a group of IAD graduate students are developing a design proposal for the Goodwood Memorial to the Enslaved competition in Tallahassee. This initiative is intended to honor the estimated 200 enslaved persons that worked on the property from 1862 to 1865. The winning entry will be considered for actual construction.

New Design History Course

Beginning in Spring 2023, Dr. Yelena McLane will offer a new course focusing on the architectural and design history of non-Western cultures. Spanning from 3,500 BCE to the present, students will learn about the development, influences, and interconnections of architecture, interior design, and material culture from regions of Africa, the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, pre-Columbian America, and pre-colonial Australia.

Design Challenge project

The Studio IV course for senior students in the department engages them each fall in identifying, researching and responding to a local need in the Tallahassee community that

assists people in underserved groups. In 2021, students produced a hypothetical designed environment within an actual building along the North Monroe corridor for diverse groups including women who have endured violence, youth who experience impoverishment, and persons with mental and physical disabilities.

Honors in the Major Thesis

In Summer 2021 through Spring 2022, a senior student worked on a creative Honors in the Major Thesis titled “Black Stage: A Universe of Afro-Surrealist Design,” which explored the possibilities of Afro-Surrealist design in theatrical spaces as a way to “bring forward the existence of Black life beyond oppressive stereotypes.” The thesis director, Dr. Yelena McLane, and members of the supervisory committee (Dr. Marlo Ransdell, IA&D, and Casey Hagwood, School of Theatre) worked with the student on interpreting three speculative short stories of the African Diaspora and conceptualized adaptations of these stories for theatrical scenic design by combining interior design methods with principles of visual storytelling.

Funding initiatives

In fall of 2021, the FSU Foundation in concert with the Department launched an FSU Spark funding campaign. Responding to students’ comments provided in listening sessions, the fund successfully met its \$5000 goal to provide 20 first-year students with economic need a kit of drawing and drafting supplies for 2022.

New policy

Recruitment procedures

New faculty recruitment procedures have and will include engagement with hiring databases that specifically reach persons from underserved populations with the goal of expanding the pool of applicants so that they better reflect the diversity of the population at large.

Mission statement

The Department’s mission statement was reconsidered in 2021 with input from the Department’s Advisory Council and ratification by the faculty. The new language identifies the intention more firmly grounded the right of good design for all people: “..the Department imparts the values of human-centered and equitable design, evidence-based design processes and creative and critical thinking so that students create well-designed spaces where people live, work, and thrive.”

Service, Teaching and Student Recruitment

Nims Middle School Project

Department students and faculty engaged with the teachers and students of R. Frank Nims Middle School, a local school serving underprivileged youth. A design charrette generated new ideas for the design improvement of the school grounds, while simultaneously exposing Nims students to the potential of design for a future career. In this way, the department seeks to act locally to seek the broadening of its student population diversity.

Guest lecture

On February 11, 2022 the Department hosted a lecture with George Bandy Jr., national leader with the US Green Building Council. Bandy champions the concepts and practices of sustainability and its potential to bring a brighter environmental, economic and socially responsible future into our grasp. The lecture coincided with the R. Frank Nims Middle School Service Project.

Student-initiated activities

The Color in Design

The Color in Design is a student-run group that celebrates the contributions of people of color to design. Their activities thus far have included *Meeting in the Middle*, a display of Black designers' work in the William B. Johnson stair gallery, a newsletter series, and a speaker series that has explored design history and contributions of Latin and Hispanic designers.