

## Department of Architecture & Interior Design **STUDIO CULTURE STATEMENT**

The **Studio Culture Statement** of the Samford University Department of Architecture & Interior Design is intended to provide students, faculty, staff, and guests of our programs a shared understanding of the values and ideals we find essential. This statement has been developed alongside the [Samford University Mission](#) and the [Samford University Student Honor Pledge](#).

*The mission of the Department of Architecture & Interior Design is to foster a collaborative culture integrating aesthetic values with a responsible design approach to the built environment which shapes and influences society for good.*

We strive for all members of our community to share fundamental values of respect, inclusivity, engagement, optimism, creativity, innovation, and collaboration. The design studio is at the core of the Architecture and Interior Design education at Samford. We foster both faculty and student growth through an active learning environment that engages interior design, architecture, and the built environment. Studio instruction uses open-ended questions and an iterative process that encourages students to develop ideas that address ethical and aesthetic considerations. Faculty promotes a design process that involves research, ideation, exploration, drawing, and making in parallel with courses that help students engage the historical, cultural, and technical dimensions of our disciplines. Our faculty, students, and staff work together to pursue a shared goal of excellence in our department by establishing a positive and productive educational environment.

The **Studio Culture Statement** is organized around four primary principles: RESPECT – DIVERSITY & INCLUSION – COLLABORATION – HEALTH & WELLNESS.

### RESPECT

We require respect among all members of the Department of Architecture & Interior Design community. Respecting others is a vital component of Samford's core values, and our department strives to uphold this.

Our department supports open and honest communication for the betterment of students and their education. Constructive feedback plays an important role in propelling students towards future success and is a commonly used practice within our major. It is critical for respect to be mutual from both faculty and students during classes and design reviews. Respect should also carry into the studio environment in peer-to-peer interactions. Respect is displayed by how we treat, speak, and interact with each other, including the timeliness of our responses.

Having design professionals review student work is a key component in the design process of our programs; their perspective and expertise provides insight for students on their projects and design thinking. The meaningful aim of design reviews is to support student dialogue and learning, so it is important that visiting reviewers appreciate their role as mentors and experts in the field. To the extent possible, it is the primary faculty's responsibility to ensure productive and respectful conversations in design reviews, even when not the primary critic.

Our studios should cultivate a welcoming atmosphere to guests. All visitors are welcome but are expected to reciprocate the same level of respect towards others. Guests should be accompanied by a student or faculty member host to provide access to the department spaces without compromising the safety of the secure design studios. It is the responsibility of each host to ensure their guests are aware and acknowledge our Studio Culture Statement.

To help keep the learning and work environment of our department creative and productive, students and faculty should maintain clean spaces within the studios, labs, and other shared spaces. Because the design studios are collaborative spaces, boundaries should be maintained to encourage a healthy respect of fellow students and their possessions. This respect also extends to maintaining a healthy stewardship of our studio and department resources. As a studio, the sharing of materials and supplies is encouraged, but should be done with permission.

#### **DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

The Samford University Department of Architecture & Interior Design values diversity. Diversity of culture, intellect, and perspectives, as well as race, nationality, gender, and beliefs. We encourage diversity throughout our students, faculty, and staff to gain knowledge and widen our perspective of design. Different viewpoints and open discussion are to be an active part of our studio culture and curriculum.

Inclusion allows people of diverse viewpoints and backgrounds to respectfully engage with each other. It does not require one to agree or disagree with other's beliefs but allows the opportunity to respectfully express your beliefs without persecution. As a university founded on Christian values, safeguarding a culture of diversity and inclusion is an expression of Biblical love and helps to create designers equipped to make an impact in the world.

#### **COLLABORATION**

The architecture and interior design industry often centers around an energetic and collaborative studio environment. Our department seeks to train our students to value that shared studio environment. In the studio, we benefit from the opportunity to continuously exchange ideas with each other because our own design inspirations can be sparked as we see what others are working on.

Collaboration results in stronger, more thoughtful design solutions. We encourage and facilitate collaboration between students within a studio; between professors and students; between students in different academic years; and between students across each discipline. When possible, we encourage and facilitate student collaboration within the School of the Arts, across the Samford campus, and beyond.

Listening to others and being willing to share our own work enhances quality of design, productivity, and relationships. Professors should model this spirit of collaboration, being willing to collaborate upon

request and remaining approachable throughout the process. Great design happens in a collaborative atmosphere, not in isolation.

## HEALTH & WELLNESS

Personal wellness is essential for any sustained success, including academics. Our department strives to promote a healthy and encouraging workplace environment, while also recognizing the intensity of the workload in the Architecture and Interior Design majors. The department encourages students and faculty to live a balanced life to help maintain their physical health and a positive mindset towards their work.

The proper management of time is a key factor in maintaining a balanced life. The design process is likely different for each student and work habits and times vary among creative thinkers. Because of this, the department maintains a 24-hour access policy to the studio spaces. This is not to encourage an unhealthy culture of all/late-nighters, but to accommodate each student's design methods and schedules.

In design, there is often "a little more" to do on a project or "a little more" to develop, but learning and practicing good time management techniques promotes a more balanced life. Samford University provides many outstanding extracurricular activities and events for all students. We encourage everyone to set reasonable expectations for themselves and others, to prioritize academic success when needed, and to hold others in the department accountable to a balanced life.

The Department of Architecture & Interior Design is committed to supporting the health & wellness of our students and faculty – physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. [Counseling Services](#) and other [Wellness Resources](#) are available on campus.

"Come, all of you who are gifted craftsmen. Construct everything that the LORD has commanded."  
– Exodus 35:10

*This statement was developed by a group of student representatives in each architecture and interior design studio and a faculty adviser during the 2022/2023 academic year. A draft of the statement was reviewed by all current students and faculty before its final acceptance.*

*The statement is shared annually with current students, faculty, and staff; provided to all incoming students or prospective students; and made available on the Department of Architecture & Interior Design webpage.*

*A group of student and faculty representatives will review the statement every two years to determine its effectiveness and assure its continued implementation. Revisions to the statement will be discussed by the group to help maintain a healthy studio environment that defines and sustains our shared culture, values, and ideals.*

*Updated 04/2023*