

September 1, 2020

Dear De and the Design as Protest organizing team,

We have spent the last few weeks reviewing the details of the Design Justice demands, and wanted to update you on our status. As you know, a University is a complex organization, and we want to ensure we have commitment and buy-in at every needed level to commit to these important and significant changes.

01 Reallocate Police Funding

- *We demand that learning institutions confront, admit, and reconcile the harms that have been caused by the territorial expansion of universities into neighborhoods and their reliance upon police forces to surveil that expansion.*
- *We demand that schools commit to ending and foregoing contractual partnerships with police for campus safety, large events, and specialized services.*

In response to this demand:

- While the Sam Fox School does not have control over the University's police relationships, we have shared all these demands with the central University.
- As we look toward the fall, and a new set of needs related to COVID-19 and overall health and safety, we are not increasing security or police presence in our building to enforce new procedures. We will be working with students, staff, and faculty to develop a culture of mutual respect, rather than bringing in any additional security.

02 Reflect Spatial Injustice in Design Training & Licensing

- *It demands that all faculty be equipped to teach from canons of practice that extend beyond Eurocentric practice and aesthetics, include black and indigenous designers of color, and reflect histories of spatial injustice across its design and architectural curriculum.*
- *This also demands that students be equipped with pre-professional training that centers community and cultural competence in order to reduce future harm that may be imparted upon black and brown communities by emerging practitioners.*

In response to this demand:

- Assistant Professor Shantel Blakely is currently in the process of redesigning the Architecture History I and II courses.
- We have also received demands from undergraduate students to work with the Department of Art History & Archaeology in Arts & Sciences on Art History courses, and we are in conversation with that department.
- We are working with the Graduate Architecture Council to compile resources to be made available to faculty to support moving beyond Eurocentric practice and aesthetics.
- Beginning in spring 2021, we will offer two new courses that are meant to be introductions to community engagement and to St. Louis' racial and spatial history. These courses are meant to pair together, and give students a fundamental basis for entering and exiting communities, and for the context of working in St. Louis. These courses will both look at harm reduction as part of the approach to engaging students.
- We also will share this demand with the faculty and ask for their participation and feedback.

03 End CPTED Tactics

- *This demands that institutions acknowledge and correct the damage done by ignoring the plight of black America at the university and the design school level.*

- *This demands that architecture and design schools commit to supporting the emergence of design justice practices within the curriculum, training programs, and community partnerships at your institutions.*

In response to this demand:

- We are fully committed to supporting the emergence of design justice practices within the curriculum and community partnerships.
- We have been consortium members of Design Futures for 5 years, and intend to continue supporting this program.
- We also will share this demand with the faculty in both colleges and ask for their participation and feedback.

04 End Design of Prisons and Police Stations

- *For universities, this means making a commitment to restructuring design and architectural curriculum to acknowledge the history of spatial violence against black and brown communities and advocate for design schools to train young designers on anti-racist design strategies and practices.*
- *This also demands that schools withdraw from all institutional financial investments that support the carceral state and redistribute those funds to support students and communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the system.*

In response to this demand:

- We are still in ongoing conversations about ensuring that we are incorporating this acknowledgement to the history, and advocacy for antiracist design, fully into our curriculum and practices. We want to see buy-in and commitment from across the faculty, so this is something we will continue to pursue until we have a firm commitment.
- We are also exploring ways that we can more intentionally explore issues related to the design of alternative spaces for public safety. In the past, courses like Radical Design have explored alternatives to the carceral state, and we will be investigating ways to address these topics through studios and seminars.
- We also will share this demand with the faculty and ask for their participation and feedback.

Other Demands

The additional demands have relevance to our teaching mission, and we want to be sure to remark on them. All demands will be shared with our faculty, particularly in architecture, urban design, and landscape architecture, and we hope to encourage our faculty to explore the following topics in their courses and research.

Redefine metrics for affordable neighborhoods

- We will discuss this topic with our faculty, particularly those in urban design, and develop a clear strategy for incorporating this into our educational process, as well as really dissecting how metrics influence the idea of what is “affordable.”
- In addition, we have hired Melisa Betts Sanders of Blackarc Design to teach in our international housing studio in fall 2020, a core part of our graduate architecture curriculum. She will focus on housing in St. Louis, which we anticipate will bring attention and focus to the issues of housing as a human right and the racial complexities in our own city.

Shift public policies

- Again, we intend to share this demand with our faculty, as many address public policy through their research in design.

Enhance self-determination

- Our new introduction to community engagement course (title to be confirmed) will address self-determination as an important part of community-engaged work at the University. We emphasize

mutual benefit and invitation in all of our community partnership work, and intend to deepen the support and demand for this from our faculty and students.

Reimagine financial model of neighborhood design

- Again, we intend to share this demand with our faculty, many of whom deal with financial structures in teaching their studios and seminars.

Preserve and invest in black cultural spaces

- In addition to ongoing research and practice projects that seek to bring funding to preserve black cultural spaces, such as the support provided through the Divided City Initiative, we hope to offer studios and seminars that focus explicitly on this topic in the years ahead.

Thank you again for all of your efforts on this effort. We will continue to update you and others in our community as to our actions and ongoing commitment to racial justice, diversity, and inclusion in the Sam Fox School, and intend to share our response to this letter publicly. Your call is a challenge and an inspiration to our work, and we encourage you to continue to challenge us.

Thank you,

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