4.2 STUDIO CULTURE POLICY

Supplemental information to the APR must include the school's current studio culture policy.

Following is an excerpt from the faculty handbook given to all faculty and discussed in a meeting with Head on the faculty person's first semester teaching or returning semester if coming back to teaching after time away. Sections below are relevant to studio culture, workload and studio ethics, full document is in Appendix B:

ACADEMIC POLICIES FOR DESIGN AND DRAWING STUDIOS — EXCERPTED FROM FACULTY HANDBOOK

Written by R. Cheng, director of design 10/31/02, adopted by studio faculty in 2002-3, modified by Ad-hoc Academic Policies committee (chaired by S.Roe) 2004-5, updated 2008-9.

INTRODUCTION

Studio education is a unique model that offers great opportunity for teaching and learning but also great responsibility on the part of both student and teacher. This handbook will outline certain suggested studio procedures that should be adapted for each individual instructor and some policies that have been adopted by the full faculty of the School of Architecture and University of Minnesota and must be followed by all those teaching in studio. It was primarily written for the design studio faculty, but much of the material is relevant for the drawing studio and other studio-based teaching.

The University provides excellent materials on-line regarding code of conduct, grading standards and syllabi guidelines noted in the general academic policies section of the Architecture Faculty Handbook. This section of the handbook is intended as a supplement to those resources and you should familiarize yourself with them.

Some of the contents of this handbook may seem common sense, or others overly dictated. Keep in mind this handbook was written to try to maintain the integrity of the studio education, to provide a basis for professional behavior in the studios and to provide clear and defensible standards for studio teaching.

FACULTY WORKLOAD EXPECTATIONS

It is expected that all faculty will spend time outside of class contact hours. It is required that all faculty coordinate with others teaching in their year level and with the studio coordinators. Time for this and other activities should be budgeted when judging the time required to teach. Only very rarely can class time be used for any of these activities:

- preparation time
- grading
- advising
- studio coordination meetings

Office hours: faculty are required to be available one hour per week outside of class times, this

can be fixed or by appointment and must be published in the syllabus.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Student Attendance

Faculty may not schedule any *required* class activity outside of regular class hours. This means that a student cannot be penalized for missing an event outside of studio hours. Events outside of class hours can be arranged with your group but attendance cannot be graded and there must be some way for a student who cannot attend to make up for required work resulting from this outside event. Studio instructors can collaborate or trade with non-studio instructors to combine required class time into one larger time block.

Exceptions to this are made for site visits or field trips that have been advertised as part of the studio before the students elect to enroll in the studio.

Students are not allowed to have a regularly scheduled event during studio hours. Students may not have other classes, physical therapy sessions, paid work time, work-study time in the building during studio hours.

Student Workload

University mandates for grad and undergrad students respectively:

"It is expected that the academic work required of graduate and professional students will exceed three hours per credit per week (over a full semester) necessary for an average student to achieve an average grade in the course. Studio courses are six credits, therefore eighteen hours of learning effort per week are expected for an average student taking this course to achieve an average grade.

For undergraduate courses, one credit is defined as equivalent to an average of three hours of learning effort per week (over a full semester) necessary for an average student to achieve an average grade in the course. Design studio is a six credit studio, therefore eighteen hours of learning effort per week are expected for an average student taking this course to achieve an average grade."

The above describes TOTAL time spent on studio including the 12 contact hours per week for the typical design studio.

The "average student to achieve the average grade" is obviously not the ideal situation. Referring to the grading standards we clearly hope that most of our students put in above average effort to achieve a higher level of work.

As we all know, studio education is a unique and highly charged experience, unlike any other model on campus. The expectation over the years has been that studio is all-consuming and hours cannot be counted.

We are fully in support of creating an intense experience where the students are completely committed to their work. However there are two recent reports to consider:

1) Tom Fisher reports from the AIA that the single most common complaint that practitioners have of our graduates is that they have no time management skills (the second most common is that they cannot keep their workspaces orderly!)

2) The AIAS national group of students has published a widely circulated report on the state of the design studio. In the report, there is a call to allow students to have a life outside of studio to enrich their education as architects. The balance that they seek is not just for social time, it is also for other classes that a significant part of their education.

With these two factors in mind, we should support the spirit behind the workload guidelines

mandated by the University and not try to create a special exception for studio. I think that we can operate within the University rules AND maintain the studio standards and culture that we all value so highly.

We need to use studio time effectively and to encourage the students to find ways to quickly drop into that "zone" of concentration in their outside time. Much of the time spent at studio is social and cannot really be considered "hours of learning effort". We would do our students a great service if we can teach them to achieve productive hours at times other than 2am!

Deadlines

Students' final work must be collected no later than the night before the review. This ensures a more sane and productive review for all involved. Collection times may vary, but whatever the time is, it should be enforced by the instructor going to studio, reviewing all work that is completed by that time and encouraging all students to leave the building. In some cases, the instructor may feel justified in allowing a student to complete a finite part of the whole project but it should be clear that all students will be graded only on what is completed at the deadline time. In reality, it is difficult to separate specific work that is completed after the deadline but a late penalty can be factored into the overall grade. An alternative to the collection by instructor is an honor agreement, but it is recommended that it be a signed agreement and required that it is part of the studio syllabus and discussed with all students.

All deadlines - intermediate and final - must be coordinated with your studio coordinator. Studio coordinators will be responsible for staggering deadlines between studios to relieve pressure on the lab and shop as well as coordinating with instructors in non-studio courses with the same students. You may be asked to move deadlines to help with the overall coordination of students' workload or facilities capacity.

STUDIO CULTURE

Studio Ethic

It is essential that the instructor establish a strong studio ethic at the beginning of the semester. This includes responsible attitudes towards:

- Maintaining a physical studio environment workable for all (clean, free from unwanted noise, sharing space/light/data and power access equitably)

- Maintaining a professional environment workable for all (respectful, inclusive, non-discriminatory). This means: no cell phones on during class hours for instructors or students, clean studios that the janitors can access and reasonably clean

Time Management

It is highly suggested that a studio meeting is held at least once per week or daily as needed. In this meeting, the overall goals for the week or day are laid out, the schedule for mini-deadlines, expectation for each mini-deadline and clarification of any changes to the issued problem statement.

One of the most common complaints from the AIA is that our graduates have poor time management skills. Studio instructors can help with this by structuring exercises with clear and realistic time line, estimated interim goals and in-studio exercises that help the students make "leaps" in process.

It is imperative that every studio hour is *potentially* productive. There are always reflective and social times in studio, however, instructors should have a clear lesson plan for each day and week. It is highly suggested that instructors incorporate a well-balanced and well-timed mix of

the following:

• in-class exercises,

• studio lectures by you or drawing from the resources of the School and larger community,

• exercises/discussion structured around lectures or readings

• group critiques of various sizes and groupings

• individual desk crits

• pin-up reviews

• formal reviews

• team exercises

• individual exercises

• shop-based exercises

• lab-based exercises

• library-based exercises

• field trips

Student Process

At all stages of the curriculum, students need help developing a process of working that can be sustained after leaving your studio. It is highly suggested that you find ways to incorporate the following into your exercises:

• Design process is not linear and not rational, leaps of scale, change of media, shift of focus are necessary

• Design is unending, but closure can be reached at various points in the process

• Analysis and editing are equally important and far more difficult to teach than ideation and creation

• As Anni Albers says, we seek to establish "boundaries for the task of free imagination"