



**University of Pennsylvania School of Design
Faculty Diversity Plan Update
August 2015**

I. Introduction

PennDesign is committed to increasing the diversity of our faculty and student body and to promoting an inclusive culture that welcomes and celebrates difference. Ensuring that our faculty, students and staff are representative of the communities that we serve strengthens our ability to prepare the next generation of designers, planners, preservationists and artists, who will go on to demonstrate how design can improve the quality of everyday life in communities around the globe. We recognize that in order to increase the diversity of our faculty, we must first increase the pipeline of minority students from which we can recruit the faculty of the future. Below is a summary of PennDesign's efforts in the past year to increase faculty diversity, recruit more minority students, and promote inclusion within our school.

II. Recruiting A More Diverse Faculty

In Academic Year 2015 PennDesign conducted three faculty searches, resulting in two new members of the standing faculty – both of whom are from minority groups. In July 2015 we welcomed video artist David Hartt, who is African American, as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Fine Arts. David has extensive experience as an artist working with video and photography on projects relating to anthropology, architectural history, and his own study of vernacular culture. His work is featured in museums across the country. This fall we welcomed Sharon Hayes, formerly an Associate Professor at Cooper Union and an accomplished video, performance and installation artist whose work focuses on identity politics and has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, Tate Modern in London, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, New Museum for Contemporary Art in New York and The Art Institute of Chicago. These new faculty members will make important contributions to the diversity of our school – not only because they are from minority groups but also because they will encourage thoughtful discourse about identity politics and diversity throughout PennDesign.

Last October we invited Lubna Mian, Director of Faculty Development and Equity, to assist us with these searches by providing training for faculty serving on search committees. The training, called *Best Practices in Faculty Searches*, focused on the University's goals for faculty diversity and inclusion, the new affirmative action process, best practices for attracting a diverse applicant pool, the role of unconscious bias, strategies for combatting unconscious bias, and University resources.

This year we are conducting searches for new assistant or associate professors in the Departments of Architecture, City Planning, and Fine Arts. As in years past, we are committed to ensuring that we reach professional, academic and alumni networks that are inclusive of underrepresented minorities (URMs). This commitment is emphasized by the Dean at the start of each search, and we have asked our faculty – several of whom are journal editors, members of executive boards of professional and disciplinary associations – to tap these networks and identify promising URM candidates. Networks of particular interest include National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) and Women in Architecture. We have also posted position descriptions in various faculty search resources recommended by the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty.

PennDesign continues to value the important role played by the Diversity Search Advisor (DSA). This past year we added a second DSA to help us ensure that the school's searches are conducted in accordance with the University's policies and procedures regarding diversity and that each

search committee is affirmatively identifying a diverse applicant pool that is inclusive of URM candidates. During search committee meetings, the DSA encourages the committee to increase the number of minorities and women included in the pool of candidates under consideration and stresses the importance of considering the overall gender and minority balance when making an appointment. During Personnel Committee meetings, Dana Tomlin, the DSA who is also a Personnel Committee member, continually encourages faculty to explore how their unconscious bias may be affecting their decision making about potential candidates. In several instances, this has prompted meaningful debate about issues of race and bias and resulted in more thoughtful decision making.

III. Increased Outreach to Underrepresented Minority Students

This year, we continued to work with our newly appointed Faculty Ambassador for Minority Recruitment, Studio Instructor Shawn Rickenbacker, to reach out to historically black colleges to help increase the number of underrepresented minority (URM) applicants to PennDesign. Professor Rickenbacker is working to increase the number of URM applicants from various colleges and universities across the U.S. He also accompanied the Director of Admissions to Morgan State University, one of PennDesign's most important feeder schools. This year, approximately 30 undergraduate architecture students from Morgan Students also visited PennDesign, where they met representatives of the Architecture and Landscape Architecture Departments, and toured Meyerson Hall.

In addition, the Director of Admissions attended the Atlanta University Center Consortium (including Clark Atlanta, Morehouse, and Spellman), the California Diversity Forum Grad Fair, the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) Graduate Fair, which was held this past October in New Orleans. These efforts contributed to an increase in the number of minority applicants and in the number of diversity scholarships. This year we distributed all 12 of our full diversity scholarships to talented minority applicants.

On November 1, 2015 PennDesign hosted *Demystifying the Design Professions*, the annual opening event at the School's fall-semester Open House for prospective students. The event was coordinated by *DiverseDesign*, a student-led group that is dedicated to fostering a PennDesign community that celebrates and promotes diversity. *DiverseDesign's* mission is to “engage PennDesign, Penn's Campus and the greater Philadelphia Community to encourage new perspectives, to grow with the field to combat the inequalities that still exist within our profession and consequently the built environments around the world.” The goal of the *Demystifying the Design Professions* event is to discuss the importance of diverse perspectives and disciplines in the design professions and at PennDesign. This year's program, which was attended by approximately 30 prospective students, included a student panel, a design charrette exercise, a keynote talk by a second year MFA candidate whose art work focuses on sound, urban space and sociopolitical issues, and an alumni and faculty panel.

IV. Fostering a Culture of Inclusion

PennDesign continued efforts to foster a climate of inclusiveness and celebrate the diversity of our student body through its global initiatives, lecture series, social events, trainings, and facilitated discussions about diversity issues. This year, as in years past, we offered design studio courses and summer programs in countries around the world, including Brazil, Canada, Chile, Columbia, France, Greece, India, Japan, Mexico and Morocco. Our annual lecture series featured more than 50 lecture and panel discussions facilitated by internationally recognized architects, urban planners, theorists, designers and artists from various disciplines and backgrounds, many of whom are from countries outside of the United States.

In January 2015 we hosted a training for faculty and staff called, “Title IX Compliance at Penn.” Facilitated by Jessica Mertz, Penn's Director of Sexual Violence Prevention & Education, and

Ralph De Lucia, Associate Director of the Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity Programs, the training focused on sexual harassment awareness, sexual and relationship violence, and relevant University obligations and policies.

Throughout the past year DiverseDesign sponsored a series of events to promote and celebrate multi-culturalism at PennDesign. In February 2015 DiverseDesign hosted a Chinese New Year celebration that included a dancing dragon, a large-scale red lantern, activities and Chinese food. In April DiverseDesign sponsored a school-wide round table discussion called *Justice+Space*, which focused on how urban design and space can contribute to or ameliorate racial and socioeconomic injustice. The event was organized around a series of provocations focusing on issues of justice, race, and inclusion as they relate to personal, private, and public space. The three-hour discussion – the first in a series – drew more than 50 students, faculty and guests. A copy of the brochure promoting the event is attached.



DiverseDesign *Justice+Space*, April 12, 2015

Also in April, PennDesign held a special faculty-wide discussion on how issues of race and racism come up in studios and classrooms, and how faculty can help lead these conversations. “Talking About Race and Racism in the Classroom,” a handout that was adapted from *Talking Race in the Classroom* by Jane Bolgatz, Teachers College Press, was distributed to the faculty prior to the meeting. In small roundtable discussions, we asked the faculty to consider and discuss the following four questions: (1) How do issues of race and racism come up in your studio or classroom? (2) What makes it difficult to engage students in conversations about race and racism? (3) What are some teaching techniques that you have used (or seen others use) to generate dialogue about issues of difference? and (4) Do you have suggestions for ways PennDesign can better support faculty in doing this work? These questions resulted in a lively discussion and the recognition that more time is needed to address these important issues, which will continue to be topics at future faculty meetings.

As in years past, the Dean of PennDesign hosted the annual PennDesign women faculty dinner at her home in April. This provides a social opportunity for women faculty to talk about the issues uniquely affecting them, and exemplifies PennDesign’s commitment to creating a climate of inclusivity.

V. Future Plans

In the coming year we will continue implementing many of the initiatives listed above, with a particular focus on increasing our partnerships with other historically black colleges using our close relationship with Morgan State as a model. We are also hoping to identify promising candidates for the University's Postdoctoral Fellowship for Academic Diversity in fall 2016. These fellows will bring a set of new perspectives on the potential for better connecting the practices of planning, preservation, design and the fine arts to the aspirations and needs of minority communities. They will also have an opportunity to gain teaching and research experience, which we believe will help them grow into future faculty candidates. Additionally, we are interested in becoming more involved with the University's Campaign for Community Initiative, and we are planning to apply for a Campaign for Community Grant. We look forward to keeping you apprised of our progress on these projects and on our ongoing efforts to promote a greater feeling of community and inclusion within our school.