

ACSA Diversity Achievement Award

2015-2016 Winner Submission Materials

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University of Louisiana - Lafayette

EFFORTS IN INCREASING DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND RETENTION OF MINORITY STUDENTS IN THE ULL SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

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During my time at the ULL School of Architecture and Design, I have made it my duty to involve myself in activities, committees, organizations and departmental initiatives which would aide the enrollment, retention and success of minority design students from diverse backgrounds. This document is a record of my efforts, support and participation in initiatives aimed towards achieving more diversity in the School of Architecture and Design at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.



Above: Kiwana T. McClung, Advisor; Below: UL NOMAS members watch the L'eau de la Danse performance during the unveiling of the Cajun Cloud student-built installation last spring.



MINORITY STUDENT SUPPORT AND RECRUITMENT

THE BLACK FACULTY AND STAFF ASSOCIATION
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN
RECRUITMENT/RETENTION/CAREER COMMITTEE

The Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA) is a campus organization dedicated to supporting the efforts of African American faculty and staff at the University, while simultaneously working to support the African American undergraduate and graduate students in their academic endeavors. The organization has created a culture of mentorship to young faculty and students, particularly graduate students since retention rates for African American and Doctoral students at the University is quite low. The BFSA also provides monetary support for students, participates in university orientation activities and holds an annual honors awards ceremony for high-achieving African American students in the University. Several of the African American SOAD students have been honored at these ceremonies and I regularly update our minority students on opportunities and scholarships provided through the BFSA.

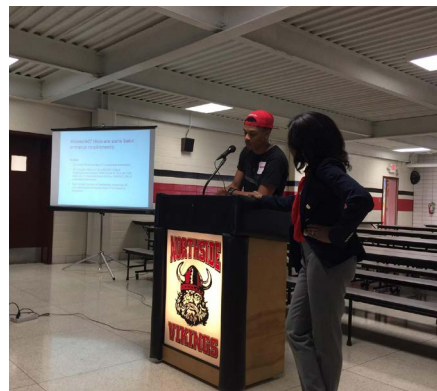


Pictured: Kiwana McClung (Center) with SOAD Students Brooke LeBlanc (Left) and Paydrian Arvie (Right). Both students were honored at the Annual Black Faculty and Staff Honors Awards Ceremony

The School of Architecture and Design's Recruitment/Retention/Career Committee was formed to coordinate recruitment of new students to the school and address issues with the retention and success of our attending students. My participation on this committee has resulted in our department's recruitment efforts extending to larger cities in Louisiana, like Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Additionally, I've made an effort to extend our recruitment efforts into more diverse/minority schools in Lafayette.



Left: Recruitment visit and charrette at Eleanor McMain Secondary School in New Orleans, LA.



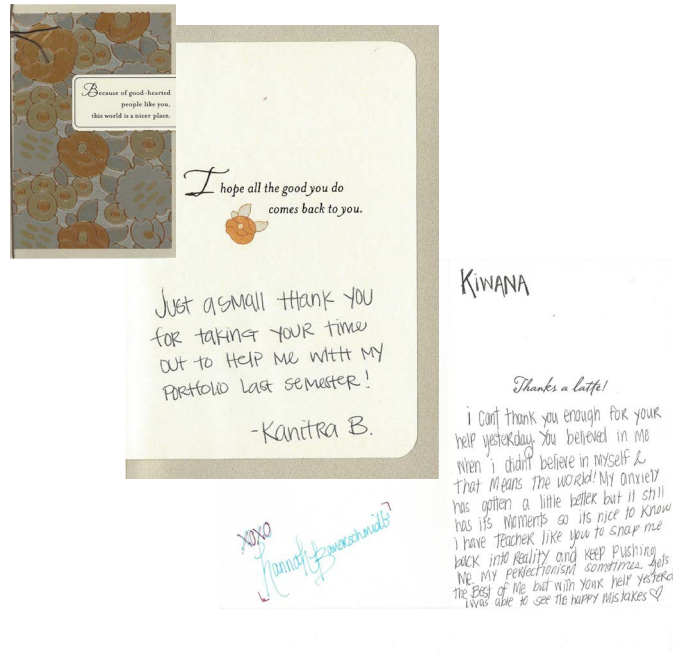
Right: Recruitment presentation at Northside High School, Lafayette, LA

ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT AND MENTORSHIP
COLLEGE OF THE ARTS
THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

Numbers are down in design programs across the country, making it ever more important to retain the students already enrolled in our department. Having once been a minority student myself, I understand the culture shock of being a young minority design major, and, often times, the first in the family to attend college. These students often lack the support and advisement needed to successfully matriculate through the design curriculum. Although I can't personally mentor each and every minority student, I make it a point to make myself available to any student that needs help and guidance. One area where I found I could make a significant impact is through academic advisement. I attend several advisor training courses a year and insist on meeting with my advisees several times a semester to ensure they stay on track with the curriculum. My Fall 2014 Advising Survey Results reveal that my advisees appreciate this approach.

Top right: Cards from students expressing their appreciation for help and advisement.

Bottom right: Fall 2014 Advising Survey Results, College of the Arts, School of Architecture and Design, Kiwana McClung



Fall 2014 Advising Survey Result

College of The Arts	
Architecture and Design	
McClung Kiwana	
Number Surveyed:	15
Is knowledgeable about my major courses	9.600
Is knowledgeable about additional courses (outside my major) and prerequisites	9.067
Is present and punctual for my appointments	10.000
Shows continued interest in my academic progress	9.533
Spends sufficient time with me	9.000
Is easy to talk to and is a good listener	9.667
Suggests helpful alternatives when I am facing academic difficulties	9.533
Recommends resources from which I can obtain assistance (such as The Learning Center and Financial Aid)	9.733
Number of Students who answered Yes to being punctual	15
Number of Students who answered No to being punctual	
University Average:	9.136
College Average:	9.320
Department Average:	9.310
Your Average:	9.692

THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF MINORITY ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS

ADVISOR

When I joined the faculty at the ULL School of Architecture and Design, I noticed a distinct lack of activity or engagement with the active student organizations. The National Organization of Minority Architecture Students (NOMAS) was newly formed, without an advisor and the least active organization in the department. As a member of the National Organization of Minority Architects, I felt it was important for me to be the link between the student and professional organizations. I took on the position as their advisor and immediately began meeting with the small group of five members. Over the last two years, NOMAS, has grown from five to twenty-six members. NOMAS collaboration with the other student organizations operating within the School of Architecture and Design has caused student organization activity to increase significantly. Furthermore, through the organization, I've been able to foster a culture of leadership and service among the students that, I believe, is increasing the attractiveness of our program and defying the stereotypes faced by so many minority students. Most of our members became top students in their studios after a year of engagement and became mentors to younger students, a practice which has created a family-like atmosphere in the organization. The organization meets weekly and encourages open, respectful discussion about the issues and challenges they face as young design students. Many of our members work part-time jobs in addition to their classes, yet they still find the time to participate in the organization's initiatives, community service projects and activities. I am especially heartened to witness the confidence they are developing as young designers and leaders through their participation in NOMAS.

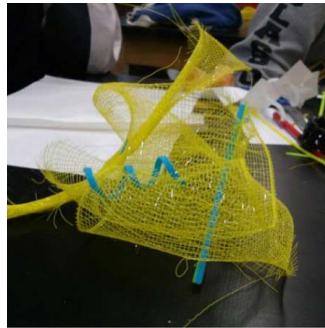


Pictured: Advisor and UL NOMAS chapter members meeting to discuss the scheme for the New Iberia Parish Rabies and Animal Control Shelter project.

THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF MINORITY ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION & MENTORSHIP EFFORTS

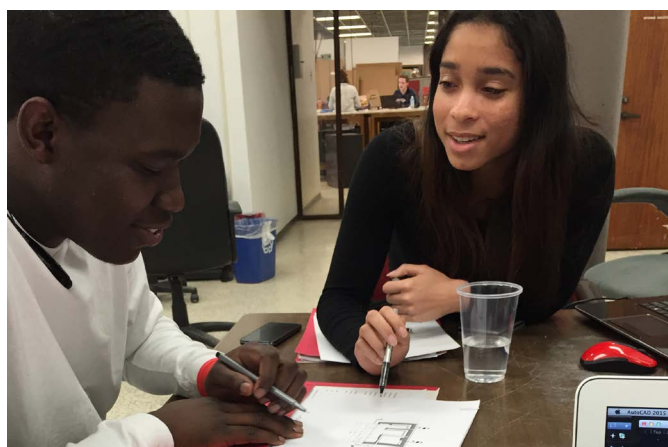
Members of the UL Chapter of NOMAS dedicates a significant amount of their time to the recruitment of high school students from minority backgrounds. Recruitment Visits are made to schools several times a semester and often include the administration of small charrettes and design projects.



Top Clockwise: NOMAS Members visit Northside High School, Lafayette, LA for a recruitment visit (Fall 2015) ; NOMAS Members participate in a Design charrette with Eleanor McMMain Secondary School students during a recruitment visit (Spring 2014).

Below: Former NOMAS President Brooke LeBlanc helps NOMAS member Theron Page with a design project.

Mentorship is one of the cornerstones of UL NOMAS membership. Keeping the members engaged in mentorship of underclassmen helps with the retention of minority students who may become overwhelmed with the demands of the program and/or feelings of isolation/marginalization. More recently, NOMAS has joined in with a departmental effort to increase mentorship and improve retention.



THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF MINORITY ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS *COMMUNITY SERVICE EFFORTS*

NOMAS members gained valuable construction experience while also participating in the service efforts of the department during their Habitat for Humanity Build Days. The School of Architecture and Design's Building Institute, headed by Professor Geoff Gjertson, works with Habitat for Humanity to design homes in under-served communities. UL NOMAS members donate several hours of their time each semester to the construction of these homes.



Pictured: Advisor Kiwana McClung and UL NOMAS chapter members Paydrian Arvie, Theron Page and William Molock participating in the construction of the NEXT house during a Habitat for Humanity build day.

THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF MINORITY ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS

DEPARTMENTAL AND COLLEGE SERVICE EFFORTS

For the last two years, the UL NOMAS chapter has collaborated with the UL Chapter of the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) for the Annual SOAD Crawfish Boil, which takes place every spring during the Festival of the Arts. This spring, several UL NOMAS members participated in the design and construction of the Cajun Cloud, a water installation designed with the help of UL SOAD graduate and fountain designer, Jim Garland. The installation honored Lifetime Achievement award recipient, Eddie Cazayoux.



Top: NOMAS Member Theron Page scales scaffolding to help construct the Cajun Cloud.

Above: UL NOMAS Member William Molock avoids the mist from the Cajun Cloud after learning he was allergic to bamboo while helping with it's construction.

Right: Former UL NOMAS President Brooke LeBlanc and former Vice-president Paydrian Arvie play within the Cajun Cloud after a long day of setup for the crawfish boil.



THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF MINORITY ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS

In the spring of 2015, the UL Chapter of NOMAS was approached by New Iberia Parish Rabies and Animal Control Shelter director Krista Burgett to help them re-imagine and design an addition to the shelter, which was violating several health, safety and facility codes/standards. The facility is operating at maximum capacity and the staff had serious storage and health concerns. Staff were also unsatisfied with the uninviting look of the facility and lack of curb appeal. After touring and evaluating the facility, the students came up with a scheme that takes advantage of the existing structure's ceiling heights, incorporating mezzanine storage above the animal cages. The students also designed an addition that solves the facility's issues with separation of specific species/animal conditions and lack of spaces for staff, while also improving the overall look of the facility. Included with the design was a cost estimate of the proposed changes. The students presented their design to a preliminary board on the New Iberia City Council, receiving favorable reviews and praise for their thoughtful and humane spatial solutions. The council unfortunately denied funding for the renovation pending leadership changes and reorganization at the city level. Nevertheless, the students gained valuable experience and skills during the duration of this project.



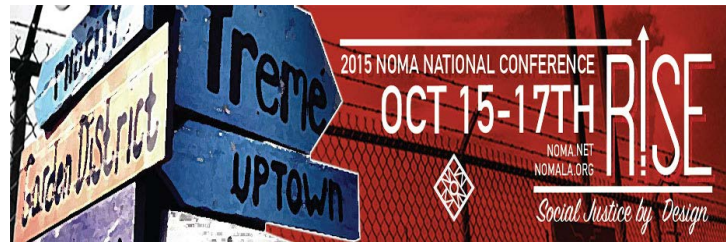
Clockwise: UL NOMAS members at the presentation to the New Iberia City Council; Interior rendering of mezzanine storage area over animal pens; Exterior rendering of improvements to shelter facade.



THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF MINORITY ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS

DESIGN SCHOLARSHIP PROJECTS

UL NOMAS members have been working hard all summer on their most recent submission to the Annual NOMA Student Design Competition. This fall, the 43rd Annual NOMA Conference will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana in October and the students will present their scheme for the revitalization of the historic Treme neighborhood, which was negatively impacted in the late sixties by the construction of an I-10 extension. Chapter members have made numerous visits to the site and learned a great deal about the history of the neighborhood through interviews of former residents and historians.



Clockwise: UL NOMAS members visit the historic Treme neighborhood in preparation for their submission to the Annual NOMA Student Design Competition. The competition theme this year is 'Rise: Social Justice by Design'.

THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF MINORITY ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS

ORGANIZATION GROWTH AND NEW MEMBERSHIP

Over the last two years, UL NOMAS has gained a reputation as an organization filled with leaders and hard-workers. Most of the members are leaders in the department and are often awarded for having the top projects in their studios. The UL chapter of NOMAS saw unprecedented growth this fall, jumping from five to twenty-seven members and the organization gains new members daily. The hard work of the UL NOMAS members and the family-like atmosphere of the organization grabbed the attention of other minorities looking for support, camaraderie, mentorship and opportunities to grow as designers. Currently, we have extremely low minority enrollment in our 5th year professional graduate program here in the School of Architecture and Design. As NOMAS advisor, I aim to help increase the number of minority students in our graduate program by fostering the young talent demonstrated by the members of the UL chapter of NOMAS. My hope is that we can eventually create a pipeline of young minority designers that could help diversify the profession, a goal shared by all of the professional organizations in our discipline. Thank you so much for your consideration.



Above: UL NOMAS members at the first meeting of the fall 2015 semester; UL NOMAS group picture with Advisor, Kiwana McClung.