

American Institute of Architecture Students

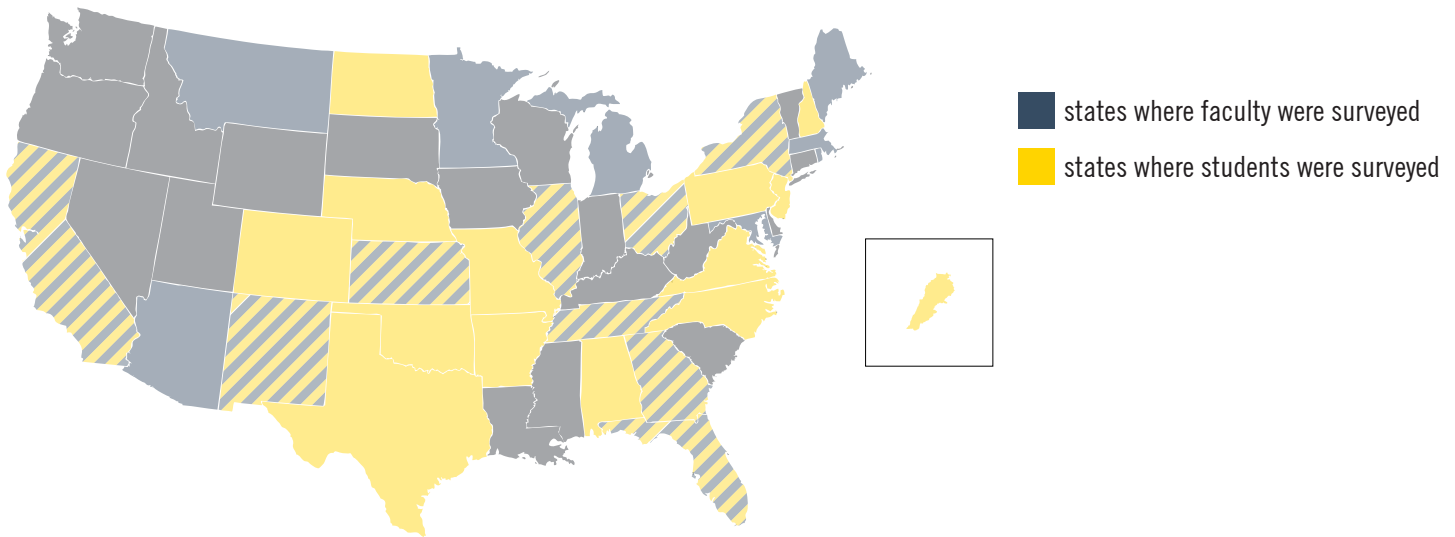
Faculty & Student Studio Culture Survey Results

The American Institute of Architecture Students released two surveys in the Fall of 2019; both were aimed at identifying root issues of and feelings behind Studio Culture among the two groups of people who deal with it the most and who handle it together: students and faculty. These results were tallied up in early 2020 and have been graphed within this document; there were 55 student survey respondents and 32 faculty survey respondents. They serve as the basis for the Learning and Teaching Culture Project and the work that the team will complete this year.

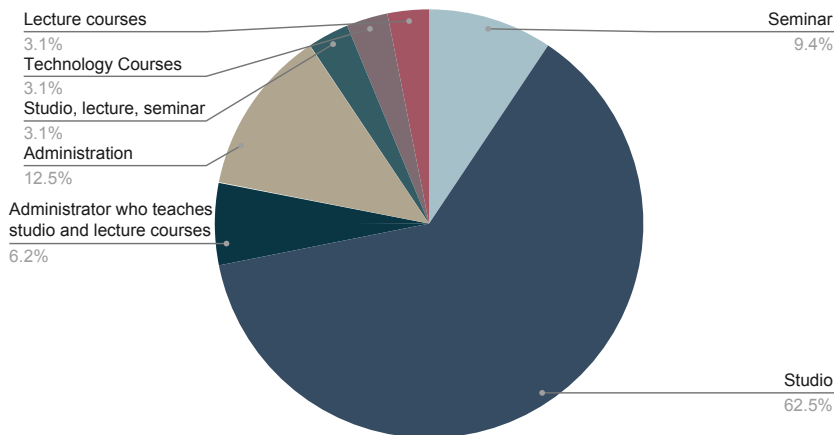
The primary intent of this project is to develop and distribute a Model Learning & Teaching Culture Policy Document that improves the lifestyles of students and teachers who experience the sometimes harsh but almost always rewarding environment of architecture school. The name change takes the emphasis off of exclusively Studio and can apply to all classes within an architecture school. It also documents a progression towards asking what students and faculty can do for each other to make the environment a positive one, as opposed to a traditional list of “demands” or conditions that don’t place or misplace responsibility. This interdisciplinary and inter-collateral team was brought together in order to mitigate bias and create something that can be endorsed or supported by the allied organizations that make up our profession.



Survey Demographics:



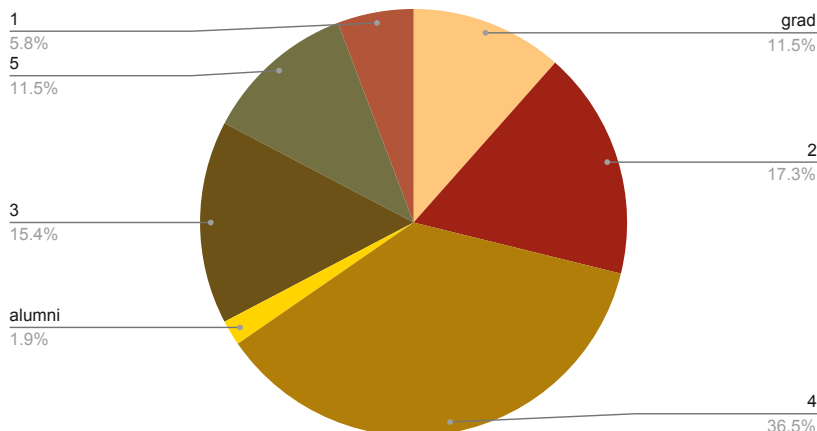
QF2: What do you teach?



Over 70% of the faculty respondents teach at least one studio class.

Other members of faculty that answered help make the survey results a good mix among faculty and administrators.

QS1: What is your year level?

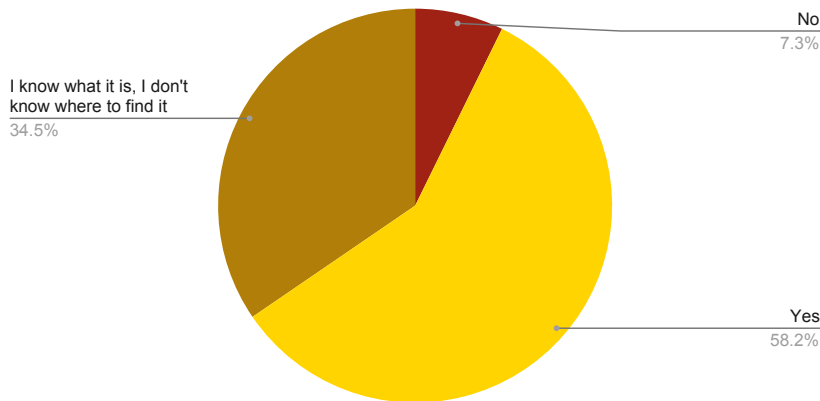


77% of students surveyed are above year 2,

which lends credibility to the survey results. The spread of students across different year levels is almost ideal.

Existing Culture Awareness:

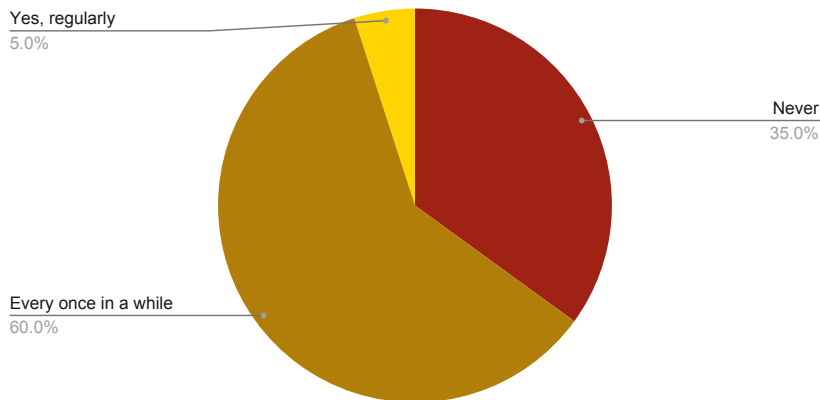
QS2: Do you know what a Studio Culture Policy is, and do you know where to find your school's?



92.7% of students know what a Studio Culture Policy is.

This is great news, and means that efforts of this Project Team should highlight accessibility to and awareness of Learning & Teaching Culture Policies.

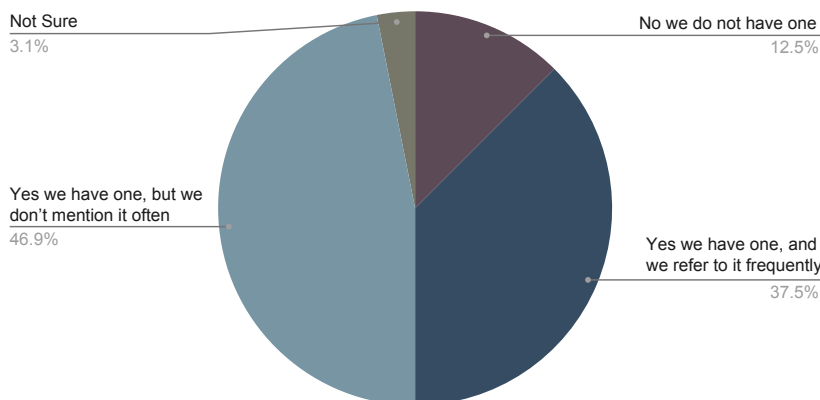
QS3: Is Studio Culture formally discussed at your school? (i.e. a Town Hall or presentation of the Policy)



Almost every student surveyed attends a school where Studio Culture is not formally discussed.

This Project Team should also emphasize the importance of discussing Studio Culture regularly - not just prior to an accreditation visit.

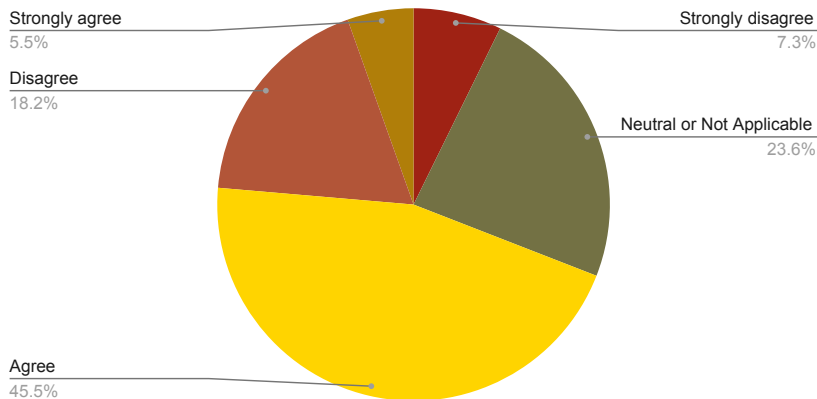
QF3: Does your school have and abide by a Studio Culture Policy?



Over 80% of faculty are aware of their school's Studio Culture Policies, but almost 50% admit that the policy is not referenced frequently.

Positive Lifestyles:

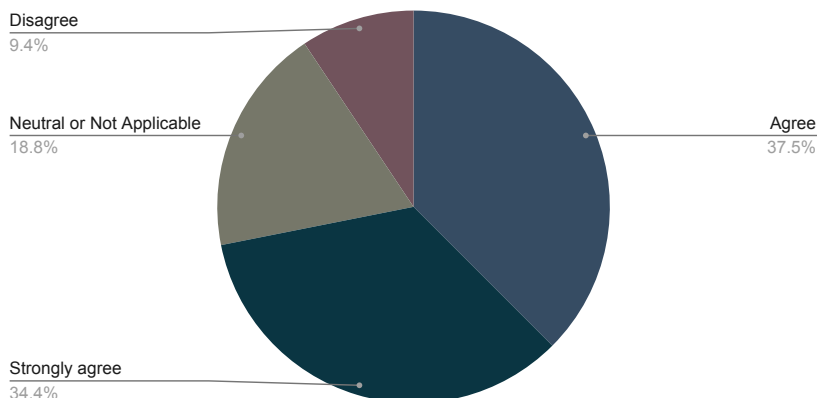
QS4: Do you feel that the Studio Culture Policy at your school portrays a positive lifestyle of learning and teaching?



Only 50% of students feel that their existing Studio Culture outlines a positive lifestyle.

A Model Learning & Teaching Culture Document portrays an ambitiously healthy and positive culture such that the environment and its inhabitants are always striving to reach it.

QF4: Do you feel that the Studio Culture Policy at your school portrays a positive lifestyle of learning and teaching?

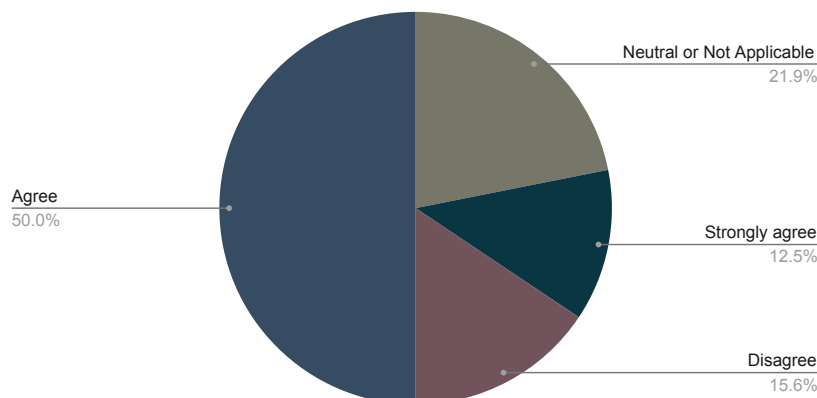


On the other hand,

71.9% of faculty feel that their existing Studio Culture outlines a positive lifestyle.

This indicates a slight disconnect in terms of what is considered “positive”, and what expectations are.

QF5: Do you feel that the reality of academic life at your school matches what’s outlined in the Studio Culture Policy?

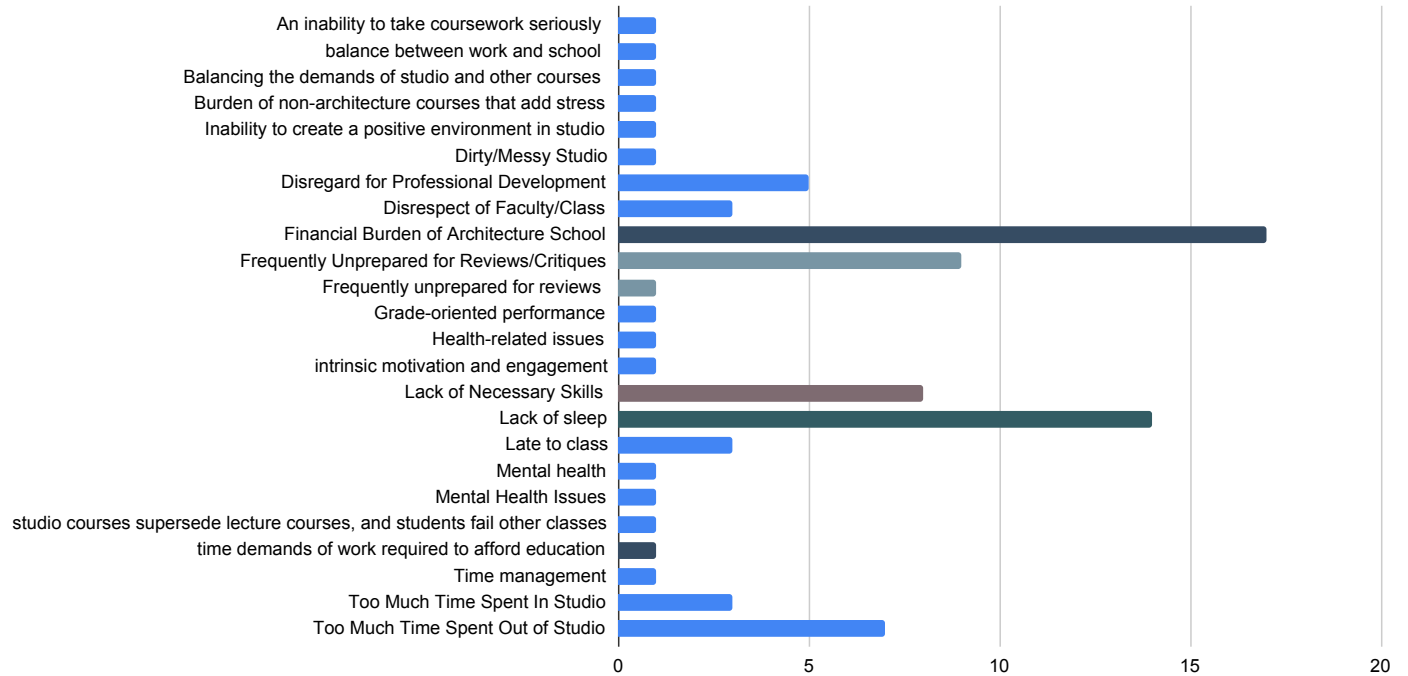


62.5% of faculty feel that the reality of academic life matches what is outlined in the Studio Culture Policy.

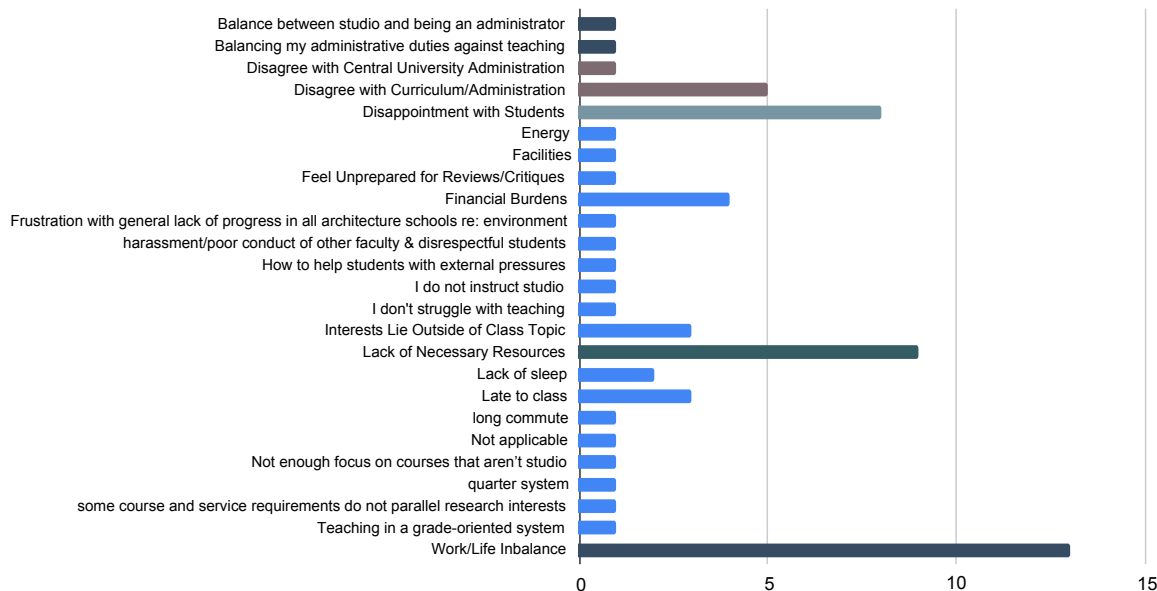
Supplementary Guides for students and faculty that discuss best practices for “walking the walk” should help this percentage increase for the better.

Struggles:

QF6: What are the top three issues your students struggle with most in their architectural education?



QF7: What are the top three issues you struggle with most while teaching?



Topics to Include:

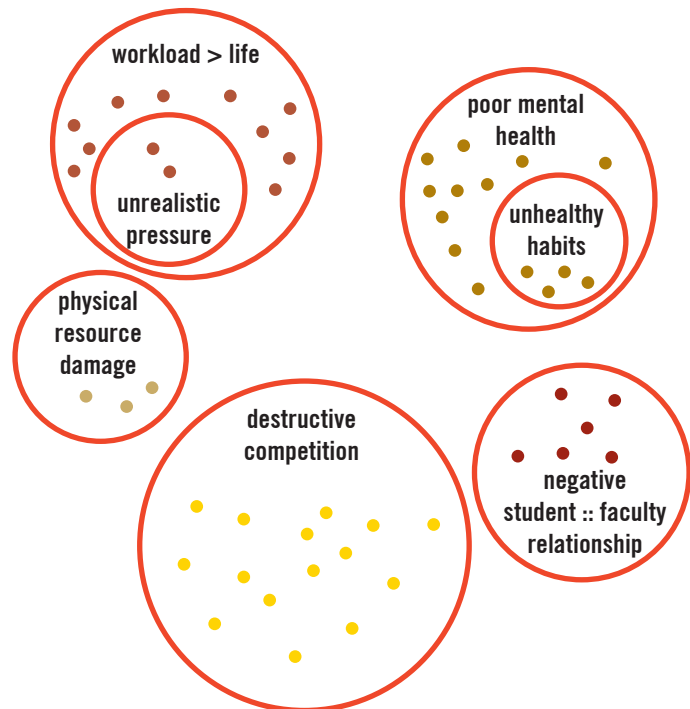
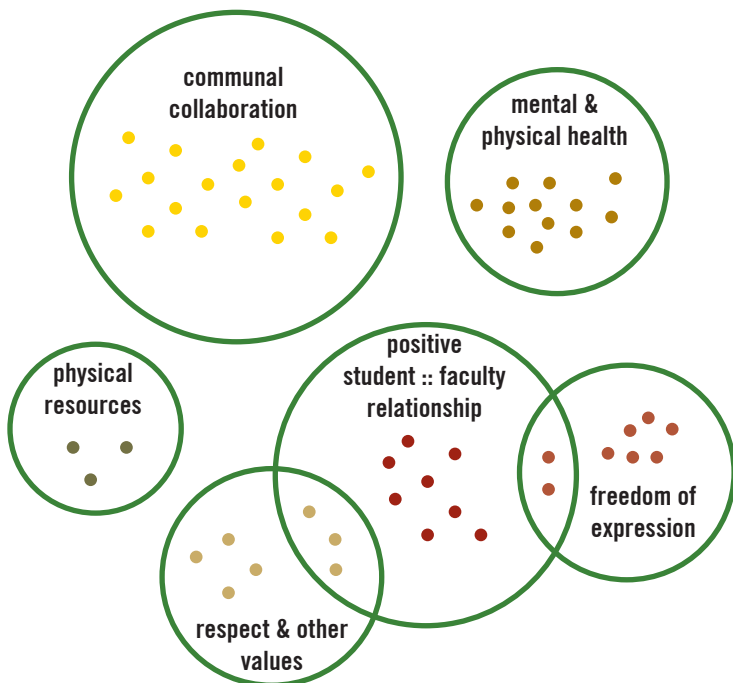
QS5: If you do have a Studio Culture Policy at your school, what is the most important topic it covers?

respect
physical and mental health
time management/amount of work
physical studio facilities
teacher :: student relationships
student :: student relationships

QS6: An ideal Learning & Teaching Culture Policy would

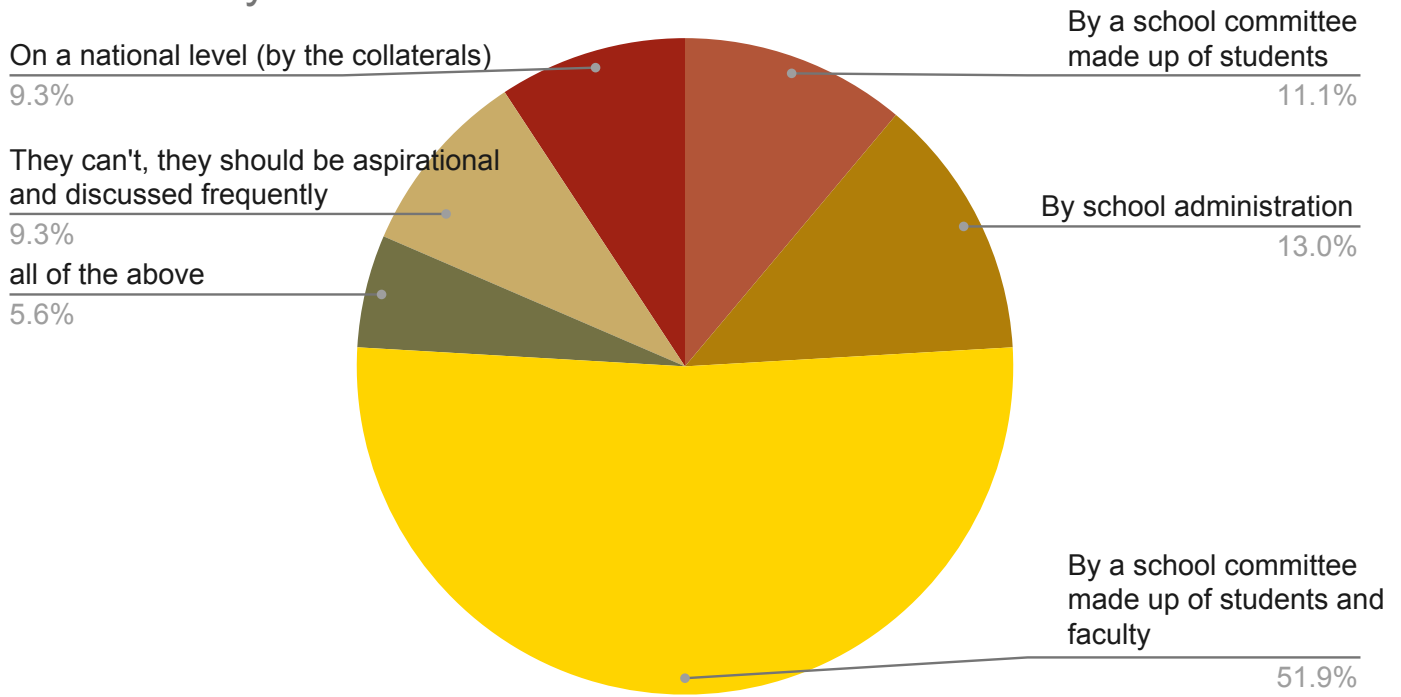
protect

prevent



Enforcing Studio Culture:

QS7: How do you think Studio Culture Policies can be successfully enforced?



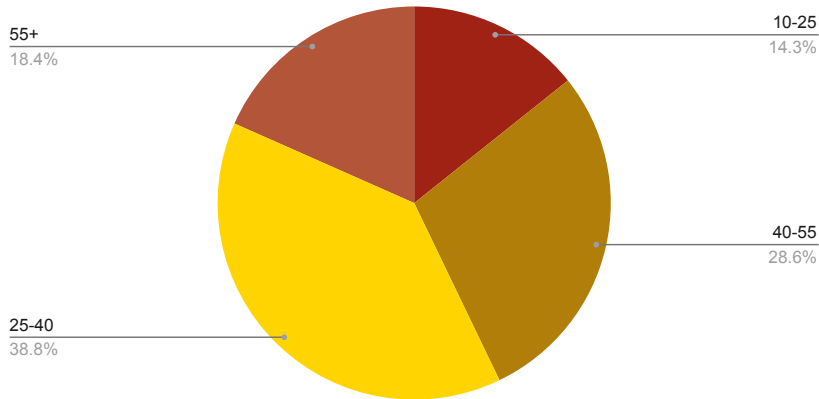
More than half of survey respondents agree that

**a school committee
made up of students
and faculty**

is the best way to enforce and monitor Studio Culture. Evaluating the feasibility of the Model Document and how it is referenced and revisited will be a big part of our work.

Current Student Workload:

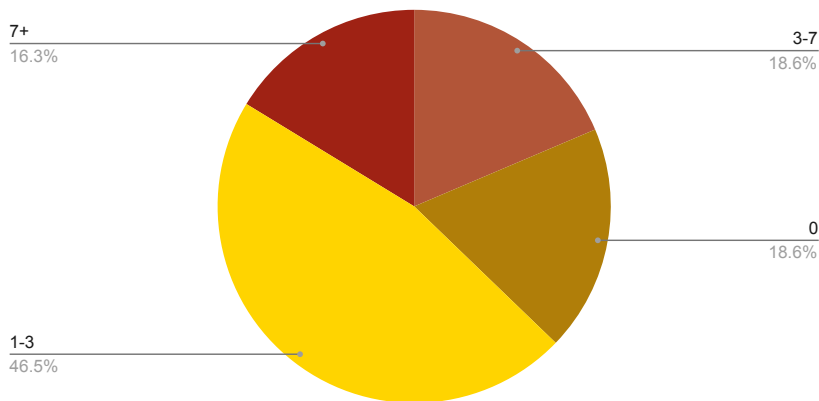
QS8: Roughly how many hours a week do you dedicate to studio work?



Over 46% of students spend over 40 hours a week on studio work.

This compares interestingly with our survey from 2015, in which students indicated that, on average, they spent 32 hours a week in studio.

QS9: Estimate how many times a week you skip or forget meals due to studio work:



81% of students miss meals due to studio work.

This is slightly more than our 2015 survey which indicated that 75% of students miss meals due to studio work.

Setting Expectations:

QF8: Please list 3-5 behaviors you expect of your students that help make class a positive and productive environment:

Arrive on time
good attendance
attendance
solid time management
on time
Be in class
Be on time
Punctuality
minimizing procrastination
Take charge of time

#timeliness

willingness to speak during discussions
Exchange of ideas
collaboration with team
collaborative
Collaborative
good listening skills
Share and engage with one another
sharing openly with others in class
open communications
working iteratively
work in studio and in collaboration with classmates
openness to critique
speaking up
articulate issues before they become unresolvable problems
Willing to communicate about their concerns/ work.

#collaborative

well prepared for class
Preparation
Prepared
prepared
prepared for class
be prepared
Come prepared to participate
Coming prepared.
coming to class prepared
Motivated
Be productive during each studio meeting
having work prepared to discuss at the beginning of class
have created something visual for me to respond to

#prepared

Commitment
committed
Consistent progress in projects
curiosity
Curious
Intelligence
Initiative to do research on their own
Thoughtfulness
imagination
Inquisitive
be curious
interest in topics
ask questions
always explore multiple-solutions to any problem
Bring passion and curiosity
Passionate
meaningful research
dedication

#curious

eager
eager to learn
Eagerness to Learn
earnestness
Encouragement of others
Be engaged
Be engaged
Engaged
engaged with each other
engaged with me
Engagement
engagement with the work
engagement with their classmates (critical, discussion, collaboration when warranted) ethics and collegiality.
Willingness to engage in their educational experience.
working on studio only
active participation
present
participation
participation
Participation
contribution during class
try hard and engagement in the topic/their education
hard work
work beyond minimum expectations
diligence
Honesty
Honesty

#engaged

Open Mind
Open-Minded
Perseverance
positive
Positive Attitude
Organization
Professional
professional attitude/behavior
Professionalism
Discipline
Respect
Respect
respect
Respect and work ethic
respect for one another
respectful
responsibility

#respectful

take risks
taking ownership of their education and looking deeply into things that self interest
try to link what is learned in one class with another
understand that University is the beginning of lifelong learning.
understanding the reading material
use the library, at most institutions it is an underutilized resource
Be human

#other

QF9: Please list 3-5 behaviors your students can expect of you to help make class a positive and productive environment:

timeliness
on time
Commitment
committed
Be ontime and engaged
active teaching in place of projecting slides
Be engaged
engaged
engaging discussion
enthusiasm
enthusiasm for teaching
Collaborative
high energy and enthusiasm for topics
I am always engaged and provide directed activities/exercises
I try to create an open environment to entice students to participate in discussions
Teach in active, rather than passive way
Inclusivity
Leave my administrative duties outside of the classroom
passion
passionate
Passionate and curious
working on studio only

#engaged

honest and forthright
Honesty
being fair
honest critique
Honesty
Humbleness
Humor
Mentorship in and out of class
Mutual respect
not sarcastic or dismissive
Personable
positive and proactive actions
positivity
Patience
Respect
Respect
respect
respect
respect and professionalism.
respect for student diversity
respect for their interests
respect for them and their time
respectful
Respectful
Willingness to listen

#accessible

sharing
sharing experience
support for development
realistic expectations
clear directions
careful step-by-step approach to instruction
articulation of expectations
clear and transparent communication
checking in with each student daily, even if short
Attention to individual students
Be an Advocate
being attentive to student objectives and needs
Constructively Critical
direct answers
Critical but supportive and productive feedback through the process
Open attitude toward their ideas
Open-minded and responsive
The class is re-evaluated every time it is run to make improvements

#attentive

well-written curricula
Be organized
being prepared
broad knowledge
Creativity
Driven
expertise
I am sure to bring some real world experience into class discussions to show how what we are doing applies to the profession outside of school
I come to class prepared to discuss the new topic
Knowledge of course content
making connections to professional practice
Organized
preparation
prepared
preparedness
preparedness
Professional
Professional knowledge
Professionalism
professionalism
provide pleasant but rigorous learning experience
purposeful work
thoughtful development of course
willing to share
Willingness to help

#knowledgeable

#kind

transparency
trust
I am open to students suggestions and comments of how to make the class work better for their need
Care
Approachable
Availability for discussion
availability outside of class time
Availability outside of class times
Available
Be kind
Compassionate

Collegiality
empathy
encouraging
encouraging
encouraging participation
fair
fair, transparent, and equitable assessment
Fairness
Fairness
flexibility
Give clear feedback on course performance.



What we wish they knew:

QS10: What is one thing you wish faculty knew about your experience attending architecture school?

How hard we push for our projects to reach a certain level without any help sometimes
My other classes have work as well, and it is difficult to complete everything fully for studio and non studio courses
While studio is an important class, there are other aspects of an architecture students life including other classes, work, and extracurriculars. That students have other classes outside of studio that also take up a significant amount of time. That I was able to accomplish all of my work and excel in studio and other courses BECAUSE I told myself to go to sleep each night, try to eat healthy, and get moderate exercise while in school. I had straight-A's in studio during my undergrad and was still able to take care of myself. When I wasn't able to always get enough sleep, exercise, or eat well, I could see the negative impacts on my mental health and how that made me feel less able to participate in all classes and coursework. Materials and prints add up quickly. Students shouldn't be spending \$500+ on a single project let alone a semester a lot of students have to balance studio work with work for other classes/minors/etc and jobs off campus
Life is about more than just architecture!! It's important to be involved in the community How truly stressful it is on not only me but my loved ones Just because a school is relatively affordable compared to other schools doesn't mean students don't have to work in order to afford it Technical courses are not inferior to design studio. We have other classes and jobs. Studio is NOT the most important thing going on. And is NOT acceptable to skip other classes due to studio
We celebrate differences it is not and should not be the same way it was when they were in school. just because faculty suffered when they were in school does not mean that students should pull all nighters that ruin their health I wish they knew that school today is not the same as it was in their time, I wish they would adapt to today's culture and shift their expectations to today's relevant matters. I value my mental health more than my studio grade. Architecture faculty are not held accountable for their apathy and perpetuation of toxic studio culture and overworking. Engineer discrimination! I work two jobs to afford school. I wish they would understand that working isn't a choice for me, and I can't just quit because they tell me to focus more on studio. poor habits seen as standard or expected Overarching guilt about taking breaks from studio, that I feel guilty not using every waking minute to work on studio, even when I cannot think straight and need to take a break. Anxiety about scheduling breaks, spending time with friends, extracurriculars, etc. I loved my experience. I dont think Ive had a situation where I needed to use or refer to it. The workload that all the other classes expect
Sleep and mental health A professor shouldn't recommend his/her students to skip lunch/dinner time, sleep less and care about other class work less for focusing more on studio especially when he/she has no idea about that Students health story (advising an anorexic student to skip lunch is not something we want to see right?) Architecture is constantly evolving. The way it is taught should evolve accordingly.
Most of our faculty pretend we don't have day jobs and set unrealistic time constraints It's harder than they think
Students need to work during school to afford classes We need communication While I love the workload and late nights, there are points where I need to take time for myself to stay sane, so there might be a day when I do not perform as well, but that does not mean I am any less of a student than my surrounding peers. The level of sacrifice their teaching policies have inflicted The undue stress they cause by indirectly forcing unhealthy work flows They know all of our unhealthy habits of all nighters. Assurance would be very helpful. Positive words not necessarily a critique The stress and overwhelming responsibilities sometimes Many people of our age group are still trying to learn who they are as a person, so helping to lead them into a positive direction would help improve students mental health and future within the field of architecture. oppressive practices don't breed greatness. pushing your students beyond their physical and mental limits doesn't make them stronger. it alters their outlook on school and the practice in a negative fashion The biggest benefit of our program is the large outreach for interdisciplinary learning and exposure to not only design based projects but also a strong passion for Building Sciences which I think is the biggest upside to our department, We volunteer heavy with the downtown and towns in our area I wish that my faculty would essentially just advocate for students and their needs more in general. I feel that there is a thick barrier of separation between students and faculty that should be more transparent. How each student coming in has such different knowledge and skills based on which studios they have taken previously Our college, its students, and the studio culture policy must continually evolve while maintaining our core values. - edited quoted from UTK studio couture policy The enormous amount of effort and dedication I put into work That it is doable only if you sacrifice something (sleep, social life, club commitments, other classes, etc). It is honestly not possible to do it all, which i feel like some faculty members believe is possible (and react with disbelief when we say so.) studio is not our entire lives The ebbs and flows of workloads of other classes We have other classes that also require work so not all time can be committed to just studio work I have other commitments It can be overwhelming Students need time to dedicate to doing not studio related things. Having time for this ultimately makes more well rounded students. I wish they told us in advance what we need to complete. Work is just thrown at architecture students with no warning, so we often have to cancel plans. It is very hard to plan out my weeks. As a commuter, sleep is super important. There are many dangers when it comes to sleep deprivation and commuting. How valuable it has been when studio professors spend class time after reviews to chat with us individually and discuss the project/class/life. Much thanks to those professors because often it was those chats which were far more helpful in understanding the successes/failures of my project than during the critiques. A good human check-in! Lack of community/acceptance, importance of equity vs equality I wished I could get critical feedback and mentoring.

QF10: What is one thing you wish students knew about your experience teaching architecture school?

Passionate That teaching is only about 30% of what we're expected to do for the university; we have research and service requirements that occupy 70% of our time.
Studio requires that we adapt our teaching styles to the learning style of each student, which is very demanding. Student experiences and expectations are not cookie-cutter. While it may seem that students are not treated equally, they are treated equitably (that is hard for students to understand). my passion for the discipline
That we definitely don't do it for the money Dedication and Time is takes. That it can always be better As a career advisor, I encourage students to research practice. I do my best to share my knowledge to benefit students in pursuing their interests. I always have the students best interest in mind.
How much I enjoy the interaction with students and how much that interaction keeps me "young" and intellectually stimulated. It is hard work. it's not in their best interest for me to "tell them what to do"
I see in my students only possibility. Each one has the ability to shape the world around them. Come prepared to learn and participate in your own development.
That I enjoy doing it.
personal dedication to teaching architecture in studio and beyond Education should be taken very seriously, and can be very costly. Don't waste anybody's time.
That there are solid pedagogical reasons for the parameters I establish How much enjoyment I get in seeing students succeed!
Difficulty of addressing varying skill levels and engagement among the students that my expertise is not restricted to the courses I teach
That I am here to help in a positive way. Listen and learn so you don't repeat the mistakes we have all made prior. That we shoulder just as much of their emotions and feelings as they do, and take that times the number of students we have in a semester. I genuinely want them to succeed and will go to great lengths to empower them, but I also have high expectations for them. How strongly I desire to make this class the best experience they have had yet and care about giving them skills they need to succeed.
That I work just as hard as they do to help them succeed. That professors do more than teach & that their plates are often very full.
faculty are human too and we have our own struggles, both personal and professional, that impact our day-to-day effectiveness I am here to help you succeed and I won't have all the answers, but we will figure it out together. regardless of the specificity of the assignment or studio project, I try to approach my role from a holistic point of view - intertwine many facets (technological, historical, cultural) that, I think allows for productive dialogu with a broad range of students That I continually learn.
I think they know but that I always have their best interests in mind

Not every survey taker wanted to answer this question, but those who did answer frequently mentioned that

even though the work is difficult, there is a lot of passion.

There is also a yearning for understanding and a willingness to understand. It will take more inferences and discernment from the team to determine what prevents these conversations from happening.

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