

S A + P



Dean's Newsletter 1.1

08.15.2020

Dear friends,

I am delighted and honored to have been named the sixth Dean of the School of Architecture + Planning. I have enjoyed meeting our beloved community of faculty, staff and students, who are the forward-moving momentum that has led to the School's success.



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I am up for the challenge of working with our academic community amid the incredibly strong headwinds we are facing with the pandemic, budget reductions, and the academy's sudden realization that—despite decades of talk and promises—our Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) community is still getting the institutional short end of the stick. In reference to the last of these challenges, it is fortuitous that through my role this year as President-Elect of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA), I am working with this organization on addressing how schools can become more effective allies to this community at the national level: we can explore how this translates into everyday practices at SA+P. I remain hopeful and am grateful for the opportunity to

Announcements

COVID-19 – Please visit UNM's [Bringing Back the Pack](#) webpage for current pandemic response information. If you have concerns about exposure to COVID-19, call the NM Department of Health Hotline at 1-855-600-3453 (Toll free). For more information about SA+P's re-entry preparations and updates, visit our [COVID-19](#) webpage, or contact Lisa Stewart at lstewart@unm.edu.

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recharge our mission to strive for spatial and racial justice. I am looking forward to exploring this with all of you, alongside our long-standing supporters, including the Dean's Circle, under the leadership of its president, **Glenn H. Fellows**, who are themselves examining new initiatives.

The fierce hope I feel is largely due to the intrinsic optimism that comes with being an architect and an educator, two professions immersed in creativity and problem-solving. And it is complemented by the fact that we inhabit a stunning building designed by preeminent architect **Antoine Predock**, who also very generously gifted to UNM his studio, home, and thousands of models and drawings, which will inspire us all. We will be sending out a call soon for a director of this grand collection, named the *Antoine Predock Center for Design and Design Research*.

We are also so fortunate to be operating in a state with excellent governorship and to be serving at a university that is engaged on the right side of history for the benefit of the state's diverse and most vulnerable populations. This has already made my work—I'm just over a month into the post now—a complete pleasure full of purpose. I was also honored to recently meet the first woman ever hired as a full-time professor at the School, **Edith Cherry**, and her husband and firm partner, **Jim See**, and to hear from them many stories of the School's formation. The SA+P's story is rich and prosperous, thanks to its strong recent leadership under **Geraldine Forbes Isais** (2010-19) and **Roger Schluntz** (1999-2010).

This bi-monthly newsletter will let you know all that is happening at SA+P. One event is my arrival as incoming dean, which was eased by the strong support of the School's long-standing administrative stewardship. This is spearheaded by our excellent Academic Operations Officer, **Lisa Stewart**, and by recent Interim Dean, **Mark Childs** (who receives our heartfelt thanks in a feature below). I also enjoyed getting a warm welcome—a massive state-wide Zoom meeting, in fact—from AIA New Mexico and meeting key leadership from throughout the state, which clearly communicated to me that New Mexico's entire architectural community wants to see the SA+P thrive.



New SA+P faculty: Cesar Adrian Lopez, Janet Abrams, Jimenez Lai, Elspeth Iralu, Jeffrey S. Nesbit

Welcome to New Faculty

Profiles

Community & Regional Planning

Professor **Claudia B Isaac** has been named Distinguished Professor. [Read more...](#)

Community & Regional Planning

Assistant Professor **Lani Tsinnajinnie** received a STEM Award. [Read more...](#)

Architecture Associate Professor

Nora Wendl named Executive Editor of the *Journal of Architectural Education*. [Read more...](#)

Research

Architecture faculty members,

Michaele Pride, **Cesar Lopez**, and **Alaa Quraishi**, selected to participate in national research study. [Read more...](#)

Assistant Professors **Aaron Cayer**, and **Kathleen Kambic**, selected to participate in The Architectural League of New York's American Roundtable Initiative. [Read more...](#)

+ We welcome our new Assistant Professor in Architecture, **Cesar Adrian Lopez**, who has been teaching at UC Berkeley, and whom we recently named Director of Recruitment and head of our Community College Alliance at the SA+P. He is an Associate and Representation Lead at The Open Workshop, which is currently developing an installation and project series entitled *Commoning Domestic Space* for the 17th Venice Architectural Biennale in 2021. His work and research has been published in *Bracket [Takes Action]* (Applied Research & Design), *Momentum Magazine*, *Art Journal*, and *New Investigations in Collective Form* (Actar Publishers).

+ We are delighted to have Dr. **Janet Abrams** join our team as a Visiting Associate Professor and as our new Summer Camp Director. Dr. Abrams holds a Ph.D. from Princeton University and an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art. An award-winning critic of design and visual arts, she led the University of Minnesota's Design Institute for nearly eight years and founded its annual Design Camp for Teens (with major funding from Target), which introduced over 600 teens to design thinking and making, with over 50 international designers hired as Teaching Fellows. We are excited that this fall, two of Dr. Abrams' books will be published, *Daddy Wouldn't Buy Me a Bauhaus: Profiles in Architecture and Design* (Princeton Architectural Press) and *WWW Drawing: Architectural Drawing from Pencil to Pixel* (Actar Publishers). So, stay tuned! We will be celebrating her book launches with some chilled Gruet!

+ We are excited to welcome **Jimenez Lai** as Visiting Associate Professor this year. A faculty member at UCLA, founder and leader of Bureau Spectacular, and author of the book-manifesto *Citizens of No Place: an Architectural Graphic*

Design

Architecture Assistant Professor

Gabriel Fries-Briggs mentioned in *New York Time's* article "How to Make a Mini-Golf Course." [Read more...](#)

The Landscape Architecture

Department launched a wonderful new department video, designed by **Melinda Frame**, showcasing their students and the design program, which is led by department chair, **Katya Crawford**. [Watch it here.](#)

Novel (Princeton Architectural Press), Lai has worked for various international offices, including OMA. His installation *The White Elephant* resides in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and he was awarded the Architectural League Prize for Young Architects. In 2014, he designed the Taiwan Pavilion at the 14th Venice Architectural Biennale.

+ We are also honored to have **Elsbeth Iralu** join us as a Visiting Assistant Professor in Community & Regional Planning. Iralu is a cultural studies scholar who is completing her Ph.D. in American Studies with a focus on spatial surveillance of indigenous people, nations, and territories. She is co-founder of UNM's Critical Environmental Justice Collective.

+ Also with us this year as a Visiting Associate Professor, is Dr. **Jeffrey S. Nesbit**, who joins us from Harvard University, where he is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Office of Urbanization. He is the founding director of the research group Haecceitas Studio. He has written widely on infrastructure, urbanization, and the history of technology. He is co-editor of *Chasing the City: Models for Extra-Urban Investigations* (Routledge), *Rio de Janeiro: Urban Expansion and Environment* (Routledge) and *New Geographies 11 Extraterrestrial* (Actar Publishers).

There is a lot more in store, which I will expand upon in future newsletters. But there are a few items I want to announce right now because we'll be asking for participation soon:

+ Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture, **Kathleen Kambic**, is working on a new award program/lecture series called "On the Brinck" as part of a J.B. Jackson Project that is supported by a generous endowment Mr. Jackson left the School. Those of you who know his story will know that the added "c" in the title is not a typo! This program will invite a distinguished group of jurors to select three cutting-edge publications each year in the disciplines of Architecture, These selections will begin to form a special collection of books for our entire School to read, and winners will be invited to lecture at the School in the Spring semester.

+ Working with Special Assistant to the Provost, **Tim Castillo**, we will soon embark on plans for UNM's new presence in Santa Fe's Midtown Campus, where SA+P will explore new degrees and collaborations with other departments and universities, with special interests in new technology and the film industry. I am now working with the new dean of the Anderson School of Management, **Mitzi Montoya**, on potential joint degrees that could be offered by our two Schools. The work we are doing in Santa Fe to address community engagement is also being supported by our Design and Planning Assistance Center (DPAC), spearheaded by Professor of Architecture, **Michaele Pride**, in collaboration with Associate Professor of Community & Regional Planning, **Moises Gonzales**.

These are only a few of the projects now underway at the School. We'd love to invite you to join us as a collaborator and a partner in carrying out our mission to support our community, city, and region, and as a supporter of the School. Please visit our [Give to SA+P](#) webpage. We can use all the support you can offer at this time: it can be directed towards a specific department, to one of our research centers, to student scholarships, or to our [Dean's Fund](#), which will allow me to continue to enrich SA+P with new programs.

If there are any news items or opportunities you would like us to consider for publication in this newsletter, please contact SA+P News Curator, Assistant Professor, **Gabriel Fries-Briggs** at friesbriggs@unm.edu. I would also like to thank Assistant Professor, **Cesar Adrian Lopez** for taking a lead on the design of this newsletter.

Thank you for being a Friend of the School of Architecture + Planning, and come visit us on Central Avenue, directly across from the Frontier Restaurant. I'd love to give you a tour of the School and treat you to a bowl of delicious green chile stew!

My very best,



Robert Alexander González

Dean and Professor

 [@Gonzalez_UNM](#)



Thank you Mark Childs

Cindy Graff Cohen

Last month, Mark Childs stepped down as interim dean of UNM's School of Architecture + Planning; this month brings his retirement from 26 years of teaching, research, administration, and community involvement.

In addition to leading the school between former dean Geraldine Forbes's nine-year term and incoming dean Robert Alexander González, Mark served as SA+P associate dean and research dean; director of the Design and Planning Assistance Center (DPAC); founding director of the Urban and Regional Design Certificate program; and interim director of the Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community & Regional Planning departments. "I've tried to collect all the titles," he laughed.

Outside the university, he founded and directed the Institute for Civic Arts and Public Space, an Albuquerque group supporting the design, development, programming and study of public spaces; served as consulting planner of Albuquerque's Open Space Plan and other infrastructure projects and studies, and maintained a design consulting practice advising nonprofits, foundations, and community groups on urban design and community development.

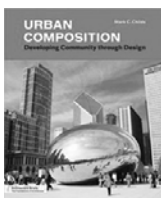
It has been a career of many hats for the Senior Fulbright Scholar, but a common thread has been his commitment to college-community collaboration, especially through his work with DPAC. Mark's legacy also includes years of studying and celebrating the region's unique architecture and art in numerous articles and three of his five books: *The Zeon Files: The Art and Design of Route 66 Signs*, *Never Say Goodbye: The Albuquerque Rephotography Project*, and *Imagine a City*



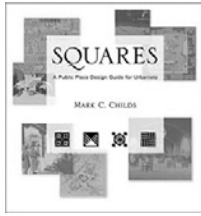
Imagine a City That Remembers
Querencias Series, University of
New Mexico Press, 2018



***The Zeon Files: The Art and
Design of Route 66 Signs***,
University of New Mexico Press,
2016



Urban Composition
Princeton Architectural Press, 2012



***Squares: A Public Space Design
Guide for Urbanists.***

UNM Press, 2004



***Never Say Goodbye: The
Albuquerque Rephotography
Project***

The Albuquerque Museum, 2000

That Remembers. "After winning New Mexico's Heritage Preservation Award for the third time, I guess I am serving as a historian," he said.

In his last year here, he will be remembered for something completely different: the unenviable task of managing the college after the corona virus closed the university's doors. "Remaining calm and trying to figure out what was within one's power and what was not is essential in these kinds of situations," he recalled "I was incredibly proud of our faculty for teaching online so quickly."

The administration set a deadline for moving classes online, but SA+P faculty were up and running ahead of schedule. The SA+P curriculum depends on hands-on work and field studies, so each class faced its own challenges. "There was a lot of learning among the faculty," Mark added. "One good thing was that with studio final reviews, you can Skype someone in from anywhere."

Administrative duties were not in his plans when he moved to Albuquerque in 1994, following his wife, Dr. Elaine Thomas, an infectious diseases physician at UNM Medical School. After completing his master's degree in architecture at the University of Oregon, Mark had been working at a Seattle firm that specialized in public interest design, a focus that grew to shape his entire professional career. In his new hometown, he joined UNM as a part-time instructor in the architecture school and realized his passion for teaching.

His own college experience came close to going a different direction, he recalled. After growing up in California and Colorado, he planned to study biology at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, but he switched to planetary physics. However, while traveling in Europe after his freshman year, he had a course-changing epiphany. Hiking down a mountain in Switzerland and looking down on a centuries-old farmhouse, he could trace its evolution in different rooflines as generations decided to expand.

He then remembered how much he enjoyed building models of cities out of paper and scraps on the garage floor as a kid. “Cities also evolve out of dialogues among people,” he said. “Cities are good long conversations.” He went back to MIT, changed his major, and is still constructing spaces in his mind, on paper, and in many cases, in real life.

He estimates that he has worked with 600 students in studio classes alone, with up to 1,000 additional students in other classes during his career. His studio classes and work with the Design and Planning Assistance Center left a real-life legacy of buildings and spaces across the state. “I had a map of New Mexico on my wall and I realized that I’ve been on most of those roads now,” he said.



Reviving Mainstreet 2012: Doña Ana + Las Cruces Communities
Design Planning Assistance Center,
School of Architecture + Planning,
University of New Mexico, 2013

One of his favorite memories from his years of teaching was the night in Santa Fe when his students presented their ideas to locate the farmer’s market in the old railyards. “We spoke at the farmers’ annual banquet and it was a glorious moment!” he remembered. Other favorite DPAC projects include working with the monthly Crown Point Navajo Rug Auction organizers on an optimal space for the weavers and redesigning a parking lot into Dona Ana’s new downtown plaza, which won the Charter Award from the Congress for New Urbanism.

The interdisciplinary nature of DPAC projects and the focus on community input to shape public policy always appeal to Mark, who also holds a master’s degree in public administration from University of Washington. “As the university president likes to say, it’s the University for New Mexico and DPAC has been that for 50 years.” He has been slowly but steadily raising funds for an endowment for the center, which was one of the first such programs in the country. “I hope it will continue for at least another 50,” he added.

After retiring, Mark looks forward to spending more time with Elaine and their children, Emily and Quinault, and grandson Ronan. He also plans to work on his sixth book, a look at the intersection of forecasting methods and design. In his spare time, he has written poetry for years (he recently sold his 50th poem for publication) and plans to continue. He says he will miss the daily dialogue about ideas and issues with students,

but similar discussions and projects will continue through his long-established design consultancy. He hopes to focus his future design work on “enabling delight in public spaces.”

The university thanks Mark for his many contributions and his lasting legacy in turning conversations into positive places.



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