2013 SECOND PLACE

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STRUCTURAL RACISM IS INVISIBLE. WE CAN SEE IT ONLY IN THE ABSENCE OF DIVERSITY. ARCHITECTURE SCHOOLS, THIS LYCEUM JURY, AND THE PROFESSION OF ARCHITECTURE EXEMPLIFY THIS LACK OF DIVERSITY. TO UNDERSTAND AND ADDRESS ISSUES FOR THE OTHER 90% OUR PROFESSION NEEDS TO INCORPORATE THE “OTHER 90%”
THE FACTS

African Americans have been and continue to be virtually invisible in the profession. The AIA and many universities recognize lack of diversity as a serious problem. They have programs to "close the gap." Here is how they are doing:

1974
56,214 PRACTICING ARCHITECTS IN AMERICA

1972: 30% AIA Minority Scholarship established, supporting an average of 120 students/year.

1973: 4% HISPANIC ARCHITECTS


2012: AIA goal of 6% African American architects within reach.


2019: Adoption of the "AIA Racial and Ethnic Diversity Initiative: Beyond the Rainbow.""
WHO GETS TO STUDY ARCHITECTURE?

African Americans continue to be underrepresented in architecture. Despite the best efforts of many well-intended people, nothing seems to have changed in the past 40 years. We need to fundamentally examine and evaluate how we select and educate architects to see if structural racism is built into the systems of architectural education.

HOW IT IS SUPPOSED TO WORK:

1. WORK HARD IN HIGH SCHOOL
2. TAKE THE SAT OR THE ACT
3. CHOOSE A GOOD PROGRAM
4. INVEST IN YOUR EDUCATION
5. IDP: LEARN IN AN OFFICE

THE AMERICAN REALITY:

1. SAT Combined:
   - All students avg: 1011
   - White students avg: 1063
   - Black students avg: 853

2. ACT Combined:
   - All students avg: 21.1
   - White students avg: 22.4
   - Black students avg: 17

In the USA there is:
1. 1 professional PhD program
58 professional Master programs
95 professional Bachelor programs

Tuition and Fees:
For the 2010–11 academic year, annual prices for undergraduate tuition, room, and board were estimated to be $13,584 at public institutions.

12,000 architecture firms generated billings of $26.6 billion 2011.

HOW IT WORKS AT MY SCHOOL:

1. Average GPA:
   - Asian students avg: 3.26
   - White students avg: 3.00
   - Hispanic students avg: 2.84
   - Black students avg: 2.69

2. Average SAT or ACT scores:
   - SAT Combined:
     - All students avg: 1100
     - White students avg: 1163
     - Black students avg: 953
   - ACT Combined:
     - All students avg: 22.1
     - White students avg: 23.4
     - Black students avg: 17

My school there is:
1. 1 professional Master program

Tuition and Fees:
$12,000 in-state, $25,000 out-of-state
Avg. financial aid package: $8,358
Avg. of financial need met: 68%

96% Co-op placement. Students who are accepted have a good shot of getting most of their IDP done.

WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM?

1. African Americans tend to grow up in more stressful environments: increased levels of stress because physically affect a child’s ability to take on tasks like sitting still, dealing with authority, and concentrating on boring tasks.

2. African American children are six times more likely to get asthma. Asthma is the number one cause of school absenteeism.

1. Apophasia is enough to ensure poor performance: “stereotypes threaten the fear that poor performance on a standardized test will confirm negative stereotypes actually causes minorities to perform less well. However, “value affirmation exercises” exercises designed to make the test takers think about why they are valuable, shrinks the performance gap by 40%.

2. Education, wealth and type of schooling only marginally affect the gap test scores. However, African American children who are adopted into white households test significantly higher than their contemporaries. This shows that cultural references built into the tests are more accessible white students.

1. Over 50% of African American architecture students choose to go to Historically Black College and Universities (HBCU). These are environments where students are less likely to face the everyday prejudices and stereotypes they would face in white-dominated schools.

1: Most scholarships are awarded based on GPA and standardized test scores.

2: It is hard to financially justify an architecture degree. High educational cost and low salaries are typical. The mean salary for a Bachelors student is $41,002. The mean salary for architects is $59,000 (compared to engineers with a mean salary of $103,700).

3. African Americans spend less on education. Spending 1.8% of their income on education compared to 2.1% national average.

About 24% of architects are unemployed. Internalized and institutional racism make it particularly hard for African American architects to find jobs. This is particularly true in the southern regions of the United States.
WE NEED TO CHANGE THE SYSTEM

A PROGRAM OF ACTION:

“We should not be talking about what we are going to do to a community... We should be talking about what we are going to do with a community.”

1: USE MORE HOLISTIC METHODS TO MEASURE A CANDIDATES WORTH

Stop using SAT/ACT/GPA as the measure of candidates worth. Studies show that success in college is based mostly on “non-cognitive” skills such as confidence, leadership, perseverance, or the ability to maintain a positive attitude after a failure. These skills can be developed at any age, primarily through mentorship.

2: WIDEN THE AVENUES TOWARDS ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION.

Set up a Community Design Development Lab (CDDL) to provide public interest design (PID) and Community Based Development (CBD) services to predominantly African American neighborhoods. Use the CDDL to recruit, prepare, and qualify students to succeed in architecture schools. The CDDL faculty is made up of professionals, university faculty and staff who will assess students’ “non-cognitive” skills for entrance to the university’s architectural program.

3: WIDEN THE IMPACT OF ARCHITECTURE.

Residents of the neighborhood 18 and older will be hired to design and build the PID/CBD projects for the CDDL. These projects will be focused on evaluation of needs and DIY improvement in disenfranchised areas. The projects will physically improve the areas by empowering residents to use design to change their communities from the ground up. The CDDL will offer a PID academic supplement for employees and residents designed to dovetail into a series of degree paths.
ARCHITECTURE

B.S. Arch students will have the opportunity starting this year.
B.S. Arch graduates will have the option to apply to M.Arch programs.
B.Arch program 40% divergent from B.S. Arch. The intensity and scope of the M.Arch program is significantly different. Students will be mixed B.S. Arch/B.Arch.

8 Arch professionals will spend their time split 40% in the classroom taking the final set of classes for their professional degree. B.S. Arch graduates will be expected to be members of 1st year CDOL students and 1st year traditional students.

M.Arch students who come up through the system either as CDOL or traditional B.S. Arch students will have a similar role. Also working on the project with the students at the CDOL. 40% in class and 60% in class at the university.

M.Arch students from different schools will have a different role. Their project will be 30% on site 70% in class. They will be on site more to learn than to mentor.

8 Arch students will design/construct/bid P&ID project for the CDOL.
Creating a thesis in action.

Things to note:
Tuition for the CDOL program will be on a sliding scale based on need.
Professionals in the Cincinnati area have the option to "sponsor" student(s) through in-kind donations of time or material. CBD rental properties will help to underwrite the cost of operation.

All graduate students will get reduced housing costs to live in the CBD residential rental units.

CBD housing available to all students in the architecture program. At the same time there will be planning, and interior design students engaging with the CDOL in different but comparable ways.

The CDOL engages a generation of African Americans to consider how architecture can be used for the improvement of social, economic and environmental problems. It also creates an urban studio that will bring a renaissance to the university's architectural program attracting the best minds in architecture.

ARCHITECTS

1. portfolio 25%
2. interview 15%
3. soft skills assessment 25%
4. academic performance 25%
5. ORE 15%
WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH TRAVEL?

Travel is fundamental to an architectural education. It is part of how we learn about design. However, it presents yet another barrier to minority students. I could tell you that by leaving my city and traveling I would develop a clearer perspective on the problem; or how by visiting some particular program or community overseas, I could learn about different ways to address our common problems. I believe this to be valid. However, I strongly believe that at the end of the day, the only way anything is going to change will be when someone rolls up their sleeves and starts working. We need a passionate, intensive commitment to getting the CDOL or a similar program going to redefine how we select and teach architects.

I HAVE THAT PASSION.

I see the lack of diversity in architectural education as a solvable problem. I am beginning to understand and care about this issue in a deeply personal way. I think the implications of a truly diverse architectural program are exciting and could impact the world in unforeseen and far-reaching ways. I would use the prize to travel about 25 blocks to the west side neighborhood of Cincinnati to work on getting the program introduced, grounded, and running. The Lyceum Foundation would essentially be sponsoring me to work full time on the CDOL. The program needs to be organized to be self-sustaining financially and educationally. I would start the CDOL as a nonprofit 501c and would work to engage local resources in cohesive ways to start re-defining the way architecture schools select students and produce realistic and useful PID/CBD projects. This competition challenges us to use our education to take an active role in shaping the world for the better. I say: If we want to change the world let’s start at home and change ourselves. I am willing to step up to that challenge.