

S A + P



Dean's Newsletter 1.5

10.18.2020

Dear friends,

Dialogue is essential if we are to navigate difficult subjects, especially controversial topics of the day such as the pandemic, or a politically divided country and a fraught election, or the yearning felt by many BIPOC community members for the freedom to learn in inclusive environments.



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Announcements

Nominations for the **On The Brinck**

Book Award are still open. Please

read more about the nomination

process and jury [here](#).

Research

Architecture Visiting Associate

Professor **Jeffrey S. Nesbit** is

hosting a mini-series podcast on

"Nature of Enclosure" in

collaboration with Actar

Publishers/urbanNext. The episodes

will be released weekly with the first

To address the last of these topics, we need to examine our School for any built-in elements that impede learning. And this requires us to admit a key fact: no educational system is ever truly neutral. Even long-established academic traditions, such as lecture series by esteemed guest speakers, need rethinking. Kudos to Assistant Professors **Aaron Cayer** and **Kathleen Kambic**, co-chairs of this year's Lecture Series Committee and their committee members, **Liz Castillo**, **Gabriel Fries-Briggs**, **Elsbeth Iralu**, and **Ted Jajola**, who adopted an alternative approach: a Conversation Series. The theme of the series, CONTESTING, takes on three vital and entangled topics that are ever-present in today's environmental design and planning discourse: Monuments, Climate, and Design. We invite you to join us for many rich conversations this year.

episode going live next week.

Participants included: Neeraj Bhatia (CCA), Aleksandra Jaeschke (UT-Austin), Antoine Picon, (GSD), and Kathy Velikov (Michigan).

Profiles

Congratulations to Associate Dean for Student Equity and Excellence and Landscape Architecture Chair **Katya Crawford** for receiving the Outstanding Supervisor Award at UNM. The award recognized supervisors who create work environments that facilitate work-life balance, professional development, and effective leadership.

[Read more...](#)

Events

Please join us for the SA+P Graduate Open House on October 30th from 1:30pm - 4:30pm (MT). Please visit the SA+P website for zoom link information.

The UNM Chapter of the **American Institute of Architecture Students** (AIAS) will be hosting "Let's Critique Ourselves" on October 19th, at 5:30pm (MT), which gives students the chance to share studio projects in-progress. Follow them on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).



SA + P UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE + PLANNING **Fall 2020**

CONTESTING CONVERSATION SERIES

In response to the global pandemic and the renewed fights to end racism and structural inequality, the 2020-21 lecture series committee at UNM's SA+P has opted for a "conversation" series rather than a "lecture" series.

Now is the time for critical dialogue, difficult discussions, and debate. Join us.

10.19 5:30pm
Speakers: Vanessa Fonseca (Arizona State University), Elena Ortiz (Red Nation - Santa Fe Freedom Council), Teresa Vázquez (University of Juarez), Christina Castro (Sisters Collective), + Aleta (Tweety) Suazo (Native American Democratic Caucus of New Mexico)

Virtual event: [REGISTER HERE](#)
Arthur W. Dekker Memorial Lecture

CLIMATE

11.02 5:30pm
Speakers: Thomas Nideroest (sasaki), Sourav Biswas (GeoAdaptive), + Billy Fleming (UPenn)

Virtual event: [REGISTER HERE](#)
George Anselevicius Memorial Lecture

DESIGN

11.23 5:30pm
Speakers: Bryan Lee, Jr. (Colloqate Design), + Keller Easterling (Yale)

Virtual event: [REGISTER HERE](#)
John Gaw Meem Memorial Lecture

FACULTY + STUDENT DIALOGUES

10.14 12pm
Reading bell hooks
Teaching to Transgress
With Aaron Cayer and Katya Crawford
Virtual event: [REGISTER HERE](#)

10.21 12pm
Jimenez Lai
The Sun Sets in Los Angeles
in conversation with faculty and students
Virtual event: [REGISTER HERE](#)

10.28 12pm
The American Roundtable
UNM SA+P Faculty Reports for the Architectural League of New York
New Mexico: Ane Gonzalez Lara (Pratt) with Ted Jojola, Saray Argumedo, and Kathy Kambic
Maine: Aaron Cayer with Kerri Arsenault
Virtual event: [REGISTER HERE](#)

11.11 12pm
Jennifer Tucker
Policing the City: A Debate
in conversation with faculty and students
Virtual event: [REGISTER HERE](#)

For more information and all event registrations visit: <https://saap.unm.edu/news-events/events.html>

In addition, the committee cleverly interlaced related dialogues with these public conversations so that our faculty and students can delve deeper into these issues together. The faculty will guide the SA+P community through these conversations. We've already begun this with our first collective reading of *Teaching to Transgress*, by the activist and writer bell hooks. Led by Cayer and **Katya Crawford**, Associate Dean of Student Equity and Excellence and Landscape Architecture Department Chair, this discussion addressed challenges that the classroom can present for those who feel disenfranchised. As a School, we must continuously re-examine the "classroom"—ironically, even more so now that the *actual* classroom has become an electronic device. (Can we find virtue here in distance learning?!) In *Teaching to Transgress*, Gloria Jean Watkins (who uses the all-lowercase bell hooks as her pen name) speaks about the shocking and disorienting shift she experienced in her own education—from her time in her beloved, nurturing, all-Black high school, Crispus Attucks, in the rural, segregated South, to the alienating reality she abruptly confronted when she was bussed to an integrated school, constantly fighting the racism in her white teachers and classmates.

At UNM, we know that similar experiences occur. Recently, UNM President **Garnett S. Stokes** reminded us that more than 400 American Indian students on the main campus were conferred degrees this past Spring. Knowing, also, that over 40 percent of our student body identifies as Latinx, Latino/a, Chicano/a, or Hispanic, helps us truly appreciate the diversity of our campus, which gives us a glimpse of what future U.S. campuses may look like. To address this diversity, UNM has embraced the [Student Experience Project](#) (SEP), a national, multi-institution effort to "improve classroom performance and persistence to completion of the degree among structurally disadvantaged students, including first-generation students and students of color."

At UNM, the [SEP](#) is led by Associate Provost for Student Success, **Pamela Cheek**, and Senior Lecturer III, **Sushilla Knottenbelt**. And, last summer, three SA+P SEP Implementing Fellows, Assistant Professor **Cesar Adrian Lopez**, Lecturer II **Alaa Quraishi**, and Professor **Michaele Pride**, who led this initiative, established a coordinated architecture studio that focuses on SEP goals, a first for us. This team continues the work that others at the SA+P initiated, including Associate Professor of Architecture and SEP Implementing Fellow, **Kristina Yu**, and Assistant Professor of Community and Regional Planning and SEP Exploratory Fellow, **Jennifer Tucker**. To build upon her excellent stewardship, Pride has been named Associate Chair of Undergraduate Studies in Architecture, serving our largest student body.

Those on campus who are advocating for a better educational environment have so much to teach us. UNM Associate Professor in the College of Education & Human Sciences, **Diane Torres-Velasquez**, lectures on the right to a sufficient education, and she has written about the *Martínez v. State of New Mexico* school finance and equity lawsuit, which determined that the state's public education system was unconstitutional. She also writes and lectures on the English Language Learners (ELL) student experience and the struggles that many students face in the STEM fields—which includes architecture and landscape architecture. As we begin a search for a Chair of the Architecture Department this year, we are honored that Torres-Velasquez (coincidentally the daughter of an architect) will be the inter-departmental representative on the search committee.

I hope our Conversation Series provides us the opportunity to create an educational environment that serves all our students equally well and effectively, in the spirit of bell hooks' and Torres-Velasquez's work. The first faculty and student dialogue takes place on October 21, a special exchange with Visiting Associate Professor in Architecture, **Jimenez Lai**, who will be discussing an urban analysis of downtown Los Angeles that uses graphic means to speculate about the future of the city, particularly during a post-COVID-19 world. The second is on October 28 with Assistant Professor of Architecture at Pratt Institute, **Ane González Lara** (who recently taught at SA+P). She will be joining others at the School to report on The American Roundtable, a new initiative of the Architecture League of New York that provides an on-the-ground perspective on what small to mid-size American communities need in order to thrive.

Please attend our public portion of the series. We begin on October 19 with the CONTESTING MONUMENTS conversation, supported by the Arthur W. Dekker Memorial Lecture endowment. To take on this timely and divisive topic, we'll be convening representatives of regional institutions, including the Red Nation-Santa Fe Freedom Council, the University of Juarez, Arizona State University, the Three Sisters Collective, and the Native American Democratic Caucus of New Mexico. As recently as October 12, on

Indigenous Peoples' Day, our very own capitol of Santa Fe was the site of a contentious act of opposition, when activists toppled an 1866 obelisk in the city's historic plaza. This is one of the many markers nation-wide that have been targeted for destruction or removal in an effort to rid our public spaces of monuments to various forms of oppression and violence. For 108 years, the obelisk made reference to "savage Indians" and, though the word "savage" was scratched out in 1974, it is understandable that many felt unable to embrace the Plaza as a public space—as a civic classroom for *everyone*—while a monument stood at its center, representing the very thing of which bell hooks speaks: spatial oppression.

We hope that the ideas explored in the MONUMENTS exchange will lead to activists undertaking creative rather than destructive actions. Personally, I do not condone any act of property destruction and, as an architectural historian, I would have preferred to see a monument of this kind preserved in a museum for future generations to study. We now turn to what remains—the pedestals—to see how they might be used to express the contemporary, collective public realm. Fortunately, an initiative to guide this conversation and support creative solutions was just launched. **The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's [The Monuments Project: Our Commemorative Landscape](#)** is a five-year, quarter-billion dollar commitment to support "efforts to recalibrate the assumed center of our national narratives to include those who have often been denied historical recognition." This is an opportunity to come together and think creatively about the role of monuments, and about public art more broadly.

As communities across the country are in a state of transformation, it is timely that we are debating the character and content of our public realm.

My very best,



Robert Alexander González
Dean and Professor

 [@Gonzalez_UNM](#)



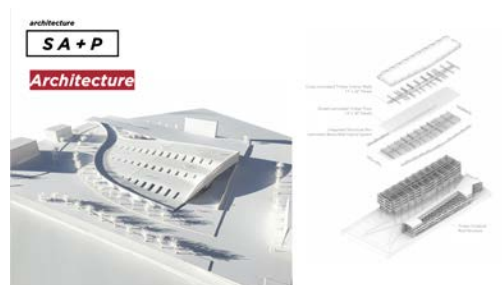
It's not recruitment, it's advocacy building

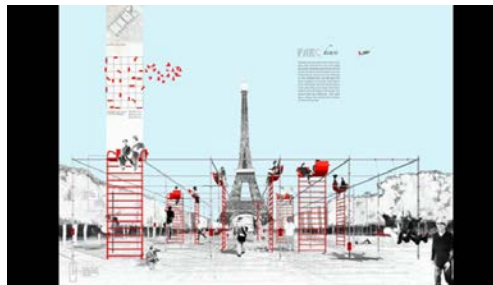
Cesar Adrian Lopez

Despite the pandemic and so much uncertainty in our world, the prospective students I've encountered at College Fairs and Information Sessions are eager to study the design and planning of our cities, communities, and environments—because they want to make better places. As a new faculty member to the UNM School of Architecture + Planning (SA+P), I was nervous about taking on such an enormous responsibility when I became the Director of Recruitment for the School, which I was still getting to know.

How can I represent it to others? Then I realized that it's not about representing our school to prospective students; it's about how our school can inspire prospective students to bring change to their communities through our disciplines.

I firmly believe that the only way to evolve our disciplines is to empower students from all walks of life to shape the disciplines themselves. When I meet them, I never refer to our session as recruitment, and I certainly don't make "a pitch." Instead, we talk about the importance of exploration in education, the need for design and planning in the world, and why they must have a voice in building and transforming cities, enriching communities, and preserving environments. By doing this, I see myself not as recruiting but as building advocacy for our program and our allied disciplines in environmental design and planning.





Select slides from the new SA+P Informational Presentation.

If we are serious about diversity, equity, and inclusion, then it begins with outreach. What does it mean to educate people who perhaps have had the least intersection with architects, planners, and landscape architects? We should commit to prospective students who will bring a new set of values to our disciplines. It wasn't too long ago that I was choosing a school of architecture to begin my education. At the time, I had a very vague idea of what design was and why it was necessary. So, I realize today just how critical this first contact is with the prospective student, and the opportunity that emerges at that very moment when I introduce our disciplines. I show compelling images of fantastic work. I share the impact that our stellar faculty have on our degree programs. I talk about the community fostered in George Pearl Hall. But in addition to all of this, instilling that design and planning is a responsibility that people have is the most important part of my outreach work.

I also convey that I, too, just chose the UNM School of Architecture + Planning in my own academic career. What drew me here from another part of the country is the energy marked by the intersection of devoted faculty and passionate students. I bring that same energy to all of the fairs and sessions I've been fortunate to join. While the world seems on hold during this pandemic, there are thousands of high school students and college graduates who are looking for that next meaningful step. Our outreach is especially important this year to remind them that we're here and ready for them.

I visited the SA+P for the first time last Spring, and another thing that impressed me was that the School is one of the most affordable programs in the nation, making it accessible to all students. This means that represented in our students, there are many who eventually do bring design and planning skills to the communities that need it the most.

Assistant Professor Cesar Adrian Lopez can be reached for informational sessions at cesarlopez@unm.edu

Feature: Mark Childs / Fall 2020 Welcome / New Faculty

[Dean's Newsletter 1.2](#)

Feature: Michaele Pride / New SA+P Org Chart / MakerLab /
You Have My Ear / Associate Chairs & Special Asst's to the Dean

[Dean's Newsletter 1.3](#)

Feature: Ted Jojola / Land Acknowledgement / Jeff Harnar Award Student Competition /
New Alumni Liaison / VAP Jeffrey S. Nesbit

[Dean's Newsletter 1.4](#)

Feature: Anne Taylor / On The Brinck Book Award / Asst. Prof. Cesar Lopez



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