

Department of Architecture Working Strategic Plan 2023-2025

The following ambitions, challenges and strategies/tactics are based on extended discussions among the faculty and staff, further developed by the strategic planning committee. They provide a working framework to move forward with the incoming Department Chair to be further developed and modified as needs evolve.

AMBITIONS:

Research:

- Advance individual and collective research and creative practice profiles of faculty.
- Invest in faculty development, and increase the research productivity of faculty.
- Raise capacity of faculty to contribute to research by reducing teaching loads.
- Increase the visibility of research, publications, and student work.

Teaching & Learning:

- Attract applicants from the state, nation and internationally.
- Increase the quality of the course offerings, delivery models, and quality of student work.
- Institutionalize assessment of student outcomes to support continuous improvement. Review and implement policies to identify areas where we can be more supportive rather than punitive for students who struggle academically.
- Support the continued integration of research into pedagogy and pedagogy into research.
- Address social and environmental justice issues throughout the curriculum.

Organization:

- Increase budget literacy to enable more engaged collective decision-making.
- Enhance staff structure to support strategic initiatives-identify funding as needed.
- Align faculty workloads with strategic goals.
- Refine curriculum to facilitate advanced planning and support strategic initiatives.
- Focus on building departmental culture: allocate sufficient resources to support robust communications, events, and graphic identity.
- Institutionalize key tasks (e.g. assessment, budgeting, hiring) with more staff support.
- Take a larger leadership role in the CBE, UW and broader community.

IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES:

- **Our academic reputation/reality is not aligned with the potential of our faculty, students and region.** We are part of an R1 Research University in Seattle, ranked the most innovative city in the US in 2022.¹ We benefit from the outstanding agglomeration of Seattle's architecture offices, making it one of the top 10 cities to practice architecture globally.² **Despite these incredible advantages and the stunning location we are operating in, our department does not have an outstanding national profile.**
- **Faculty & staff workload is too high, limiting our potential to innovate.** Faculty teaching loads are significantly higher than others in the University and College, limiting their energy and capacity to contribute to research and service without overload. Staff are expected to fill multiple roles and thus do not have time for needed strategic and planning initiatives. This can be addressed both by increased funding and by streamlining the work that we do. **When all are overloaded, needed improvements and valuable initiatives are tabled to the future, stagnating our Department.**
- **We are struggling to revive Departmental culture post covid.** Across the board (studios, seminars, lectures, events, meetings) we identify that students, staff and faculty do not naturally return to 'the way it was' nor have we invested the time and resources to help us envision and implement a 'new normal'. **We need to be intentional in creating a vibrant contemporary culture.**
- **Equity and social justice issues are not critically investigated/acted on throughout the department.** We currently don't understand justice issues in our community -- students, staff, and faculty -- well enough. **How do we best investigate and address these issues specific to our department and in the context of our discipline?**

¹ The Fabricator, "The most innovative U.S. cities in 2022: Where are STEM careers and opportunities thriving or lacking?," thefabricator.com, October 25, 2022

² Abhiri Khisty, "10 Best Cities to Work in for Architects," [Rethinking The Future](#), August 8, 2021

- **Changes made to the graduate program have to be reviewed and advanced.** Four years into implementing modifications to the MArch graduate programs, we have to assess the success of the transformations, new studio types, and the integration of research and innovations into the research studios. **We need to apply our assessment methodology under development for a productive self-assessment.**
- **The undergraduate programs need focused support to achieve their potential.** The undergraduate programs are a critical pathway to increase the diversity of students entering the profession in Washington State. While the Liberal Studies program has grown, potential alignment and differentiation between it and the Design program have not been fully realized. Opportunities to scale the program(s) have not been systematically applied. **The undergraduate degree programs could improve and grow with focused effort.**
- **We do not have budget awareness and thus the financial impact of decisions are not well considered.** Changes to the MArch, MS and Undergraduate programs are made without full awareness of their financial implications. We focus on what we are gaining without understanding what we are giving up. This includes decisions on number and size of studios, classes, electives and supervision loads. **We need to take a hard look at what are our largest teaching investments and prioritize our efforts for greatest impact.**

PLAN GOALS (3-5 year timeframe. Internally focused plan)

1. PRIORITIZE RESEARCH

Develop research infrastructure to increase dissemination of faculty and student research resulting in increased output and engagement with our work.

- a. Strategy: Recruit and support excellent MS/PhD students in both HT/DT streams
 - i. Tactic: Develop a sustainable cohort students in the MS and Phd
 - ii. Tactic: Committed TA opportunities to support recruitment (see CM).
 - iii. Tactic: Support grant applications that prioritize RA positions.
 - iv. Tactic: Evaluate and propose changes to MS/PhD program
 - v. Tactic: Create a clear pathway for MS students to PhD program
- b. Strategy: Enhance and support courses that integrate research and teaching
 - i. Tactic: Invest in delivering research studios and disseminating results
 - ii. Tactic: Review/revise Research Methods at both grad/undergrad levels
 - iii. Tactic: Review/revise how research integrated into undergrad programs
 - iv. Tactic: Electives directly link student needs to faculty research
 - v. Tactic: Use faculty meetings to evaluate our collective research output.
- c. Strategy: Identify strategies to increase research time for research active faculty
 - i. Tactic: Thesis supervision & selection strategies support faculty research.
 - ii. Tactic: Evaluate the size and teaching load of the MS programs
 - iii. Tactic: Define criteria to identify research/teaching active faculty (seeCM).
 - iv. Tactic: Refine teaching loads for research active/teaching active faculty.
- d. Invest in faculty research development
 - i. Tactic: Research studio funding supports faculty research
 - ii. Tactic: Identify discretionary support RAs advancing faculty research.
 - iii. Tactic:

2. IMPROVE TEACHING & LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- a. Strategy: Review and revamp undergraduate programs as required to clarify distinctions between programs and strengthen student outcomes.
 - i. Tactic: Finalize name change of LS degree to Architecture Studies (AS)
 - ii. Tactic: Update goals for each program and implement changes to support
 - iii. Tactic: AS program as performance based admit not capacity controlled
 - iv. Tactic: Develop junior level required courses for the ASs
 - v. Tactic: Develop clear transfer pathway for Jr College
 - vi. Tactic: Align pre-reqs with other CBE Departments (esp Landscape)
- b. Strategy: Review/Refresh courses regularly in order to assure quality and coherence for the programs
 - i. Tactic: Identify overlapping courses
 - ii. Tactic: Develop standards for contact hours/content of 5 cr courses
 - iii. Tactic: Identify important missing topic areas
 - iv. Tactic: Develop aligned teaching and learning objectives

- v. Tactic: Review offerings from part-time instructors, What are we missing? What can we let go o
 - vi. Tactic: Assess content and make recommendations regarding of social and environmental justice issues
 - c. Strategy: Support faculty teaching success
 - i. Tactic: Selective recruitment and review of part-time faculty performance
 - ii. Tactic: Better link teaching assessments and faculty review process
 - iii. Tactic: Faculty meeting time for teaching goals and review
 - iv. Tactic: Focused support for courses required for accreditation
 - v. Tactic: Continual discussion re. teaching & learning culture documents.
3. **BUILD DEPARTMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE:** Focus our efforts to define the administrative staff support and organizational structure needed to enable our Department to use our time and resources wisely towards achieving broader strategic goals.
- a. Strategy: Increase efficiency and impact of Dept. staff
 - i. Tactic: Review and update staff roles and job descriptions
 - ii. Tactic: Identify strategic administrator to lead planning & assessment
 - iii. Tactic: Increase training and action for all faculty/staff on EDI strategies.
 - iv. Tactic: Support chair in continuous financial awareness and planning
 - v. Tactic: Implement a program to support smooth leadership transitions.
 - vi. Tactic: Identify communications and event leader
 - vii. Tactic: Permanent position for outreach and admissions coordinator
 - viii. Tactic: Review and optimize student staff hiring/supervision/deliverables
 - ix. Tactic: Faculty meeting time for staff goals and review
 - b. Strategy:
 - i. Tactic: Develop system for multi-year course planning and assessment
 - ii. Tactic: Simplify our methods of assessing student outcomes.
 - iii. Tactic: Assign staff to administer the program.
 - iv. Tactic: Integrate assessment into course grading as much as possible
 - c. Strategy: Simplify our curriculum to facilitate staffing and scheduling
 - i. Tactic: Clarity of options presented two years in advance helps advising
 - ii. Tactic: More required courses overlap between both UG programs
 - iii. Tactic: Time schedule strategy developed and sustained
 - a. Strategy: Streamline Faculty assessment
 - i. Tactic: Connect peer teaching evaluations, research productivity, and chairs regular reviews to help support faculty excellence.
 - ii. Tactic: Require faculty to develop a 3 year research plan that they can assess progress against.
 - iii. Tactic: Streamline documents required for merit and chair review.
 - iv. Tactic: Faculty present research strategy/goals at faculty meetings

4. **FINANCIAL FLEXIBILITY TO INVEST IN STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:** By 2025 have budget flexibility such that no more than 75% of our budget is allocated to fixed costs (salaries) enabling us to invest in strategic initiatives such as faculty research, special teaching programs, events to support students and RA/TA positions.
 - a. Strategy: Become a more budget aware Department
 - i. Tactic: Departmental budget shared annually
 - ii. Tactic: Offer clear guidelines for support of TAs/RAs linked to class sizes
 - iii. Tactic: Study cost implications of options to changes noted below
 - iv. Tactic: Staff to support chair/committees on budget awareness/strategy
 - b. Strategy: Reduce teaching costs
 - i. Tactic: Offer fewer, larger courses.
 - ii. Tactic: Offer more 5 credit courses
 - iii. Tactic: Advanced studios meet with faculty 2x a week (see LA)
 - iv. Tactic: Evaluate need for 2 faculty courses, possibility of TA support
 - c. Strategy: Increase ABB Budgeting
 - i. Tactic: Offer larger 5 credit required classes open to others in CBE/UW
 - ii. Tactic: Support CBE curriculum while prioritizing Dept. goals.
 - iii. Tactic: Increase enrollment in programs/mitigate capacity constraints
 - iv. Tactic: Clear and predictable pathway for Architecture minor
 - d. Strategy: Increase discretionary funding
 - i. Tactic: Identify 1-2 focus areas to target Departmental fundraising efforts
 - ii. Tactic: Implement strategies outlined above to decrease teaching costs
 - iii. Tactic: Develop a sustainable cohort students in the MS and Phd

5. **ELEVATE DEPARTMENTAL REPUTATION:** Elevate departmental reputation locally, nationally, and internationally in order to attract more applicants and admit higher quality students. Increase the number of applicants and acceptance rates.
 - a. Strategy: Develop communication plan and infrastructure
 - i. Tactic: fund and hire department comms manager
 - ii. Tactic: launch quarterly departmental newsletters
 - iii. Tactic: resume/revise lecture posters/postcards
 - iv. Tactic: develop and maintain robust mailing lists - peer institutions, alumni, practitioners, recruitment targets (i.e. HBCUs)
 - v. Tactic: support departmental or college publications (e.g. HT, CBE, Column 5)
 - vi. Tactic: support departmental events aligned with HT/DT foci
 - vii. Tactic: Host topical events targeted toward local/regional companies.
 - b. Strategy: improve online presence
 - i. Tactic: develop and deploy content creation strategy
 - ii. Tactic: outreach to UW/local/national media to highlight Research studios
 - iii. Tactic: invest in public communications aligned with CBE initiatives
 - iv. Tactic: fund and hire external web development/design team for site refresh

- v. Tactic: develop policy & workflow for collecting & sharing Student Work
- c. Strategy: improve recruitment and student engagement
 - i. Tactic: fund and hire outreach & admissions coordinator (permanent)
 - ii. Tactic: Define strategy to sustain & grow student groups (staff+faculty)
 - iii. Tactic: Coordinate with CBE departments to align prerequisite options.
 - iv. Tactic: Develop clear pathway for community college transfer students
- d. Strategy: increase engagement with policymakers
 - i. Tactic: Collaborate to advance policy events and updates through CBE
- e. Strategy: increase engagement with alumni
 - i. Tactic: resume biannual alumni awards
 - ii. Tactic: resume yearly alumni happy hours (downtown Seattle)
 - iii. Tactic: support networking events with alumni during faculty travel

6. DEPARTMENT ACTIVELY ADVANCING SJEDI GOALS

- a. Strategy: Ensure our curriculum addresses...
 - i. Tactic: Curriculum audit
 - ii. Tactic: Department sets specific learning outcomes for select courses
- b. Strategy: Student pipeline and recruitment
 - i. Tactic: Connect with AIA and NOMA and support their initiatives
 - ii. Tactic: Support and lead undergraduate mentorship/recruitment programs
- c. Strategy: Create culture of support for our current students
 - i. Tactic: Support student organizations
 - ii. Tactic: Continual training for permanent faculty
 - iii. Tactic: Targeted training and resources for part time faculty
- d. Strategy: Build pipeline for potential faculty hires
 - i. Tactic: Afrofuturism lecture series
 - ii. Tactic: Outreach to HBCUs