



BACHELOR OF ARCHITECTURE PROGRAM
Woodbury University
Burbank, California

Building the Bridge to Architecture

Latino students comprise 35% of Woodbury University's enrollment. In the School of Architecture, however, Hispanic enrollment is greater than 40%, in part because the program's mission, curricular focus, and support systems are matched to the needs of the Latino population. Woodbury Architecture is the rare National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB)-accredited program that does not require a portfolio for entrance. Low-income communities rarely can afford art or design programs that result in portfolios, and instead Woodbury's Bachelor of Architecture (BArch) program targets students who display a passion for the discipline and a habit of hard work. The program actively encourages students to express their identities and value their heritage through the practice of architecture.

Consistent with the university's mission, the School of Architecture is committed to the training and education of innovative design professionals. The curriculum prepares students to balance the need to work competitively in the marketplace with the equally important concerns of ethical conduct and social responsibility. Woodbury's BArch develops the voices of the students it serves, and fosters respect for their natural, social, and cultural environments.

Program Elements

Woodbury's School of Architecture offers a comprehensive curriculum with a clear set of learning objectives that aligns with the guiding principles of the university and surpasses NAAB requirements. The school emphasizes a solid foundation in and continual development of core skills. Its studios and degree projects are issue-driven and designed to produce critical thinkers. It is committed not only to nurturing struggling students, but challenging, rewarding, and retaining strong students, by providing increased opportunities for independent study, teaching assistantships, student-faculty collaborations, and merit-based scholarships. In their first semester, all first-year and transfer students take orientation classes that emphasize the challenges of the program and help students identify their strengths and weaknesses. These sessions contribute to students' transition to the unfamiliar culture of higher education and of studio architecture. Each student has an advisor and faculty mentor, which is especially important in the first year. Fifth-year students work one on one with a thesis advisor.

The school is also committed to exploiting the regional laboratory that is Southern California, taking full advantage of its proximity to centers of fabrication, industry, media and entertainment, as well as natural, cultural, and academic resources. At the same time, the school recognizes the value of being part of a small university, with potential for engagement across disciplines. Integrated into the curriculum are several special programs that enhance the learning outcomes of our Latino students, like:

Study Abroad Opportunities - Every summer, students can take advantage of an extensive study abroad program that is equivalent to one regular semester. Students choose between Nanjing - Beijing and Barcelona for the first four-weeks, and Berlin and Rome - Paris for the second four-weeks. Fourth year students can also participate in the "Wet" and "Dry" sustainable studios. The "Dry" studio travels through the American Southwest studying the challenges associated with accessing water in an arid climate. The "Wet" studio travels to Latin America studying the challenges associated with a wet climate. This particular studio has been a great opportunity for Latino students to expand their understanding of their Latino roots, and for our non-Latino students to be completely immersed in Latin American culture.

CLEA / ELEA - Students and faculty of the School of Architecture are the Official USA representatives in the Council of Latin American Students of Architecture, *CLEA - Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Estudiantes de Arquitectura*. Each spring, two students travel to Latin America to participate in planning meetings for the annual week-long meeting held in October: Encounter of Latin American Students of Architecture, *ELEA Encuentro Latinoamericano de Estudiantes de Arquitectura*. The *Encuentro* has been held in Cuba, Columbia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Panama, and will be held in Guatemala in 2008.

aLA - In the summer of 2008, Woodbury Architecture started a four-week study-abroad program in Los Angeles taught completely in Spanish open to students from Latin America and Spain.

Universidad Alfonso X Exchange Program - the University sponsors an exchange program with the School of Architecture at Universidad Alfonso X (UAX) in Madrid whereby students from either institution can attend the other for one semester paying tuition at the home institution. Since the Woodbury courses are taught in English, Spanish-speaking Latino students play a special role as liaison for the students from Spain. Since the UAX program in Madrid is taught in Spanish, Latino students are the primary beneficiaries.

Evidence of Effectiveness

The number of Latino students finishing their degrees has risen nearly 90% since 2003. First-year retention rates for Latinos in BArch, a five-year program, surpass the university average by almost 5%. Also notable is that in the last five years, 17 Latino architecture graduates from Woodbury have been admitted to prestigious graduate programs including those at Columbia, Harvard, Yale, Syracuse, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern, Bartlett in London, Architectural Association in London, London School of Economics, University of Southern California, and University of California-Los Angeles.

Contact:

Norman Millar, Director of the School of Architecture
Woodbury University
7500 Glenoaks Boulevard
Burbank, CA 91510
norman.millar@woodbury.edu