AIA DIVERSITY RECOGNITION PROGRAM 2010

WWW.AIA.ORG/DIVERSITY

AIA Diversity Recognition Program Application Form

Applicant name

Boston Architectural College

Name of firm (if applicable)

Link to firm Web site (if applicable)

www.the-bac.edu

Applicant mailing address

Boston Architectural College
320 Newbury Street
Boston, MA 02115

Applicant e-mail address

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Applicant phone number

617-585-0126

Title of program/initiative

The BAC: Implementing an Institutional Commitment to Diversity

Link to program/initiative Web site

www.the-bac.edu

Description of program/initiative

The Boston Architectural College was founded in 1883 to be an accessible, urban, practice-based alternative to traditional professional design education. Intrinsic to that mission has been a commitment to increasing diversity within the design professions. We have focused on developing intrinsic long-term policies and procedures that eschew temporary "programs, in order to focus on initiatives that evolve into embedded practices, and rigorous self-analytical assessments of our progress. We strive to produce work environments and student/client/practice service bases that reflect the society we serve, rather than perpetuating traditional demographic patterns within our design professions.

This AIA Diversity Recognition Program Application form contains information about our interlocking systems of student and staff recruitment, retention, and community engagement that enable us to best reflect the diverse communities and global populations we need to serve in order to sustain our profession into the future. At the BAC, "diversity work is an on-going and systematically embedded practice that affects all our policies and procedures, embracing our core mission to be an openly accessible point of entry into the design professions.

2009–2012 Diversity Action Plan

PRESIDENTIAL VISION FOR DIVERSITY

Excellent design relies on the integration of diverse approaches to meeting client needs. Melding divergent ways of thinking, non-traditional approaches to solving problems, multi-cultural awareness, sensitivity to the needs of persons unlike ourselves, tolerance of ideas we may not initially understand, and openness to incorporating new ways of addressing needs is the essence of thoughtful, creative, innovative and client-centered design. Through multiple design disciplines and our commitment to listening, discussing, learning from and absorbing varying ways of approaching the development and implementation of design solutions, the Boston Architectural College expresses its fundamental commitment to being an open and welcoming community that serves the needs of diverse clients in a multi-cultural world.
– Dr Theodore C. Landsmark, President

The BAC's Diversity Vision is to become and to be nationally recognized as a vibrant, inclusive learning community where all members are fully respected, welcome and able to thrive. When this vision is fully realized, the College will reflect diversity not only in its student body, but in its faculty, curriculum, Practice Component, and the ways that we teach and learn.

As a leader in design education, and the largest independent college of spatial design in the United States, the Boston Architectural College (BAC) is in a unique position to have a significant impact on the future of the design professions. One of the most important ways in which the BAC seeks to meet the responsibility of implementing best practices is by increasing diversity among those who study, work teach, and practice in the fields of Architecture, Interior Design, Landscape Architecture and a wide range of allied industries.

This plan addresses a specific set of initiatives aimed at fulfilling the College's mission: to provide excellence in design education grounded in practice and accessible to diverse communities. This plan outlines current outreach and in-reach efforts under way at the BAC, and a three-year strategic action plan focused on five major objectives to increase diversity throughout the BAC community. These objectives encompass the establishment and review of policies, programming and the creation of innovative new partnerships in order to accomplish the plan's ambitious goals.

BAC STUDENTS

Our students currently work within and train for a global economy. Their clients cross all lines of race, language, religion and ability. Our students' designs will impact users from all walks of life for many years to come, shaping environments which will enrich lives. As our students ultimately succeed as project managers, firm principals and leaders in the design community, it will be due to their ability to think critically about how spatial design can affect and will be affected by these differences.

BAC FACULTY

The BAC challenges its faculty to incorporate teaching and learning about pluralism and inclusion into our design curricula. In order to highlight this aspect of our curricula we have designed specific courses and studios to address the needs of a more diverse and inclusive profession.

BAC PROGRAMS

Each semester the BAC hosts programming initiatives that are designed to engage our governance, staff, faculty and student body. These include gallery exhibitions, lectures, symposia, receptions and professional development events. Our programs teach and encourage our constituents to reflect on the significant impact that the work and cultures of individuals and firms of varying geographic location, race, gender, sexual orientation and ability can have on the built environment, and support sustainable communities. The BAC also contributes to the diversity initiatives of strategic partners such as the American Institute of Architects, Boston Society of Architects, American Society of Interior Designers, International Interior Design Association, Boston Society of Landscape Architects, ProArts Consortium and other organizations.

The BAC has initiated a comprehensive, campus-wide priority to increase diversity among students, faculty, volunteers and staff, and to increase retention, particularly among those students who face the most serious obstacles to success. With the continued support of our dedicated volunteer leadership, a solid infrastructure, the growth of successful programs and the addition of new initiatives, the BAC will continue to lead the way in creating the diverse design school of the 21st century.

POSITION ON DIVERSITY

Diversity The BAC broadly defines diversity to include race, national origin, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, socio-economic class, religion, political persuasion, age, and physical and learning ability. We also recognize the need to revisit and revise this definition periodically as our own understanding of diversity deepens.

Pluralism The term diversity indicates multiplicity. Pluralism implies an attitude or a position toward that multiplicity—specifically, an attitude that 1) advocates for the understanding of different perspectives, values, cultures, etc., as practiced by different groups; 2) acknowledges the values of such diversity.

STRATEGY

The BAC has a three-year strategic diversity action plan, focusing on five major objectives:

1. **Integrate pluralism and diversity more fully** throughout the organization;
2. **Increase the recruitment, retention and graduation** of minority and female students, as well as those from other underrepresented groups;
3. **Increase the recruitment of faculty and staff** who are minority, female and from other underrepresented groups;
4. **Utilize diversity training and dialogues to help** create a more inclusive climate where all community members can thrive;
5. **Develop a comprehensive multicultural marketing** communications plan as part of an ongoing diversity in-reach and outreach effort.

These five objectives will be accomplished through a wide spectrum of strategies and action steps throughout the entire organization, over the short and long term.

2009–2012 Diversity Action Plan

OBJECTIVE 1 Integrate Pluralism and Diversity more fully throughout the BAC.

- **Re-invigorate the Diversity Advisory** Committee, composed of a broad representation of the entire BAC community, with a firm charter, clear lines of reporting, responsibilities and support from leadership.
- **Communicate the Diversity Council** mission and vision statement, along with a definition of diversity for the BAC, and develop a calendar of events that will drive the organizational diversity initiative to produce a thriving, inclusive environment.
- **Engage the entire BAC community** (faculty, staff, students, firms, alumni, and governance) in the spirit and work of creating an inclusive environment, where differences are truly valued and where all are welcome and can thrive.
- **Integrate diversity and issues of universal** design into syllabi across the curriculum.
- **Expand the focus of diversity within** governance by increasing efforts to create a diverse membership, and by establishing and adhering to guiding principles of diversity.
- **Develop a statement of studio culture** that incorporates the concepts of diversity and pluralism.

OBJECTIVE 2 Increase the recruitment, retention and graduation rate of minority and female students, as well as those from other underrepresented groups.

- **Increase representation for students from** underrepresented groups to 30%.
- **Establish recruiting programs in high** schools, with emphasis on recruiting underrepresented groups.
- **Develop relationships with vocational and** specific high schools that have design programs focused on under-served populations. Establish formal mentoring and early design exposure programs via partnerships with ACE, City Year, HBCUs and other national organizations.
- **Develop programs to increase outreach** to non-traditional students working or studying in a related field or institution. These may include: Franklin Institute, ITT Tech, Roxbury Community College, vocational schools, adult learners, landscapers, construction workers and managers.
- **Collect and analyze demographic data** to better understand our attrition rates.
- **Establish relationships with minority and** women designers with global perspectives and experiences, and highlight their work in lectures, exhibits, and other forums.
- **Establish an institutional shared** "prospects" list of contacts to enhance our staff, faculty and supplier diversity.

OBJECTIVE 3 Increase the recruitment of faculty and staff who are minority, female and from other underrepresented groups.

- **Set target goals to increase diverse** faculty representation.
- **Develop a diversity recruiting toolkit,** containing practical advice and resources to increase the diversity of candidate pools when hiring staff and faculty.
- **Develop a diversity recruiting strategy** and a branding campaign focused on both active and passive candidates, with special emphasis on under-served Haitian, Latino, Cape Verdean and Asian populations.
- **Continue BAC joint programming with** both National Organization of Minority Architecture Students (NOMAS) and establish the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE).
- **Develop innovative partnerships with** specialized design high schools nationally (e.g., CHAD in Philadelphia) to promote diversity.
- **Garner community support for a diverse** workforce by including diverse professional and civic associations in BAC events.

OBJECTIVE 4 Utilize diversity training and dialogues to help create a more inclusive climate where all members can thrive.

- **Create a common understanding and** language within the BAC community around diversity and inclusion, utilizing best leadership practices from professionals in other fields.

OBJECTIVE 5 Develop a comprehensive, integrated, multicultural marketing communications plan as part of an ongoing diversity 'in-reach' and outreach effort.

- **Develop consistent, clear and ongoing** strategies that will integrate diversity into all marketing and communications efforts to all internal and external audiences.
- **Conduct at least four cultural celebrations** or events throughout the year to sponsor and promote diversity and inclusion.
- **Develop a PR Strategy to gain favorable** press and submit op-ed pieces to run in diverse publications, such as *Black Enterprise, Hispanic Business, Out, Seventeen, Slate, Building, Color*, etc.
- **Create a yearly diversity progress report** that is available to key stakeholders on the BAC website.
- **Redesign the diversity section of the** BAC website to be more prominent, with high-profile, up-to-date-links to active resources and ongoing practices.

Application for the 2010 AIA Diversity Recognition Program

Boston Architectural College –

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>
> – BAC President Theodore C. Landsmark, M.Env.D., J.D., D.F.A. (Hon.), Ph.D.

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The BAC Diversity Action Plan and this document describe contain information about our interlocking systems of student and staff recruitment, retention, and community engagement that enable us to best reflect the diverse communities and global populations we need to serve in order to sustain our profession into the future. At the BAC, "diversity work" is an on-going and systematically embedded practice that affects all our policies and procedures, embracing our core mission to be an openly accessible point of entry into the design professions.

Diversity as a BAC Staff Commitment

Our commitment to diversity begins at the top. For the past 12 years, the Boston Architectural College has been led by our President, Dr. Theodore C. Landsmark. Ted was National Chair of the AIA Committee on Diversity from 2003 to 2005; under his leadership, the Committee completed a four-phase study, responding to a 2004 resolution by AIA delegates at the AIA national convention in Chicago "to strengthen the demographic diversity of the design professions." The AIA honored Ted with its Whitney Young Jr. Award in 2006. Professor Kathryn H. Anthony, Ph.D., recipient of the 2003 AIA Honor for Collaborative Achievement, wrote of Ted that "His personal, academic, and professional background has offered him a unique set of lenses through which to view our architectural profession. Throughout each of his careers, he has addressed key social issues. He has made significant and long-lasting contributions to promoting diversity and to the causes that Whitney Young espoused."

Ted brought focus to national efforts to diversify the architectural student community during his term as President of the American Collegiate Schools of Architecture, and has served the Boston community through chairing Mayor Thomas Menino's Task Force on School Assignment, a 16-member task force that collected public opinion on how students should be assigned to public schools, an issue that has been the subject of racial controversy in Boston since court-ordered busing started 30 years ago.

Along with our President, the BAC benefits from the work of Michael James, our Director of Diversity and Community Relations. Michael develops, implements and oversees programs and processes that promote and sustain diversity, equity and respect within the BAC community. In addition, he has implemented a number of community relations activities intended to foster and increase diversity and inclusion within the BAC community. Michael was recently awarded the *Cheryl Troy and Craig Wood Humanitarian Award* from the Northeast Human Resources Association, the *Rosoff Mentoring Award* and a commendation for diversity leadership from Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick.

The BAC's work in diversity does not stop in the administrative offices. The programs and initiatives we describe here are the results of collaborative work by dozens of BAC staff: our Institutional Advancement office and our External and Government Relations office; our Practice and Advising staff; our Provost and Associate Provosts, our school Heads and Education Directors; and by our students and our volunteer faculty.

Outreach, Recruitment and Mentoring

The BAC is committed to developing an awareness of the design professions, and an eagerness to study, among young people throughout the Boston metropolitan area through a series of interconnected programs. Outreach to middle school and high school students, at their schools and at public events, is conducted while staff also run highly successful educational programs, at the BAC, for Boston's high school students that engage them in the world of design. These activities also help the staff to identify ongoing resources that the BAC can provide for their future.

Early Outreach: *Youth Explore Design* at *BuildBoston*

Each November, the Boston Society of Architects conducts the *BuildBoston* professional and trade conference, attended by over 15,000 members of the design and construction community. BAC President Ted Landsmark and Nancy Jenner of the BSA lead a highly interactive session for 300 Boston area middle-and high-school students to explore the Build Boston tradeshow floor, view the design exhibits, and learn about design careers from local design professionals. The workshop portion of the experience includes an opportunity for students to ask questions within both a group Q&A format and one-on-one with designers.

Any architect participating in *BuildBoston* is welcome to join the panelists in talking one-on-one with the students after the presentation. *Youth Explore Design* is a great opportunity for students to learn about the professional community and its opportunities, and for designers to meet tomorrow's colleagues and clients. We believe that the encounters enrich our profession and industry, and encourage students to think about a career in design.

Engaging Young People and their Neighborhoods: Youth Community Design Summit

Over fifty young people aged 12 to 18 from across Boston came together on a Saturday in 2008 for Boston's first Youth Community Design Summit. The summit, sponsored by the Community Design Resource Center of Boston, a joint venture of the BAC and the Boston Society of Architects, brings together Boston's youth, community organizations, and building industry professionals for a day of brainstorming, learning, and creating design solutions to increase neighborhood safety.

"There's a need to turn the discussion from safety meetings into action that addresses the people who are most affected by these issues. Who better to address the city's issues than the youth

experiencing them everyday?" said Michael James, CDRC-Boston Board Member and BAC Director of Diversity and Community Relations at the Boston Architectural College.

"This Summit will strengthen the voice of young people and examine their perspective on their communities' most critical needs. This is more than a one-day activity, it's an opportunity for youth to deal with daily issues in a constructive fashion and expose them to different career options. We hope that they will walk away will a new set of critical thinking skills that will help them problem-solve in their communities and every day lives."

The students spent their day examining previously identified neighborhood safety "hot spots" throughout Boston, with an eye toward creative and practical solutions involving the physical environment – reclamation of abandoned or underused properties, increased visibility between the street and its neighbors. The students, mentored by experienced professionals and students from the BAC and other Boston design colleges, conducted spatial and material analysis, and developed and presented design and development proposals to leaders of numerous community organizations.

The Summit will be repeated this year and will be followed with an opportunity for youth-led teams to develop and build a design solution that promotes safety, identity and development in one of the city's neighborhoods.

Entering the Schools: BAC and Citizen Schools

Citizen Schools operates a national network of apprenticeship programs for middle school students, helping them to develop the academic and leadership skills they need to do well in school, get into college, and become leaders in their careers and in their communities. At middle schools in Boston and across America, students are teaming up with adult volunteers to create WOW! Projects. In only ten 90-minute after-school sessions, student apprentices make films, build solar cars, argue mock trials, calculate carbon footprints...whatever their volunteer Citizen Teachers inspire them to do.

Kara Peet, BAC Assistant Director of Community and Program Services, and BAC design instructor Hyacinth John, Assoc. AIA., led a ten-week student design project for the renovation of the Jackson Square transit station and its surroundings. Eleven middle school students worked in the BAC's studios every week, received critiques from BAC faculty, and presented their designs alongside ten other teams from other schools at a demonstration day at Northeastern University. Kara has also served as a volunteer juror at the Citizen Schools' WOW! program, which exposes middle school students to the design professions and possibilities.

Bringing Students into the BAC and Boston's Neighborhoods: Explorations of Public Space and Public Art

In the Summer of 2009, the BAC's Landscape Architecture Department partnered with the Boston Youth Fund to provide work and research opportunities for inner-city youth from area high schools. Six high school summer interns were teamed with three BAC Student Mentors in an effort to research and document public art in the city of Boston. The students looked specifically at works supported by the Edward Ingersoll Browne Fund exploring the intersection of public art, public space, and the role the works have on developing a sense of community.

The BAC Student Mentors, under the direction of Kevin Benham, the BAC's Director of Landscape Architecture Foundation Studies, trained the high school summer interns in a variety of graphic skills that include photography, sketching, site surveying, Photoshop, portfolio

production, printing and binding. The research and documentation will culminate in an exhibition at the Boston Architectural College in November that coincides with a symposium being conducted by the School of Landscape Architecure Head Pat Loheed on Public Arts.

Our Flagship Youth Opportunity: BAC Summer Academy

Since 1974, we have conducted the BAC Summer Academy, a four-week design program that enables high school students from Boston and nearby communities to explore design fundamentals. Through hands-on studio projects, field trips, office visits, discussions, and presentations, BAC Summer Academy introduces students to the process of design. Students investigate the disciplines of architecture, landscape architecture, interior architecture, and urban design; explore creative ways of making and shaping ideas; and become more astute observers of their own neighborhoods and cities.

Since its inception with a cohort of ten students, the BAC Summer Academy has grown to enroll 80 participants annually, of which over 30% are students of color. Program participation has averaged 45% female students, providing young women an exciting opportunity to discover what has traditionally been a male-centered profession.

Exposing diverse youth to the BAC Summer Academy experience is an investment in our next generation of designers – design professionals who look like the people they design for, and come from the places that most need their service, providing diverse youth with a chance to become energized by design challenges and realize that there is a place for them in these important professions.

Upon entry to the BAC Summer Academy, youth begin to ask questions of the world around them, strategize creative ways to respond to design challenges, and learn how to communicate their design ideas, both as individuals and as members of teams. Students exhibiting much growth throughout their participation in Summer Academy, build confidence in their abilities and envision being members of the design community into their future, as professionals or informed citizens.

All Summer Academy graduates are guaranteed admission to the BAC and parents and students often receive counsel about study in programs nationally at the college level.

Serious Financial Commitment: the Houseman Scholarships

Established in 2005 through a million-dollar gift (the largest in the BAC's history), the Robert Houseman and Richard Kirkham Fund for Diverse High School Students Entering the Design Professions is used to address the deficiencies and disparities in demographic diversity within the design professions. The Houseman Program contributes to this achievement and leads the way toward supporting and mentoring diverse youth as they commit to higher education and a future in the field of design.

The Houseman Scholarship Program offers three levels of opportunity to diverse youth, beginning with entrance into BAC Summer Academy:

- *Houseman Summer Academy Scholarship.* Eight full-tuition scholarships are awarded annually to prospective BAC Summer Academy high school students from underrepresented groups who exhibit financial need and express an interest in design.
- *Houseman Fellowship.* Four of the eight Houseman Scholars are selected annually to return the following summer as leaders who work with, mentor, and inspire the new class of BAC

Summer Academy students. A financial award is provided for their service and achievements.

- *Houseman Professional Programs Scholarship.* Every year, one former Houseman Scholar in her/his senior year is selected to receive this scholarship, which waives tuition and fees for the first two years at the BAC and covers a substantial amount of tuition for the remaining time of study toward a BAC professional design degree.

Through the multi-level opportunities of the Houseman Program, participants develop their skills in leadership, critical thinking, and design communication. Returning for a second year, Houseman Fellows develop into motivated role models who are mature, enthusiastic, altruistic, participatory, dedicated, and collaborative - young people who realize the importance of building community through design.

The Houseman Professional Programs Scholarship enables this audience to continue their growth at the college level. Houseman students enter the BAC with basic design skills and an important understanding of the studio experience, which supports their success as they dedicate themselves to the intensity of design school. Throughout their time at the BAC, their design education grows stronger as does their continued service to the design community in related institutional organizations such as National Organization of Minority Architects Students (NOMAS). Houseman students also become natural BAC Summer Academy & Houseman Program Ambassadors, providing outreach to youth who will follow in their footsteps.

Through their experiences with BAC Summer Academy, Houseman Students and Fellows get to know staff and faculty advisors, and develop firsthand knowledge of how to navigate the BAC as a college student (many Houseman grantees are the first in their family to go on to higher education). This first-hand experience and insight into the educational process breaks down barriers and establishes a more successful transition from high school to college and eventually into the profession.

Since 2005, 36 students have participated in the BAC Summer Academy as Houseman Summer Academy Scholars, exploring the field of design. Of that group, twelve have returned to serve as leaders through the Houseman Fellowship, and six are currently attending the BAC through the support of the Houseman Professional Program Scholarship to explore Architecture, Interior Design, and Landscape Architecture. Other Houseman Scholars and Fellows have gone on to study design at Wentworth Institute of Technology, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Northeastern University, and Howard University.

The female proportion of the Houseman Summer Academy Scholars has steadily increased over the life of the program, from 17% at its inception in 2005 to 50% in 2009.

"I became involved with the Summer Academy in 2007 as a student, 2008 as a Houseman Fellow and I enrolled to the BAC 2008 fall under the Houseman Professional Scholarship. My involvement with the Summer Academy under the Houseman Program has helped shape me into a better student, mentor and designer. I attended the Summer Academy with the intention of learning about architecture and design, but my main objective was to find out if architecture was the right career for me. The projects I did and the information I acquired during the 4 week program, only fueled my curiosity about design. The more I leaned about architecture and design the more I fell in love with it. I was fortunate to be awarded the Houseman Professional Program Scholarship. I'm now entering my second year at the BAC and my knowledge of design has definitely expanded. What I learned about design during Summer Academy was extremely useful

information during my first year in college. Summer Academy had instilled in me the importance of sketching, iteration, model making and daring to explore your ideas. These skills became very useful in studio. Coming to the BAC turned out to be a good college choice for me. The design opportunities are endless and I'm growing as a design student. I strongly believe that without the Houseman Program I wouldn't be eager to discover and learn about architecture and designing. The program helped me discover my passion and fueled my growth as student and future designer." -Anesu Dhliwayo, Houseman Student 2007, Houseman Fellow 2008, Houseman Professional Programs Scholarship Recipient and BAC BArch Student 2008 – Present

"This has been the most beneficial summer I've ever had. The BAC Summer Academy provided me with so much diverse information in addition to architecture. I've discovered Boston and all its glory, and I've met people who have opened up my mind and taught me to think differently." -Angela Ngo, Houseman Student 2006, Houseman Fellow 2007

"Your contribution has helped me strengthen my desire to become an architect. I am now sure that architectural design is the field that I am interested in, and will most likely become my major in college. Having clients incorporated into our designs was my part of the program. I learned to consider the ideas of others while making a structure that embodied my views as well. I hope you continue offering these scholarships to students like me who want to pursue design as a career. Your gift has impacted me in a great way. Thank you." -Janaya Hart, Houseman Student 2007

"This program has helped me in so many ways and shown me that the design field is the right one for me. One of the best features of this program was having studio leaders working so closely to us and helping with the projects. This was so important to me because I got to ask questions about college, the field, and the different paths you can take to study design. Having the opportunity to attend this program allowed me to talk personally with people who have been in my position and discuss my concerns about entering this profession." -Sergio Guzman, Houseman Student 2009

Mentoring BAC Students of Color: NOMA & NOMAS

The National Organization of Minority Architects, founded in 1971, advocates on behalf of architects of color and for making all 117 North American schools of architecture increasingly diverse in their populations. Boston's NOMA chapter has been a powerful ally of the BAC, providing mentorship to our students including the 25% non-white students, helping them to understand that they have a place within the profession and its leadership. And in turn, the BAC has supported the local and national organization in a number of ways including use of our facilities, partnerships, sponsorships, staff support and publicity through internal and external media opportunities.

This past spring, NOMA's national office sponsored a design competition for housing in St. Louis that related to cultural norms and activity patterns of immigrants from the Caribbean islands. BAC faculty member Hyacinth John, Assoc. AIA, led a team of eight NOMAS students who met every Saturday from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. for the entire semester. NOMA Boston is sending this team to the NOMA national conference to present this work and to experience the fellowship of other minority design professionals.

- In conjunction with the 2008 AIA National Convention, *We The People*, The BAC celebrated Marshall E. Purnell FAIA, a principal at Devrouax + Purnell Architects and Planners PC in Washington, D.C., with a champagne reception and the opening of the exhibition *2%: Women of Color in Design*. The reception, a well-kept surprise for the 84th president of the AIA, was co-hosted by the BAC and NOMA Boston.
- In 2009 the BAC honored past president of the AIA, Marshall Purnell with an honorary Doctorate of Architecture and hosted a leadership think tank forum and dinner with diverse BAC students, numerous African American architects.

2%: Women of Color in Design was an exhibition in BAC's prominent McCormick Gallery, curated by Audrey O'Hagan, O'Hagan Architects, and Cedric Sinclair, BAC Assistant Director of External Relations, that displayed the work of thirty women designers, many of whom are among the exclusive ranks of the two hundred plus female architects licensed in the United States. The BAC recognized AIA's national convention as the opportunity to show stellar design work with design projects including built and unbuilt projects, landscape, furniture design, and research representing a diverse, experienced body of established, licensed architects such as Allsion Williams of Perkins + Will and emerging professionals such as Kimberly Dowdell of HOK. The gallery remained very busy throughout the week, in conjunction with other AIA related events held at the BAC. The exhibition subsequently traveled to the 2009 AIA convention in San Francisco.

The BAC community welcomed many AIA Board members, including in-coming AIA President Marvin Malecha; iconic African American architects Robert T. Coles, Sharon Sutton, J. Max Bond Jr., M. David Lee; Cheryl McAfee and Bill and Ivenue Stanley in a filled-to-capacity Cascieri lecture hall to witness one of the most emotional moments of the 2008 AIA National Convention. BAC President Ted. Landsmark noted to the group, "This is likely the most diverse group of distinguished guests we have ever had in Cascieri Hall."

Addressing Perceptions of Interdisciplinary Inequality

Students have occasionally expressed frustrations about perceived inequalities associated with becoming professionals in the various design professions. In schools offering multiple degree paths, students, especially women, choosing to become interior designers or landscape architects have sometimes indicated they felt professionally diminished in the eyes of students (primarily men) studying architecture or engineering. We have sought to address these perceptions of inequality through two initiatives.

In conjunction with the University of Cincinnati, and with assistance from design educators at national universities, we began a series of conversations on curricular overlaps and divergences between professional studies in architecture and interior design. These national *Inside/Out* conversations have taken place over the past year on various campuses and at ACSA and IDEC meetings in Cincinnati, St. Louis, Savannah, and this fall in Boston. Over 100 design educators have participated, from more than 50 schools. While outcomes of these meetings cannot yet be assessed, the discussions have supported further scholarly research into design teaching and expected learning outcomes, with a goal of determining what each professional discipline contributes toward improving the quality of our built environments, with particular emphases on sustainability, ergonomics, and human factors engineering. By implication, the

discussions are addressing how designers can better collaborate to improve client service, and the perception of what differing disciplines contribute toward improving design outcomes.

On the BAC campus, we have brought together women designers on our faculty and in our governance in both architecture and interior design to discuss the challenges they have faced as women design professionals, and whether the disciplines they chose affected their career paths as successful practitioners. These *Culture of Equality* discussions are also inconclusive at this time, but they have fostered a sense of collegiality across disciplines that we believe will inform our student advising and mentoring around perceptions of gender inequity and professional disciplinary discrimination.

Mentoring Gay, Lesbian and Transgender BAC Students: *StudioQ*

The founding principle of StudioQ, directed by the BAC's Associate Provost for Student Development, Rich Griswold, is that people are able to teach and learn more effectively in a comfortable, accepting environment. By providing supportive and safe forums for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning people, as well as their heterosexual allies, students can come together and share and discuss issues specific to themselves. StudioQ also endeavors to create unity between GLBTQ and straight people at the BAC and in the surrounding community.

StudioQ organizes monthly activities and events at which GLBTQ people meet, socialize, and network professionally, and encourages lively discussions of current GLBTQ-related issues within and beyond the College.

Enabling Masters' Students to Pursue their Goals: the Distance M.Arch

The BAC's Practicing NAAB accredited Professional Distance Master of Architecture program enrolls over 70 students from across America for a uniquely blended program of online and face-to-face learning, allowing students to pursue an M.Arch without having to give up their employment or their personal and family commitments in their home communities. Professionals from Florida to Alaska spend five semesters to complete coursework and thesis research. Country of origin for the current cohorts include Egypt, Colombia, Albania, and South Africa, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Indonesia and Venezuela.

Since its inception in January 2007, 98 students have participated in the Distance M.Arch program – 36% are women, and 26% are students of color. The program conducts outreach at colleges, professional events and AIA regional chapters throughout the US, and has begun a targeted recruitment among graduates of design programs at HBCUs.

Accessibility and Universal Design

The Boston Architectural College has a commitment to providing a curriculum and learning environment that fully incorporates universal design and accessibility as a core element. The curriculum of all degree programs highlights Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and requirements:

- Universal Design within Interior Design studios is stressed from Foundation through Design Degree Project/Thesis.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act is explained and experimented with in Interior Design Studio 2, Human Factors & Codes, Non-residential Design Studio, and of course

the capstone courses for the both paths, Degree Project for undergraduates and Thesis for masters candidates.

- ADA standards are covered in each of the Landscape Architecture studios starting with the third LA studio through degree project. In addition, ADA requirements are a part of design detailing and grading plans in practice design offices or landscape design-build employment and permitting processes that our students engage in their jobs.
- Programming and Codes includes a full class lecture on accessibility (including a slideshow by former Mass. Architectural Access Board Director Deb Ryan). The concept of Universal Design is introduced and compliance with codes and standards described. An "Accessibility Worksheet" is required of each student with information specific to their project.

Outside the curriculum, the BAC partnered with the institute for Human Centered Design during a recent campus renovation to ensure that the BAC campus is accessible and a leading example of universal design in practice. "We have loved the huge challenge of working with the largest and most diverse architectural community in the nation on the newest chapter for this venerable building – truly an illustration of How Buildings Learn." Said Valerie Fletcher, Executive Director, Institute for Human Centered Design.

Earlier this year, the United States Access Board held a major meeting, with Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick among the day's guests. A panel discussion moderated by Board Member Joseph Cirillo and Valerie Fletcher, Executive Director of the Institute for Human Centered Design, explored ways to promote education in accessible design, a subject of strong interest to the Board. BAC President Ted Landsmark was one of the featured panelists, along with Diane Georgopulos, former president of the Boston Society of Architects, and Polly Welch, a former professor of architecture currently with the Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management.

Success as a Result of Diligent Everyday Effort

In the past ten years, the BAC has roughly doubled in enrollment. Over that period, our diversity efforts have had clear successes. Our students of color have increased from 13% to nearly 25% of our total student population, and our female students have gone from 26% to consistently more than 40%.

Students successfully completing the BAC are also becoming more diverse than ever due to increased mentoring, practice advising, the enhancement of the Learning Resource Center, and an ESOL Speak Group (a support and social group for International Students.) Ten years ago, the BAC graduated 16 students, two of whom were women and only one who was non-white. Now, among the 79 students who completed one of our degree programs in 2008, fully half (50.6%) of our new graduates were women, and 28% were students of color. The diversity of our staff has also increased by more than 20% over the course of the last decade. The BAC is proud of its achievements in increasing the diversity of the design professions, but continues to look for ways to make our program – its faculty, its students, its staff and its graduates – more representative of the many histories and perspectives of American life.

Community-Rooted Design

The BAC is rooted in a long history of engagement with Boston's professional design, engineering, development and construction community. This has led to a body of skills and professional experience that sets our students apart from those of any other design college. This is amplified by the deep tradition of service learning that has been instilled in them through their experience at the BAC – more than 300 community-based design studios, varied design/build initiatives completed in concert with neighborhood groups, and the many forums and public exhibitions created and supported by the BAC.

The economic downturn has left an inordinate number of our most talented students without work. Already the College has responded by stepping up efforts to align with non-profit organizations and offer our students' skills and services as they seek alternatives for earning practice-based credits and securing critical lost income. Current projects include an array of pre-feasibility, development and construction studies, technical assistance, master planning and design ventures, as well as mentoring, career discovery and instruction for inner-city youths. The BAC is establishing an innovative clearinghouse for significant numbers of small-to-medium size projects serving a broad group of community constituents throughout metropolitan Boston. We also expect to reach out to and develop collaborative relationships with design firms that have historically employed our students, and share the College's commitment to volunteerism and pro bono project involvement.

Throughout its long history, the BAC has distinguished itself as a diverse and inclusive lifelong learning institution. The new opportunities that are now presenting themselves offer the promise of engaging our brightest and most talented young designers with community organizations, in ways that will benefit the entire Greater Boston community in the years and decades to come.

<u>Community Design Center/ Community Design Resource Center of Boston</u>

During more than 40 years of service to the BAC and to the AIA, Don R. Brown, AIA Emeritus, has been a pioneer in developing the BAC's integrated academic and practice curriculum, and helped to create a national model for IDP. Since 1977, the BAC operated an internal Community Design Center, led by Don that has put students into direct service of community needs through the creation and teaching of focused Advanced Architectural Studio courses. In collaboration with Advanced Studios Director Karen Nelson, the CDC has offered at least one community-based design studio each semester, often more than one; these opportunities have become some of the most sought-after studio spots among our upper-division students. Some examples of community-based studios include:

- Designing a residential and workplace training center for Self-Esteem Boston, a non-profit serving women escaping domestic abuse. Self-Esteem Boston provides housing, food, clothing, and workplace preparation in a phased transition from crisis intervention and healing to re-entry into the community and the workplace, and CDC students were able to offer strong design recommendations that were sensitive and supportive of participants in their recovery.
- Offering design assistance to the Blackstone Community Center in the South End of Boston – one of the most diverse and vital community centers in the city. BAC students, community members and youth from a wide ranging background, along with staff and directors at the center were involved in every step of the design process.

- Addressing the Four Corners area of Dorchester – a long underserved neighborhood – to propose specific improvements and support the efforts of the Four Corners Main Streets initiative.
- Working with the South End Lower Roxbury Open Space Land Trust in a design-build studio to create a garden pavilion. In Spring 2008, our students met with economically challenged African American community members to select one of the students' collaboratively designed proposals for construction in open space near two Boston housing projects. Construction began this past April, as students and community members worked alongside one another to learn together how to prepare the site, build concrete formwork, tie-off rebar, and pour concrete.

There is a longstanding history at the BAC of identifying and sponsoring community design studios which typically provide opportunities for students to dedicate efforts to work with community-based groups that are often disadvantaged/culturally diverse/underserved. As emerging professionals, students come to understand/appreciate the need to volunteer and provide pro-bono design services to individuals who normally are not in a position to receive them.

In 2005, the BAC partnered with the Boston Society of Architects to launch the Community Design Resource Center of Boston (CDRC-Boston) which connects community organizations in Greater Boston with designers and other building industry professionals willing to offer their services pro bono or for reduced fees. The CDRC-Boston organizes education and discussion programs to help community members and professionals learn about collaborative, participatory processes for the design and development of Boston-area buildings and spaces.

CDRC-Boston, with offices at the BAC, began offering technical assistance to community organizations in February 2006. One of the latest design service projects, with the Women's Lunch Place in Boston, prompted enthusiastic response from designers, including many members of the American Society of Interior Designers New England chapter. The project included a needs assessment and space planning to assist the organization in the development of a new facility to better provide meals, friendship, advocacy, and support services for needy and homeless women and children. Those professionals who responded to the call for services expressed not only a strong commitment to give back to the community, but also deep, personal commitment to the WLP's longtime service to Boston's women.

Similarly, another design service solicitation for the Sportsmen's Tennis Club in Dorchester seemed to draw out all of the tennis fans in Boston's design community. CDRC-Boston received an overwhelming number of expressions of interest from more than 40 design firms and individuals. A key component of this project was the opportunity to advise Sportsmen's on sustainable, energy efficient strategies for their building, to create a more pleasant and healthy environment for visitors and users of the Club.

CDRC-Boston has also led a Community Design Symposium at *BuildBoston* 2006, assembling professionals from Greater Boston and around the country to share their knowledge on topics ranging from community process to materials reuse to the role that young people can play in shaping their neighborhoods.

From Sustainability to Social Justice: Solar Decathlon and Affordable Housing

The Boston Architectural College has fielded an entry in the current 2009 Solar Decathlon competition, sponsored by the United States Department of Energy. This year, in partnership

with engineering students from Tufts University, students from the BAC have constructed a zero-net-energy house called the *Curio.House*. Soon to be disassembled, shipped to the National Mall in Washington DC, and then lived in by our students for a week during the competition, the *Curio.House* performs remarkably well across the ten criteria that the DOE uses in judging competitors.

The BAC and Tufts have made use of the *Curio.House* to introduce issues of sustainability in visits to Boston area high schools, and we have involved high school students in a hands-on discovery of the assembly of solar panels in a special workshop in which those students actually fabricated electricity-generating solar panels that they took home afterward. The team has been active in local and national environmental conferences and festivals in Boston, Medford and Somerville.

It was never the intent of the BAC students to merely construct a prototype house that met the demands of physics; our team included economic accessibility in their design criteria as well. The proof of success recently came through the purchase of the Curio House by the nonprofit Housing Assistance Corporation on Cape Cod, who intend to use it after the competition has ended as the centerpiece of a new sustainable development under construction near Sandwich, Massachusetts. HAC's development, Community Green, is a demonstration project that provides a comprehensive answer to the housing and employment needs of Cape Cod's most marginalized populations while benefiting the broader community through economic development and environmentally respectful land use that support the goals of regional growth plans.

Community Green – 57 rental units, 5 single family houses, and an Enterprise Center – will be home to a diverse population, giving formerly homeless and lower income individuals and families with opportunities to live, learn, and work so that they can grow into healthy and productive citizens. The BAC/Tufts Team Boston Solar Decathlon Curio House will be the first occupied building in this new community.

Community-based Practice Alternatives

The most unique characteristic of the BAC is the concurrent learning model. Students earn academic credits working in approved positions at more than 300 Greater Boston design firms during the day, and attend classes in the evening. This connects the theoretical with the practical, affording students the ability to test for licensure upon graduation. The BAC stands alone as the only degree-granting design college in the nation which comprehensively integrates classroom instruction and practice-based learning into every phase of a student's education.

Along with traditional Practice placements in architectural firms, the College has stepped up its efforts to align with non-profit organizations. Current projects include an array of pre-feasibility, development and construction studies, technical assistance, master planning and design ventures, as well as mentoring, career discovery and instruction for inner-city youths. The BAC is establishing an innovative clearinghouse for significant numbers of small-to-medium size projects serving a broad group of community constituents throughout metropolitan Boston. We also develop collaborative relationships with design firms that have historically employed our students, and that share the College's commitment to volunteerism and pro bono project involvement.

As an urban educational institution, the BAC is uniquely positioned to connect with city neighborhoods. Through this interaction, the College is prepared to play a significant role in President Obama's plan for universal voluntary citizen service, and share in his vision to rebuild urban neighborhoods nationwide.

Throughout its long history, the BAC has distinguished itself as a diverse and inclusive lifelong learning institution. The new opportunities that are now presenting themselves offer the promise of engaging our brightest and most talented emerging designers with community organizations, in ways that will benefit the entire Greater Boston community in the years and decades to come.

Diversity Within, and Diversity Beyond

Each of the projects described have allowed us to support and nurture the full range of BAC students across categories of gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation; and allowed us to serve the changing communities of the Boston metropolitan area. Measured one by one, they have been successful initiatives; together, they represent something greater – a sustained and systemic belief that diversity is a core educational value.

The Boston Architectural College has a sustained and systematic belief that diversity is a core educational value. The BAC carries a responsibility to bring design to underserved communities, and to make the community of designers themselves more representative of the rich and varied experiences of our citizens. We continue to find new ways of fulfilling this responsibility.