


SA + P

Dean's Newsletter 1.7

11.20.2020

Dear friends,

President-Elect Biden's recent call for the country to lead "not by the example of our power, but by the power of our example" provides a perfect directive for how we should respond to the resounding calls for change heard today throughout the hallways of higher education.



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Announcements

This month the Tau Sigma Delta Honor Society welcomes new inductees from SA+P. Join us in congratulating these students for receiving such a high honor and continuing excellence at UNM.

Induction Ceremony speakers included: **Robert Alexander González**, Dean of SA+P and **Christopher Wilson**, Professor Emeritus.

[Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Planning and Design](#)

How do we become exemplary leaders within academia? More importantly, how do we help shape the exemplary planners, architects, and landscape architects of tomorrow?

When I recently posed a similar question—"What kind of leaders do we need at SA+P?"—during a "Q&A with the Dean" session hosted by AIA New Mexico, I was pleasantly surprised with a bold answer given by the group's president, **Jennifer Penner**: "We need a disruptor."

The sentiment is in line with President-Elect Biden's, when he spoke directly to the urgency surrounding the current social concerns for humanity and for the environment, in his exhilarating acceptance speech in Wilmington, Delaware. The "example" of which he speaks necessarily prioritizes the responsible *citizen*, rather than the responsible *practitioners* we're here to train.

In the AIA architects' roundtable, I also brought up the issue of labor justice, pointing out that it is our responsibility to train architects within the academy so they have the skills to gain employment—but it is *also* our responsibility to given them the skills to enact meaningful change in their communities. This is the power of the word *justice*. Nearly half of the students at UNM are "first-generation" students and, as a first-gen myself (along with our University President **Garnett S. Stokes**), I know the importance families place on students entering the workforce upon graduation. But first-gens also know that there is much work to do to strengthen the communities they come from. Model architects and planners of today and tomorrow are consequently, and necessarily, very different from those of

Aveann G. Bousek

the past.

Matthew Denis

Sairis Lizbeth Perez-Gomez

Bryana "Indy" Mitchell

Mikayla R. Ortega-Speight

This new type of citizen-professional has been the through-line in the dialogues in which I've participated during my now five-month listening tour. We simply need to broaden our vision of what makes the exemplary practitioners that can address critical needs of today.

[Bachelor of Arts in Architecture](#)

Courteney Janel Begay

Antwan Jordan Calabaza

Alejandro Manuel Garcia

Benjamin Holland River

Tony Wilson

I have very much enjoyed and benefited from these state-level conversations, and I appreciate the work **Heidi Steele**, AIA NM's Public Director, has done to organize them throughout the year. I am also benefiting from participating in national-level conversations, such as the session on "Becoming an Administrator: Paths to Success," recently hosted by the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA), which represents the 168 architecture programs in the U.S., Canada, and Puerto Rico. This is the organization for which I am currently President-Elect.

[Master of Community and Regional Planning](#)

Maria Nicole Held

[Master of Architecture](#)

Era Shae Holland Brown

Joseph Daniel Erazo

Alexandre Magno Gomes Abreu

Geena Marie Gutierrez

William Thomas Lyons

Kristen Elizabeth Madden

Nicholas Ashton Morse

Anita L. Sandoval

Scott Joseph Striegel

Omid Mohseni Tousi

For this session, we brought together a group of deans and chairs from four Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs): **Carla Jackson Bell** (Dean, Tuskegee University), **Robert Easter** (Chair, Hampton University), **Hazel Ruth Edwards** (Chair, Howard University), and **Rodner B. Wright** (Dean, Florida A&M University). Faced with the question of what constitutes exemplary leadership in the context of equity, diversity and inclusion, the panelists gave diverse responses, but they all emphasized the importance of recruitment and mentorship. This reinforced for me that the changing demographics of our colleges and universities will require us to pay closer attention to our mechanisms for mentorship: *who* gets mentored is as important as *how* they get mentored.

[Master of Landscape Architecture](#)

John R. Owen

Gabriel Christopher Raab-Faber

Kudos to Tau Sigma Delta Society officers for organizing a wonderful ceremony to honor the inductees.

Justin K. White, President

Jade Altheide, Vice President

Brianna Horvath, Treasurer

Hong Yan, Secretary

Similar issues came up during another recent panel that I moderated, hosted by the Boston Society of Architects. "Race & Architecture, Design Education—Pipelines, Pathways, Pedagogies, Profession" brought together **Mahesh Daas** (President, Boston Architectural Center), **Stephen Gray** (Associate Professor, Harvard University GSD), **Judith Kinnard** (Professor, Tulane University), and **Mónica Ponce de León** (Dean, Princeton University). In this session, we learned that while U.S. demographics are slowly being reflected in our student bodies, this is not yet the case in key leadership positions in academia, and the disparity is even worse in the profession at large. From 1994-2019, while architecture programs grew in numbers, from 100 to 168, architecture student populations decreased from 35,500 to 26,000. Two positive trends occurred during this 25-year period: the number of women increased (from 30% to 49%) and Hispanic/Latinx student representation more than doubled (from 8.3% to 18%).

Research

Visiting Associate Professor of Architecture **Jeffrey S.**

Nesbit continues to host a mini-series podcast on "Nature of Enclosure" in collaboration with Actar Publishers/urbanNext. The third episode was just released including **Denise Luna Acevedo**, **Alejandro Santander**, and **David Salomon**. [Listen here...](#)

Yet, while this growth seemingly paralleled national numbers, Hispanic/Latinx faculty representation still lags significantly, and even more so in the rank of administrators and in the profession of architecture. Interestingly, recent numbers issued by the National Architectural Accreditation Board (NAAB) put Hispanic/Latinx faculty at 9% nationally (582 faculty members),



Design

Former Dean and Professor Emeritus **Roger Schluntz**, FAIA, is currently providing services to Rice University as their professional design competition advisor for two competitions. The first and recently completed competition for the new Rice Memorial Center was won by the firm headed by Sir David Adjaye (other finalists were Olson Kundig and Miró Rivera Architects). A second competition for a Visual and Dramatic Arts facility is now underway. [Read more...](#)



We are excited to see Adobe feature our campus in a recent article, which features Smith Plaza, designed by McClain+Yu, the firm belonging to Associate Professor of Architecture **Kristina Yu**. The article also

but these figures don't convey the very few tenured and tenure-track positions held by this group.

NAAB's numbers for the other two historically Under-Represented Minority (URM) groups are even smaller: only 5% students and 3% faculty in the Black/African American category, and just 0.3% students and 1% faculty in the American Indian/Alaska Natives category. Even though these numbers only reflect the discipline of architecture, they indicate the work ahead needed to build more representative future generations of exemplary leaders in our professions.

At the SA+P, we continue to contribute significantly to the advancement of research in the Indigenous design and planning fields, and much of this trailblazing work is thanks to the fine leadership of **Ted Jojola**, Professor of Community and Regional Planning. I was proud to see Professor Jojola recently address the ACSA National Administrator's Conference as its closing keynote speaker, along with SA+P Lecturer II and alumna, **Tamarah Begay**, architect and member of the Navajo Nation. As many attendees noted, this was an unprecedented conference finale for the ACSA, which has rarely given this kind of spotlight to Indigenous design.

Work by the center that Professor Jojola directs—the Indigenous Design and Planning Institute (iD+Pi)—is now gaining global recognition, as witness the recent invitation for iD+Pi to exhibit at the 18th Venice Biennale International Architecture Exhibition. And, through a generous gift from **Peter Nabokov** and **Robert Easton**, iD+Pi is now the recipient of an important archive: the entire collection of resources (manuscripts, notes, photos, slides, etc.) for Nabokov and Easton's groundbreaking book *Native American Architecture*. The Institute also welcomes a new staff member **Isaiah Smith**, who joins as its Multimedia Assistant. You can learn more about iD+Pi's work [here](#).

November has already been highly significant on the national level, but also this month we celebrate Native American Heritage Month, International Education Week (November 16-20), and on November 20, Transgender Day of Remembrance, an annual observance that honors the memory of the transgender people whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence. We honor these days as important times of reflection at SA+P. For our alumni, who remember the campus strolls that come with the annual [Hanging of the Greens](#) celebration, in which the campus is decorated with luminarias and pine greens, we will host this event virtually on November 20, and we invite everyone to join in online with *biscochitos* and hot chocolate from our homes.

Also, this month, I invite you to join us for the last installment of SA+P's Conversation Series: on November 23, **Bryan Lee, Jr**, founder of Colloqate Design and a design justice advocate, will be in conversation with Yale University professor **Keller Easterling**, author of *Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space* (2004) and *Enduring Innocence: Global Architecture and its Political Masquerades* (2005). This event

features Professor Yu's students, from her Architectural Design Studio 201 class. The students are: **Sushil Darjee, Jeremy Granfors, Kelvin Lopez, Ivan Rodriguez, Jesse Sanchez, Hannah M. Smith, Yessenia Soto, and Rebecca Tresise.** [Read More...](#)



UNM Smith Plaza, designed by **McClain + Yu** in collaboration with landscape architects **MRWM** of Albuquerque and **SurfaceDesign** of San Francisco.

is sponsored by the John Gaw Meem Memorial Lecture endowment. Register [here](#).

Another important announcement: we are launching a Chair Search for the Architecture Department this year. I'd like to express our deepest gratitude to current Chair, **John Quale**, for his seven years of service, during which he led us through a successful accreditation and helped expand our undergraduate program. Quale is looking forward to turning his attention to the development of our new MS in Architecture: Climate Change and the Built Environment degree track. Please help us circulate the Chair Search advertisement, which can be found [here](#), where you can also learn about the Search Committee. Candidates will be interviewed in March-April, and community forums will give all of you an opportunity to offer feedback. If you have any questions, please contact the Search Committee Chair, **Nora Wendl**, Associate Professor of Architecture.

This newsletter includes a special feature on the Chair of our Landscape Architecture Department, **Katya Crawford**, who is a prime model of exemplary leadership through her many roles at SA+P. At the heart of Professor Crawford's work is the great care she offers our students, which has been a pleasure to see.

As we get ready for the semester's home stretch, we prepare to see the end results of all the hard work by our faculty and students, which has been especially challenging for the design disciplines. I look forward to reporting on the School's final design presentations in the next installment.

I wish everyone a safe, warm and wonderful Thanksgiving holiday break.

My very best,

Robert Alexander González
Dean and Professor

 [@Gonzalez_UNM](#)



Katya Crawford: Landscape Architecture for the People

Cindy Graff Cohen

“The front yard is definitely a little experimental garden, where I practice growing things,” says landscape architecture professor Katya Crawford. “I will say that it is messy. You know the sayings about the hairdresser with the bad haircut or the mechanic with a car that doesn’t work? Our front yard is probably the worst landscaped space on the street.”

Crawford, chair of the SA+P Landscape Architecture program is describing the space surrounding the small 1906 bungalow she shares with husband Jay Rice, also a landscape designer, two dogs and a cat.

But the backyard? “A total paradise work in progress!” Crawford smiles widely when she talks about the plants, two decks, napping pavilion, studio, and 14-foot long table under a trellis covered in wisteria. It is that backyard space that reflects her life goal to build outdoor spaces that bring joy.

Growing the Department

Crawford graduated from SA+P with a Master’s Degree in Landscape Architecture in 2005 as one of the newly formed program’s first group of students and joined the school as a full-time teacher in 2009. In quick order, Crawford raised the profile of the Landscape Architecture department locally, with important community projects, and nationally through her involvement with the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (CELA), an organization of faculty at 120 landscape architecture departments. After serving as a CELA article and abstract reviewer, a CELA regional director and national treasurer, Crawford spent 2015-18 in the roles of president-elect, president and past president.

Now an Associate Professor, she became chair of the Landscape Architecture Program in January 2019. Today she guides a growing department of 12 faculty members, including a number of part-time instructors who she says should be labeled “Super-Hero Adjuncts.”

Today, after almost two years as department chair, she hopes the school can add a bachelor’s degree program. “We work with so many high schools in the city and then students go off and study somewhere else for four years,” she says. “We would love students that we work with to be able to come here straight from high school.”

Education about the field is also a priority. Historically, landscape architecture was considered Eurocentric and elitist, the province of wealthy landowners. “We see that a lot of people don’t understand what landscape architecture is—they think it’s just about beautification, when in fact we design everything from the yard to the plaza to the park, the streets, the alleyways, the neighborhood, the region.”

The department sees climate change as a central concern and she was glad to hire Anthony Fettes, a former student of hers who brings over 15 years of global experience in habitat restoration, ecosystem monitoring, and landscape architecture to his urban ecology courses. Increasing diversity among the faculty and serving the region’s indigenous population are other departmental goals.

Off the Grid

In many ways, Crawford is not a typical administrator or academic; she brings a many-layered background to her passion for landscape architecture. Born to two writers who wanted to live off the land in the late 1960s, Katya and her brother grew up in a two-room adobe house without indoor plumbing or electricity. Her Australian mother, who was working as a journalist in London, and her well-traveled father from California, met in Greece.

The couple chose to live in the tiny village of Dixon, NM, between Taos and Española in rural Rio Arriba County. They built the adobe house themselves and set up an organic garlic farm. “They were writers in the winter and farmers the rest of the year,” she recalls. Her mother, Rose Mary, wrote children’s plays and poems and held artist-in-school residencies while also performing in the Taos and Santa Fe theater community. Her father, Stanley Crawford, still writes novels, satirical works, and award-winning creative nonfiction books, including the well-received *A Garlic Testament: Seasons on a Small New Mexico Farm*.

After a non-traditional childhood with world-travelling parents, Crawford chose a life of travel and a non-traditional college: The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. At 17, she moved to Italy and applied to only the one school. “If I didn’t get into Evergreen, I decided to stay in Italy,” she says.

Evergreen, a rigorous school without grades or exams, set high expectations for engagement and collaboration with fellow students and faculty. The experience shaped her, sowing the seeds for her life’s work as a teacher herself. “The act of working together is life-affirming,” she emphasizes.

After graduating with a liberal arts degree in 1992, Crawford settled in San Francisco where she worked at the public library, a literacy program, and a free health care center for women. She volunteered with a center for homeless children and teenagers, many of whom were HIV-positive. The last role taught her a different measure for success: to survive and stay hopeful day-by-day.

Back Home

After San Francisco, she travelled extensively. “I would work for six months and travel for two,” she recalls. After nearly a year of teaching English in Barcelona, a childhood friend convinced her to move into a house next-door in a city she never wanted to live: Albuquerque.

“I always thought the city was full of asphalt and violence,” she recalls. “But it wasn’t long before I fell in love with Albuquerque. The city was livable, the people were authentic, and there were secret gems everywhere.”

She took some small metal construction classes at UNM, but a trip to Thailand galvanized her educational goals. She returned inspired and ready to learn about outdoor design, but she didn’t know there was an academic specialty for what she wanted to do. “I went to the School of Architecture and said I wanted to do something like architecture but for outside spaces that’s not farming,” she laughs.

She was accepted and thrived in her new field. One design team that she was on took first place at the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) National Student Design Competition. She also earned statewide recognition with New Mexico Chapter ASLA Awards for Excellence in Scholarly Achievement.

After graduating, she worked for architecture firms in Albuquerque and began teaching architecture classes part-time in SA+P in 2005. In 2007, she was a visiting professor at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Australia.

On a Mission

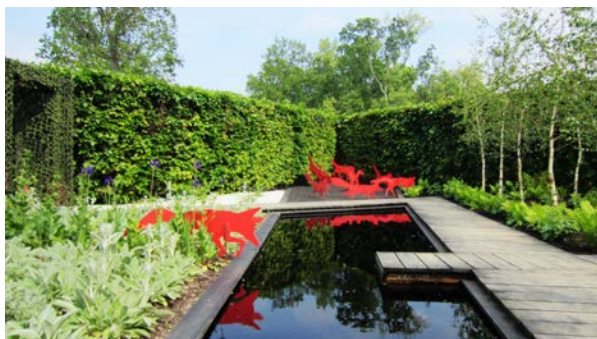
Professionally, Crawford’s influence has been broad, through a prolific list of prestigious publications, presentations, exhibitions, and projects, but her mission is finely tuned. “My heart soars when social and environmental justice, beauty, and joy come together in a design,” she says.



In a TEDx talk in Albuquerque in 2018, she spoke of an epiphany that followed her diagnosis and treatment for cancer. On her bucket list (which was separate from her similar-sounding list that began with a different consonant) was the desire “to design and build something that will bring the world joy.” With friends and colleagues, she entered a competition to

design a garden in the Loire Valley of France—and won.

With a couple husbands in tow, the friends headed to Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire, a massive estate and chateau. In just ten days, they constructed “Foxes in the Garden” with classical fairy tale elements, a reflection pool, tall hedges, and a pack of red shadow-puppet foxes leaping throughout. The garden encouraged visitors to create their own story during the days of “Occupy Wall Street” when “the foxes were in the henhouses.”



Her husband was the key player in the rapid construction. “He has that mind—he’s great at building and organizing,” she emphasizes. The two of them work together at his design and build landscape firm in Albuquerque; he hires her to design and he builds. The cancer is gone, but her passion for teaching her core values of joy and justice remains.

She bases her teaching strategies in part on the critical thinking conversations she enjoyed at The Evergreen State College—and they seem to work. Students in her courses have placed 15 times in national and international design competitions, many of which focus on building healthier neighborhoods, addressing social challenges, or supporting underserved communities.

For example, a student proposal for a freeway underpass in New Orleans dealt with floods, climate change and an empathetic response to homelessness in an orphaned landscape. It took first place in a competition sponsored by New Orleans Minority Architects. By linking studio objectives to community needs, she adds real-world contexts and service-learning elements to students’ portfolios.

Katya Crawford’s main goal in teaching is scalable: she hopes for the ripple effect of good people. “If you can be a positive influence in one person’s life, that’s amazing, but if you can be a positive influence on lots of people—like all these students—and if those students can be positive influences for others, that’s what’s important.”

“I really want our students to feel empowered to be active agents for social change, environmental change, via design and to love what they do,” she adds. “Right now, in today’s world, pursuing joy and beauty is an act of defiance—and is necessary for survival.”

Associate Professor Katya Crawford can be reached at katyac@unm.edu

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