Why is DEI important to Taubman College?

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
University of Michigan Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning

We want to create new knowledge, research and creative work across architecture, urban design, and urban planning that enables persons of different race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, gender expression, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, religious commitment, age and (dis)ability status to equitably shape their environment through buildings, design, and policies.

Who are we?

The A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning promotes the public good by engaging a diverse constituency in purpose-driven learning and research addressing the built environment. Through interdisciplinary education and research, we prepare graduates for positions of responsibility within a wide spectrum of professions, organizations, and institutions that shape the built environment on the local to the global scale.

What did we set out to do?

Develop strategies for achieving equity and diminishing bias, harassment, discrimination and intimidation in the college environment, and to achieve and sustain a critical mass of diverse students, staff, and faculty.

What did we find?

The good:

Our college values and respects students from different backgrounds and identities, and our faculty feel welcomed and respected.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN IS CONSTANTLY STRIVING TO CREATE THE MOST DIVERSE, EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR OUR STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF...

The bad:

Our surveys report feelings of isolation, judgment, and lack of commitment to DEI values, experienced and perceived disparities in treatment and distribution of resources, acts of discrimination, and lack of diversity of ideas and political views represented by students, faculty, and staff. We found that our hierarchies sometimes impede progress.

The opportunities:

Our college has signaled a strong commitment to DEI, with a budget allocation and strategic changes. We see opportunities for the broader inclusion of students, faculty, and staff in decision-making and open communication, and increased partnerships between faculty and staff.

What is DEI important to Taubman College?

What have we accomplished?

- Designated a DEI Implementation Lead.
- Changed college rules to include a new standing committee on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Conducted meetings and presentations with students, faculty, and staff to gather input for the plan.
- Initiated a College DEI Student Consortium.
- Implemented a new comprehensive Academic and Professional Student Conduct Policy.
- Offered the Taubman Michigan ArcPrep Program, serving as an entry for Detroit-based high school juniors from underrepresented backgrounds to the architecture field, and continued work on K-12 outreach programs.
- Offered the Taubman Michigan ArcStart Program, serving as an entry for high school and under-graduate students from underrepresented backgrounds to the architecture field.
- Hired a full-time staff member to manage the implementation of the DEI Strategic Plan.

What are our priorities for Year 2 (2017-2018)?

Short term:

- Increase opportunities for mentorships, particularly for people of color and women campuswide.
- Develop strategies for recognition of DEI efforts, with emphasis on awards and grants.
- Expand architecture enrichment/urban outreach K-12 programs.
- Revise hiring protocols to prioritize DEI goals.

Michigan students come from all 50 states and 122 countries. Our students are a mosaic of races, cultures, languages, religions, and points of view.

Long term:

- Increase the number of students from underrepresented back grounds, with emphasis on creating articulation agreements with colleges and universities who traditionally serve African-Americans and Latinos.
- Restructure curriculum, research, and creative work to be rooted in DEI values.
- Expand joint research with HBCU/HSI institutions.
- Deepen Detroit-based research projects to include more people of color.
- Expand international joint research to South America and Africa.

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“...in all our work, but particularly in our professional architecture degree program, we should pursue continuous improvement in the service of excellence and equity. Through academic innovation, pipeline programs, and partnerships with practitioners, Taubman College can make progress on an existential challenge facing the U.S. architecture world: lowering the barriers to entry, access, and success that distort the demographics of our field and undermine its credibility.”

— Jonathan Massey, Taubman College Dean