

Practice Component: A Model for Practice-Integrated Architectural Education

2025 AIA/ACSA Practice + Leadership Award

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What is “Practice” at The BAC?

The Practice Component is a “whole learner” approach to the architectural curriculum, involving high-impact, hands-on experiences within and beyond the classroom that accelerate students’ career growth and leadership.

The Boston Architectural College’s mission is to provide excellence in design education, **emerging from practice** and accessible to diverse communities. A vital aspect of this pursuit of excellence in architectural education involves an innovative approach to the practice of architecture through the “Practice Component” — a degree requirement where each student becomes part of a transformative practice-meets-academy ecosystem of integrated teaching and learning. By promoting the “Practice Component” as a model of excellence, we hope more schools will adopt this approach—in part or in whole—to provide students with greater opportunities to learn while earning money.

The goal of the Practice Component is to prepare design students through the act of learning by doing, grounded in professional work and reflection on how their chosen “Practice” path has helped them become agents of change. Students are ready to advocate, manage, and act ethically for the good of those they serve through empathy, collaboration, technical execution, and design implementation.

Architecture students satisfy two separate and complementary degree components:
1) the course-based Academic Component and
2) the experience-based Practice Component.

Bachelor of Science in Architecture:

Academic Component = 132 credits
Practice Component = minimum of 900 hours and Skill Level 6 (Engaged/Integration)

Bachelor of Architecture:

Academic Component = 150 credits
Practice Component = minimum of 3,000 hours and Skill Level 8 (Advanced/Synthesis)

Master of Architecture:

Academic Component = 60-90 credits
Practice Component = minimum of 3,000 hours and Skill Level 8 (Advanced/Synthesis)



Graduates recognized with “Practice Distinction” for demonstrating outstanding work in the Practice Component of their degrees.

Practice-Integrated Education

The Practice Component unifies a broad range of learning partners through a scalable curriculum that connects all BAC students with hundreds of adjunct practitioner faculty and firm partners across the world. It is delivered through a dedicated unit, the Practice Department, within the Office of Academic Affairs. The curriculum includes two core courses and an array of co-curricular offerings that challenge students to deeply engage in practice through teamwork, reflection, knowledge sharing, skill building, and mentorship applied within and beyond the classroom. As a result, students learn to self-direct their collaborations with communities, design firms, and clients, prioritizing the importance of applying academic knowledge directly to real-world challenges.



Dean of Practice making 2023 Commencement remarks celebrating the Valedictorians’ Practice achievements

What is “Practice” Experience?

As a concurrent co-operative education program, the Practice Component encourages a range of opportunities for student engagement in communities and the workplace, aligning with their individual career interests.

Examples of Practice Experience:

- Paid internships
- Full-time or Part-time jobs
- Career Services & Practice workshops
- Networking events
- Design competitions *
- On-Campus Jobs - Teaching Assistant, Library Aid, Admissions Ambassador, Learning Resource Center Tutor, Orientation Leaders, Beekeepers, Student Life Community Fellows, etc.
 - Federal Work Study jobs - Research Assistant, Job Board Assistant, Materials Library Assistant, etc.
- BAC Practice ConnEx Externships
- GO Fellowship @ The BAC
- Firm & Construction Site Visits
- Research or Teaching Fellowships
- Student Groups - i.e. AIAS, NOMAS, etc.
- Professional Organizations - AIA, NOMA, ULI, etc.
- Travel (up to 200 hours, exclude home region) *
- Research Papers & Presentations *
- Freelance Contract Work
- Community Service - Habitat for Humanity, community gardening, volunteering at the local food bank, etc.
 - Fabrication and Construction*
 - Teaching or Mentoring
 - Work Journaling

* only when the experience is not already counted towards course credit

Examples of Practice Settings:

- Professional Firms in Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Interiors, Design, etc.
- Gateway Office - The BAC’s community-based design uncenter with GO Fellows
- On-Campus (onsite, online, and hybrid)
- Nonprofits & Community-Based Organizations
- Development & Real Estate
- Construction or Engineering
- Facilities or Property Management
- Innovation & Technology
- Local or Federal Government
- Retail or Supplier Companies
- Pre-K-12 Schools
- Health & Social Services

Practice Guidelines

Eligible experience requires that:

1. The student has a **mentor or supervisor** who agrees to support them as they learn. The mentor/supervisor(s) signs-off on the hours reported by the student. Practice Hours Report Forms are due each semester.
2. The student collects and presents a portfolio of **evidence demonstrating the professional practice knowledge or skills** that they gained during their various practice experiences.
3. The practice experience **has not already been counted as academic credit** at any educational institution.



Student Work



Source: ARCHitecture trio, Inc.

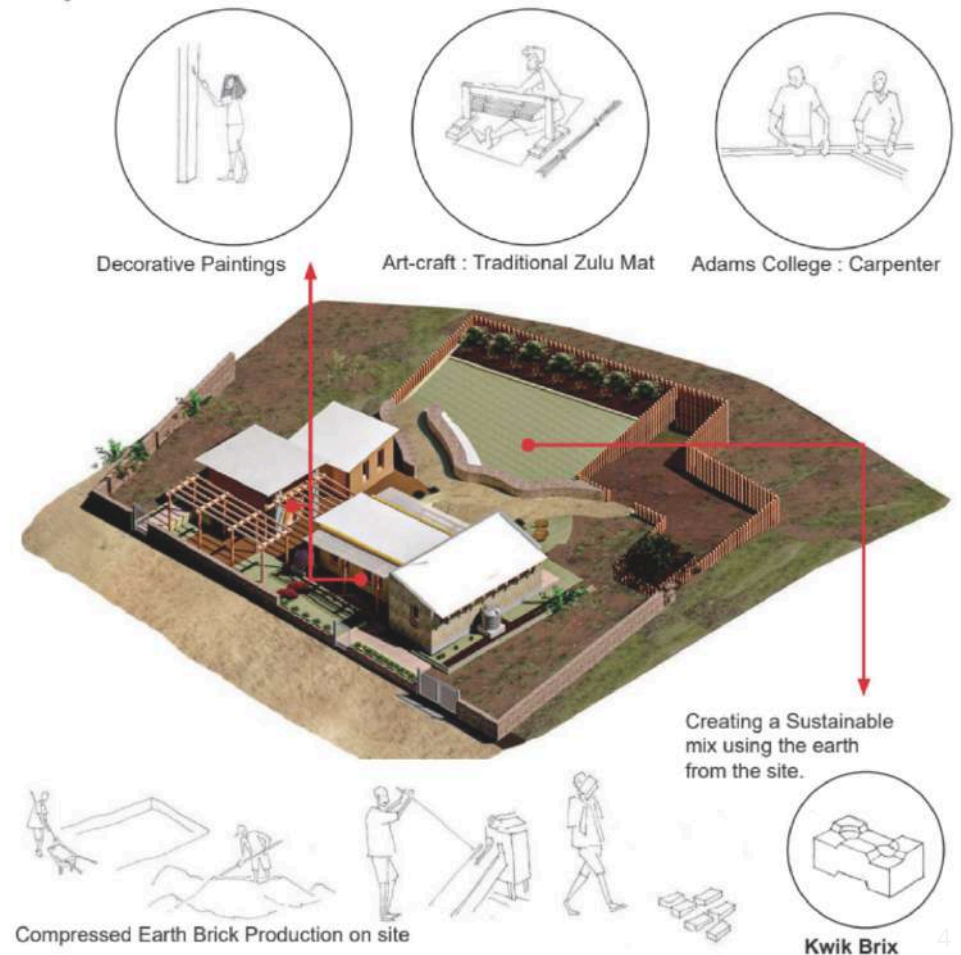
^ M.Arch student and Lead Designer/Project Coordinator at ARCHitecture trio, Inc. He reflects on this school addition project in Indianapolis, IN during Fall 2023: “Rendering I created of the new addition using Revit and Lumion [to show how] the loading above the gym had to be kept to a minimum to keep the cost of the structural steel within reason... therefore the gym moved up, with the classrooms kept below. This atypical design required our team to think about the consequences of having a gym floor above classrooms, so we hired an acoustician to ensure noise reduction so learning can happen below.”

> B.Arch student participated on the winning team for an Ubuntu Design Competition for a family home in Umbumbulu, South Africa. She reflects on the experience during Fall 2022: “Through landscape, gardening, and cultural practices, the design of the home respects the context and the way of life in Umbumbulu. Utilizing local or regional materials to reduce the carbon emission, but to also celebrate what is local can be aesthetically pleasing and more than enough to design a dignified home that tells the story of the community through the collaboration of local skills.”

Project Title: “Practice Component” student work
 Month/Year Completed: Ongoing
 Role of Nominee (in the project): Director of Experiential Learning, Tina Maceri Bolden, is responsible collecting student evidence of learning; Director of Career Services, Maria Sardinias, assists students in getting jobs; and Dean of Practice, Beth Lundell Garver provides strategic direction and support.
 Collaborators & Funding Sources Expenses: ARCHitecture trio, Inc.; Prellwitz Chilinski Associates; Ubuntu Architecture Summer Abroad Program. 3 paid adjunct faculty met with students to reflect on their Practice growth, grade their skill level, and discuss desired next steps.
 Student Compensation: 2 students working in paid full-time jobs that continued after graduation. 1 student participated on a self-selected design competition for 60 Hours of Practice credit.

What is your biggest accomplishment as a designer since your last practice assessment?

^ B.Arch student and Designer at Prellwitz Chilinski Associates in Cambridge, MA. She reflects during her final semester before graduating in Spring 2022: “Working on a 100,000 SF multi-family building from Design Development to Construction Documents along with co-planning an all-office workshop on Environmental Psychology. Upon starting at PCA a little before my last practice assessment, I was nervous in my capabilities to work and lead in such a [significant] architectural firm working on multi-family projects along with project managers, principals, and directors. Nonetheless, within three months, I had been integrated into a team of 3, working on a multi-family project in Dorchester which led to my second multi-family project in Quincy. Given that, my biggest challenge has been pursuing tasks out of my comfort zone until I feel confident enough leading them and taking ownership.”



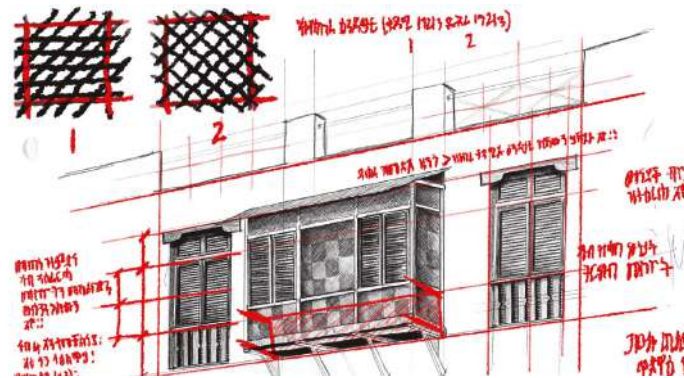
“The William E. Carter School for students with severe ambulatory and cognitive disabilities... will be my first start-to-finish project. I am proud and humbled to be on such an incredible project. I became a designer to make a positive impact on the world, and this project fulfills that dream.”

M.Arch student reflects on his role as Designer I and Model Maker at Perkins+Will in Boston, MA: “I was [on the] team work[ing] on renovating the top of the Prudential Tower. I took ownership of the main entrance into a new pavilion space [and] completing construction documents for the restrooms. I worked on physical models [and] a full detail model of the staircase. [Here is] a rendering I did [that] ended up being [in] the Boston Globe.

I am now working [on] the William E. Carter School for students aged 3-22 with severe ambulatory and cognitive disabilities. [This] will be my first start-to-finish project. I am proud and humbled to be on such an incredible project. I became a designer to make a positive impact on the world, and this project fulfills that dream. [It] not only serves a positive purpose, but many elements are innovations that have seldom or never been done before. This method of research-based design is something I never thought I'd be doing this early in my career.”



Project Title: “Practice Component” student work
Month/Year Completed: Ongoing
Role of Nominee (in the project): Director of Experiential Learning, Tina Maceri Bolden, collects student evidence of learning; Director of Career Services, Maria Sardinias, assists student with job search; Dean of Practice, Beth Lundell Garver provides strategic direction.
Collaborators & Funding Sources Expenses: Perkins + Will, Prudential Center, William E. Carter School. Paid adjunct faculty met with students to reflect on their Practice growth, grade their skill level, and discuss their desired next steps.
Student Compensation: 1 student in paid full-time jobs that continued after graduation.



- RESPONSIBILITY :**
- Site analysis
 - Meeting with client to understand
 - Design proposal meetings with client
 - I overlooked the designed from the initial to final design process
 - 2D and 3D visualizations
 - Marketing and designing of the Ads
 - Daily updates and monthly report

Images: DECCO Construction Group



^ BS.Arch student reflects on two jobs: one in Boston and another with Asmara Heritage Project jointly with UNESCO World Heritage in Eritrea, East Africa: “[At] Perkins Eastman, I was the BIM lead for a K-12 Project, communicating with consultants and reporting comments with the team of +25 people. [At] Asmara, I was introduced to a completely different field of design focused on existing - compared to new development. This required collaboration between our team [and] the stakeholders and contractors that work in the building. A crucial aspect was to show the exact locations of decay within the technical drawings in order to make accurate calculations for the BOQ (Bill of Quantity) for the maintenance/restoration plans.”

v M.Arch (4+2) student is a Designer I at Schwartz/Silver Architects in Boston, MA. In Summer 2023, she reflects on a proposal for a university student center in Ohio: “I played a pivotal role in the design through the incorporat[ing] a substantial aperture above the entry. While my boss proposed an interior stairway and skylight, I took the initiative to amplify the impact by ensuring the passage was visually extended through the building facade. This concept was well received and ultimately integrated into the final [design]...”

[I want to produce] a thesis that delves into [my] personal interest [and transfers] to my professional engagement. Topics that intrigue me [are] the evolution of facades in the 21st century. [At work] I was tasked with designing a series of facades [which] proved enlightening. However, it highlighted my limited comprehension of what constitutes an exemplary facade. Immersing myself in this theme promises to enhance my design prowess both in the academic and practical spheres.”

^ M.Arch student and Lead Designer at DECCO Construction Group. She is based in Nairobi, Kenya and reflects on two projects in Somalia, East Africa during Fall 2021: “One of the challenges that I faced was mostly language barrier. I had to use a translator to communicate with clients [and] to make smart decision[s] on material sourcing, local construction methods, and [to] hire qualified employees. The country is still recovering from Civil War [so for the residential project] I must do research... to understand the market and cost before traveling or communicating with the manufactures. In addition, I have engaged different subcontractors for most of the projects.

[The] Arc Dam is a construction of a dam project for a rural community sponsored by the local government and an international donor... to develop water and agricultural services among agro pastoralist communities in dryland areas of Somalia. The project scope include[s] construction of Watchman House, animal trough [for] livestock and camels, construction of water tank, and installation of solar panels to power the water pump, arc dam, and gabions.”



Image: Schwartz/Silver Architects

Project Title: “Practice Component” student work
 Month/Year Completed: Ongoing
 Role of Nominee (in the project): Director of Experiential Learning, Tina Maceri Bolden, collects student evidence of learning; Director of Career Services, Maria Sardinias, assists students with getting jobs; and Dean of Practice, Beth Lundell Garver provides strategic direction and support.
 Collaborators & Funding Sources Expenses: Perkins Eastman; Asmara Heritage Project jointly with UNESCO; Schwartz/Silver Architects; and DECCO Construction Group. Paid adjunct faculty met with students to reflect on their Practice growth, grade their skill level, and discuss their desired next steps.
 Student Compensation: 3 students in paid full-time jobs that continued after graduation. Total of 6900 Practice Hours granted.

Why Practice? Program Learning Outcomes

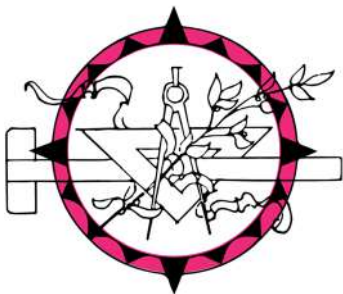
This page reflects the Practice Component's Course Catalog description: "Integration of practice and academic studies is a core principle within the College's approach to design learning. The Practice Department supports a range of initiatives encompassing curricular coursework, community engagement, applied learning, reflective assessment, and career development. You graduate with not only a professional degree but also essential hands-on experience, ensuring an accelerated foothold in your emerging career. This foundation allows you to assume leadership positions more quickly, with confidence and greater responsibility."

"As a graduate who has successfully completed the Practice Component..."



YOU ARE A CHANGE AGENT

You use your capacity to synthesize existing ideas and expertise in new ways through experiential learning, where your design work employs imaginative experimentation. This builds your agency and cultivates design innovation, divergent thinking, and risk-taking.



YOU ARE A WAYFINDER

You demonstrate self-awareness, courage, initiative, and fortitude to navigate obstacles and conflict by finding focus and centeredness, complemented by the creative powers of curiosity, resilience, and openness to feedback. Through career advocacy, allyship, and mentoring, you nurture a lasting professional network with your classmates, instructors, community partners, employers, families, and communities, yielding long-term career benefits.



YOU ARE A CONVENER

You demonstrate your ability and commitment to work collaboratively in teams and community contexts to achieve civic aims. The relationships you establish with diverse people, communities, and cultures adjust your attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs.



YOU ARE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARD

You evaluate your design decisions, actions, and work to understand their consequences on resources at local and global scales. You act on the urgent need to keep the planet and its ecosystems habitable by applying knowledge and experience with interconnected economic, environmental, and social factors into your design practice, nurturing and protecting future generations of life on Earth.



YOU ARE AN ADVOCATE

You communicate effectively across oral, graphic, and written media to create compelling, clear, and concise messages that reach diverse audiences. Your leadership, listening, reflection, and adaptability inform your decision-making for design choices, career aspirations, and social impact."

Why Practice? An Outcomes-Based Approach

Students reflect on their personal and professional growth through the Practice Component by collecting evidence that aligns with program learning outcomes. This evidence demonstrates their learning through a range of skills and competencies (see selected list below). During “Practice Assessment” meetings with practitioner faculty, students share their work through self-reporting, portfolio evidence, written reflections, and supervisor feedback.

AS CHANGE AGENTS

You Practice Pioneering Possibility and Change

- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Investigation, Inquiry, and Analysis
- Problem Solving
- Ethical Reasoning, Integrity, and Professionalism
- Information Literacy
- Integrative and Applied Learning

AS WAYFINDERS

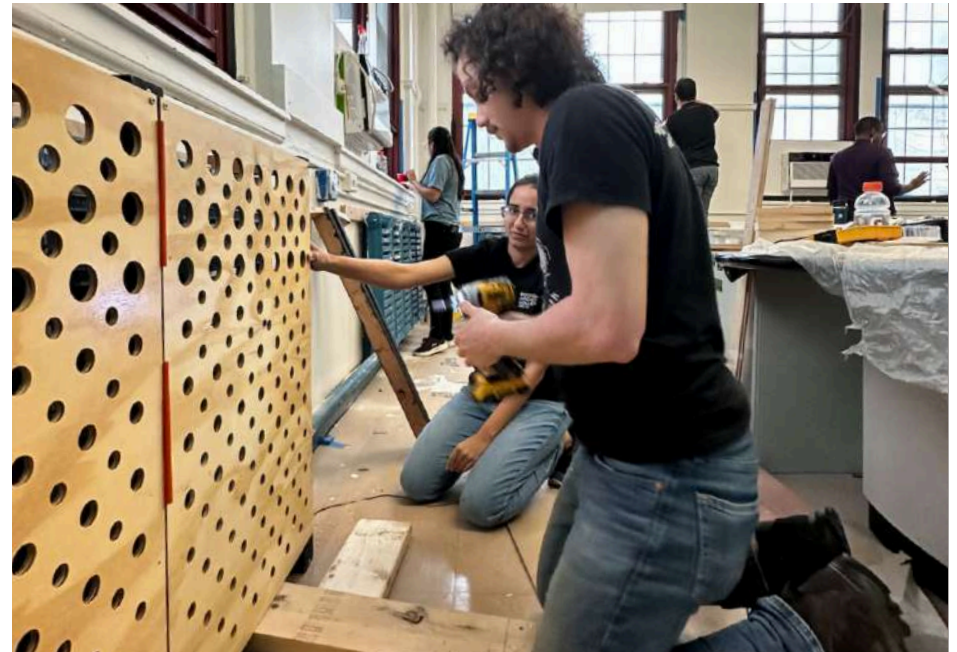
You Practice Trailblazing to Landmarks of Lifelong Learning

- Personal Time Management
- Precedents, Reading, and Research
- Professional Participation, Committees, Lectures, and Conferences
- Business Practices and Operations
- Teaching and/or Conducting Workshops
- Mentorship

AS CONVENERS

You Practice Gathering Diverse Groups in the Great Hall of Now

- Intercultural Knowledge and Competence
- Teamwork and Collaboration
- Social Interaction and Human-Centered Design
- Conflict Resolution
- Team Building
- Civic Engagement, Service and Volunteerism



AS ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDS

You Practice Being a Banyan Tree for Climate Action

- Site and Existing Conditions Analysis
- Environmental Stewardship and Global Learning
- Programming and Feasibility
- Engineering Systems & Environmental Impact
- Mindful Materials, Lighting, FF&E Selection
- Life Cycle Assessment

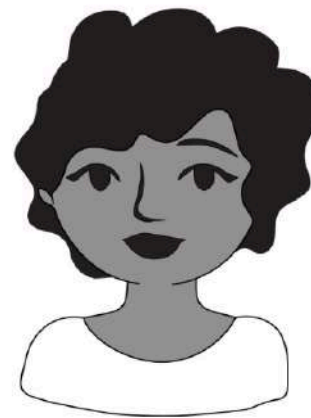
AS ADVOCATES

You Practice Compassionate Communication and Servant Leadership

- Written Communication
- Oral Communication and Presentation Delivery
- Visual Communication
- Leadership and Service
- Stakeholder Roles
- Interpersonal Skills

Who? Typical Learner Profiles in Practice

We created learner profiles to assist students in visualizing possible directions for their individual Practice Component journey. The goal is to motivate students to self-direct their learning through Practice experiences that excite them.



| THE EXPLORER | THE SHAPE-SHIFTER | THE CLIMBER | THE WEAVER |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Hey friend! I'm diving into the world of spatial design with a passion for helping people. As a curious and creative learner, I'm ready to explore and discover the endless possibilities this field offers. I can't wait to forge meaningful connections along the way. Let's create a network that sparks innovation and propels the world toward new possibilities!</p> | <p>Hey, hey, hey! So check it out, I'm a PRO in another field, but now I'm ready to take my skills to the next level through spatial design. I bring a fresh perspective, using my transferable skills to shake things up and create innovative experiences for people to live, work, and play. Let's make some design magic!</p> | <p>Hi there! I'm a seasoned designer at a top-notch architecture firm. I'm all about overcoming obstacles, pushing boundaries, and creating civic-minded designs that improve people's lives. With a thirst for expanding my knowledge and experience, I'm on a mission to redefine architectural excellence and have a blast doing it!</p> | <p>I use my past design experience to weave in new ideas that address urgent problems. I seek compassionate and creative innovations that address persistent issues. I can be quite vocal and proactive in practice. At the same time, my strength is listening closely to my team members and synthesizing this information into a vision of unique alternatives. My goal is to drive change and encourage others to take action!</p> |
| <p>Examples of Practice Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant and/or Designer at a Firm • Gateway Fellow • Researcher presenting Conference Paper and/or Poster Design • AIAS & NOMAS Member • WELL AP Certification • Teaching Assistant • LRC Conversation Partners • Speaks five languages and works as a translator on community-based design projects | <p>Examples of Practice Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert featured on NPR • Public Interest Advocate / Volunteerism • LEED Associate / Sustainability Consultant • Entrepreneur • Electronics Repair • CNC Lab Technician • Researcher • Painter, Photographer • Clothing Designer • Design/Build Construction | <p>Examples of Practice Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor • NOMA, AIAS, Student Leadership • AIA Assoc. • Designer in a Firm • Independent Practice Experience • Practice Teaching Assistant • Collaborative Leader • Project Manager • Professional Development • Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure | <p>Description:</p> <p>Has 500-1500 Prior Practice in design but wants to dedicate the rest of their practice to entirely new and creative ways of engaging with the world.</p> |

Presented by Tina Maceri Bolden and Beth Lundell Garver in "Make Learning Visible: Competency Matrix, Graphic Maps, & Learner Profiles for Assessing Unique Student Paths," Association of Assessment of Learning in Higher Education Conference, 2023

Who? Student Paths through Practice



EXPLORER: YASMINE BADAWI, B.ARCH '23
AIAS student group, WELL AP certificate, AIA Film Challenge, Teaching Assistant (TA) for Structures, Tutoring, BAC Gateway community project on city-wide supports for homelessness, Trauma-Informed Design research for ANFA conference, Interior Design Consultant at Restoration Hardware, and Designer at architecture firm PCA Design



CLIMBER: TYLER PITT, M.ARCH '22
Intern Architect at Hartman-Cox Architects; elevated to Designer/Manager at Goody Clancy led “design & construction admin. efforts on complex MIT renovation;” consultant, contractor, and client coordination; mentored staff; conducted site visits; completed NCARB AXP Hours & AEs; and graduated as a Project Architect at VMDO—an IPAL graduate.



EXPLORER: LAURA ISABEL MEDINA, B.ARCH '24 - Admissions Ambassador, Community Fellow, TA for Making/Modeling & Revit, President StudioQ student group, NOMAS treasurer, BAC Gateway community project *Iluminacion Lawrence* placemaking, Marketing/Media & Lead Designer at architecture firm Flow Design, and Technical Design Assistant at Cucina Moda kitchen design



CLIMBER: KASSIA SHRUM, B.ARCH '26
AIAS BAC Chapter Vice-President & Treasurer; NOMAS Design Competition; Commercial Real Estate Success Training (CREST) Internship; Project Management Intern promoted to full-time Assistant Superintendent at J. Calnan & Associates Construction Managers; OSHA 30-Hour Construction certification—an IPAL candidate.



SHAPE-SHIFTER: DONALD RESPRESS, M.ARCH '19 - With prior expertise in electrical engineering, product development, and business administration, Donnie pivoted to AIAS President, Lead Designer at nonprofit Youthbuild Boston, and a range of design positions at firm Anderson Porter Design, Boston Architects & Builders, and Studio G Architects.



WEAVER: TRACY RENET PREVILON, B.ARCH '25
Prior to enrolling, she was Intern Architect in Haiti working for US Dept. of State. She weaves this into her current pursuits to promote diversity & inclusion. NOMAS BAC Chapter President & Secretary, Student Mentor, & full-time Architectural Drafter at Build Health International, a nonprofit creating affordable, high-quality healthcare infrastructure in resource-constrained settings around the world.

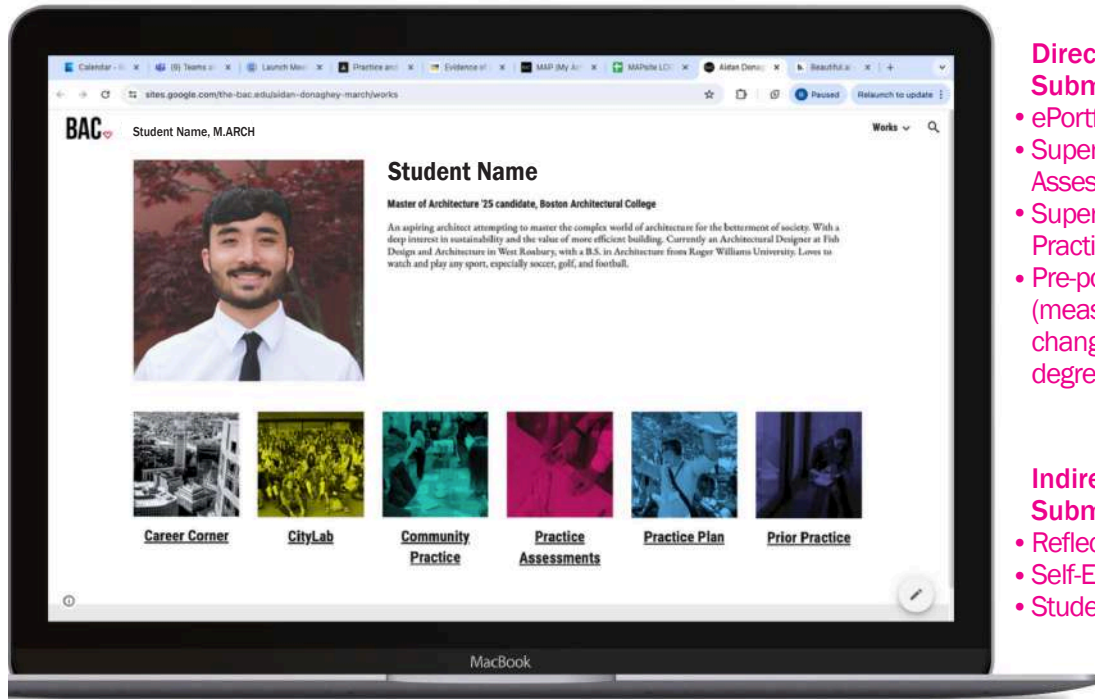


SHAPE-SHIFTER: ALEJANDRO ZAMBRANO, B.ARCH '24 - Prior major in urban design & planning at another institution, Alex shifted to creative endeavors, tattoo artistry, and graphic design; Member of NOMAS, AIAS, and USA Cycling; IIDA Fashion Show competitions; Practice ConnEx externship; Career Fair student volunteer; and residential design practice.



WEAVER: SPIRIT DIENER, M.ARCH '24
Prior experience establishing & leading interior design in two firms, she weaves adaptability, continuous learning, teamwork, & emotional intelligence into her work. Designer on K-12 projects at 19six Architects, Teaching Assistant for Community Practice, and Gateway Office (GO) Fellowship. IPAL candidate. Entrepreneurial owner of a design firm in Santa Cruz, CA.

How? Interpreting Evidence of Learning



- Direct Evidence Submissions:**
- ePortfolio (MAP Site)
 - Supervisor Assessment
 - Supervisor-signed Practice Hour Reports
 - Pre-post assessments (measuring student change over the degree program)

- Indirect Evidence Submissions:**
- Reflective Essays
 - Self-Evaluations
 - Student Surveys

DIRECT EVIDENCE

The Practice Component involves a robust process of gathering direct evidence to measure student learning through their Practice experience. By examining students' work, this evidence offers insight into what is being learned and the depth of each student's comprehension. Practitioner faculty and teaching assistants are calibrated to make judgments about the level of knowledge or mastery that students have achieved in their self-directed learning outside the classroom.

We realized that certain direct measures are better at capturing learning for some students than for others. In response, the Practice Component provides a range of methods for demonstrating learning on the same outcomes over the course of students' Practice experience.

We also use **INDIRECT EVIDENCE** to provide important context for interpreting direct evidence and for reviewing how our students succeed in cultivating professional and ethical habits of mind.

The Practice Component requires all students develop a comprehensive Practice ePortfolio called a "MAP (My Active Practice) Site".

| Degree | Class Level | Prior Practice | Work | 2022 Practice Hours | Practice Hours Reported | Supervisor Assessment | Self Eval | Practice ePortfolio | Prior Skill Lvl | New Skill Lvl | Practice Status | Notes |
|--------|-------------|----------------|------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|
| B.ARCH | FS 2 | None | | No | | | Y | Y | | 2 | Pending | |
| B.ARCH | Arch 1 | None | | No | | | Y | Y | | 2 | Pending | Student rec |
| B.ARCH | Arch 3 | Y | PT | Y | 1974 | Y | Y | Y | 3 | 6 | Portfolio Clear | Their third |
| B.ARCH | Arch 4 | None | | Y | 1890 | Y | Y | Y | 4 | 6 | Portfolio Clear | Last submi |
| B.ARCH | Degree | Y | | Y | 1503 | Y | Y | Y | 3 | 7 | Portfolio Clear | |
| B.ARCH | Degree | Y | FT | Y | 2707 | No | Y | Y | 6 | 8 | Incomplete | Beth confin |
| B.ARCH | Degree | None | | Y | 3560 | Y | Y | Y | 6 | 9 | Graduation Clear | Thinks they |
| M.ARCH | Thesis | Y | | Y | 1988 | Y | Y | Y | 6 | | Portfolio Clear | SU22 hrs (|
| M.ARCH | Arch 3 | Y | FT | Y | 902 | Y | Y | Y | | 4 | Progress | Excellent F |
| M.ARCH | Arch 3 | Y | FT | No | 615 | Y | Y | Y | | 3 | Progress | Loves work |
| M.ARCH | Arch 3 | None | | Y | | | | | | 4 | | Leave of Al |
| M.ARCH | Arch 4 | Y | PT | Y | 3098 | No | Y | Y | 4 | 8 | Pending | Satisfied th |
| M.ARCH | Arch 4 | Y | | No | 3470 | Y | Y | Y | 5 | 8 | Graduation Clear | Student's S |
| M.ARCH | Thesis | Y | FT | Y | 5301 | Y | Y | Y | 6 | 11 | Graduation Clear | |

Ongoing tracking of progress for +600 BAC students for the 'Practice Component' curriculum.

The BAC Practice Component | 2025 AIA/ACSA Practice + Leadership Award

“There are design organizations out there that need someone just like you now... The more opportunities you have to grow, it will build both your skills and confidence. I suspect you do not yet realize just how much you have to offer the world. The sooner you get into a position to realize your potential the better off you, and the world, will be.”

— Practice Faculty feedback to student

How? Practice Assessment

Reflective assessment of Practice growth utilizing the BAC Student Learning Contract (SLC) rubric to:

- Provide a graphic map of competency criteria for students to plan and self-advocate toward achieving their desired learning outcomes.
- Introduce levels of performance (e.g., awareness, integration) as a tool for evaluating progress.
- Customize summative scores and descriptors to offer an array of practice paths that satisfy graduation requirements.

TRACKING PRACTICE LEARNING OUTCOMES

At least three times during their degree program, students submit documentation of their Practice experience, which is evaluated by practitioner faculty and teaching assistants using the BAC's innovative Student Learning Contract (SLC). With this rubric, demonstrated competencies and skills are assigned a point value based on the level of mastery shown in the student's ePortfolio. Total points determine a "Skill Level" grade, with a minimum skill level (Skill Level 8) required for graduation.

The SLC is also used as a guide for students' future practice decisions and self-advocacy in the workplace. **Since each student's path through Practice is different, every student has a unique SLC that tracks how their specific skills have developed from one Practice Assessment to the next.**



Boston Architectural College

Student Learning Contract (SLC)

Student Name

Student ID

My MAPsite

Degree

MY VALIDATED PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

| | | AWARENESS | INTEGRATION | SYNTHESIS |
|--|--|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | | BEGINNER (1) | ENGAGED (1) | ADVANCED (1) |
| CONCEPTUAL THINKING | Critical Thinking | | | |
| | Investigation, Inquiry & Analysis | | | |
| | Creative Thinking | | | |
| | Problem Solving | | | |
| | Programming, Needs Assessment, Feasibility | | | |
| | Site / Existing Conditions Analysis | | | |
| | Use of Precedents, Reading & Research | | | |
| | Social Interaction & Human-Centered Design | | | |
| PROFESSIONAL VALUES | Systems Thinking & Global Learning | | | |
| | Environment, Climate & Sustainable Design | | | |
| | Written Communication | | | |
| | Oral Communication & Presentation Delivery | | | |
| | Information Literacy | | | |
| | Ethical Reasoning, Integrity & Professionalism | | | |
| | Time Management | | | |
| | Conflict Resolution | | | |
| | Interpersonal Skills & Intercultural Competence | | | |
| | Teamwork & Collaboration | | | |
| TECHNOLOGY & REPRESENTATION | Leadership & Service | | | |
| | Integrate Knowledge from Other Disciplines | | | |
| | Model Building / Fabrication | | | |
| | Building Information Modeling (Revit) | | | |
| | Geographic Information Systems (GIS, ArcMap, etc.) | | | |
| | 2d & 3D CAD Drafting (AutoCAD, SketchUp, Rhino) | | | |
| | 3D Illustrative Rendering (Enscape, Lumion) | | | |
| | Web/Video/Interactive Design | | | |
| | Graphic Design Software (Adobe Suite) | | | |
| | Manual Drafting | | | |
| CONCENTRATION AREAS | Diagramming | | | |
| | Planning, Zoning or Permitting Regulations | | | |
| | Schematic Design & Design Development | | | |
| | Engineering Systems (e.g. Structural, MEP, Civil) | | | |
| | Financial Considerations + Project Cost | | | |
| | Codes & Regulations | | | |
| | Technical & Construction Documents | | | |
| | Materials Pledge & Holistic Product Selection | | | |
| | Specifications, Responsible & Ethical Sourcing | | | |
| | Construction Administration & Observation | | | |
| ENTREPRENEUR & PRACTICE MANAGEMENT | Business Practices & Operations | | | |
| | Team Building | | | |
| | Stakeholder Roles | | | |
| | Budgeting / Accounting | | | |
| | Schedule & Work Plan Development | | | |
| | Project Management | | | |
| | Bidding & Contract Negotiation | | | |
| | Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) | | | |
| SOCIAL IMPACT DESIGN, SERVICE & RESEARCH | Market Research & Support | | | |
| | Attend Professional Events / Conferences | | | |
| | Office Committees / Student Groups | | | |
| | Equity, Inclusion & Belonging | | | |
| | Mentorship & Sponsorship | | | |
| | Teaching / Conducting Workshops | | | |
| | Civic Engagement, Advocacy & Volunteerism | | | |
| | Resilience & Design for Reuse First | | | |
| Design Competitions | | | | |
| Research & Innovation (e.g. Advancing Knowledge) | | | | |

Legend

- 1st Practice Assessment
- 2nd Practice Assessment
- 3rd Practice Assessment

Demonstrated Skill Level: 10

Where? Practice-Integrated Learning...

IN THE CLASSROOM

Director of Collaborative Practice, Dr. Ashley Tannebaum, AIA (Harvard GSD, D.Des, '21), leads curriculum development and delivery for core practice-integrated courses and initiatives that occur within the foundation year.

- **FND1006/3006 CityLab Intensive** (2 academic credits)
- **FND2007 Community Practice** (3 academic credits)

These “Practice Component” curricular milestones build awareness and application of program learning outcomes associated with **critical thinking, systems thinking, communication, teamwork, collaboration, environmental impact, and advocacy through engagement with diverse communities.**



IN THE COMMUNITY

Dean of Practice, Beth Lundell Garver, AIA (Harvard GSD, MAUD '14), directs the **Gateway Office**, a community-based design center where student fellows earn Practice credit while collaborating directly with community partners in co-creative design processes. Through this, students learn to embrace and promote **design for material reuse first**. They also gain experience engaging with multiple stakeholders to create places that **empower underserved youth, teachers, and families.**

This direct engagement with community partners and stakeholders outside the classroom helps students apply program learning goals from their foundational Practice Component coursework (CityLab and Community Practice) to real-world community-based design, with support from embedded BAC Gateway Office faculty experts.



IN THE WORKPLACE

Director of Career Services, Maria Sardinias (Brown University, MA in Hispanic Studies, '08), invites students to engage in the workplace from the start by organizing firm visits for all students during New Student Orientation. Career Services workshops are embedded in and outside the classroom during the first year, **flipping the traditional narrative** where students approach Career Services in the final year of school. The Practice Component encourages students to engage in career development early and often.

Director of Experiential Learning, Tina Maceri Bolden (Auburn University, B'Arch '14), leads the delivery of **Practice Assessments**, where students integrate their learning into a wide range of practice settings. Students begin to act as self-directed change agents in their local communities. They also engage in periodic meetings with Practice faculty to reflect on evidence of how their experiences are **building Practice SLC competencies** along with their individualized career and personal goals.



IN THE CLASSROOM FIRST SEMESTER

CityLab Intensive FND1006 core course

THE PRACTICE COMPONENT STARTS WITH AN IMMERSIVE PRACTICE-INTEGRATED FIRST SEMESTER CORE COURSE

In the CityLab Intensive, new students spend four days in the field examining the context of professional practice: the systems, structures, people, and places that comprise the society, communities, and clients architects serve. Students investigate built projects that celebrate accessibility, inclusiveness, sustainability, and resiliency within the built environment. They learn to recognize the varied ways that space programming, project delivery, construction, post-occupancy, and maintenance affect the quality of life of people.

Interdisciplinary teams of approximately 10 students are led by co-instructors who guide observations and analysis through sketching, journaling, photography, and conversation. You will develop a strong sense of discovery, curiosity, and appreciation for learning outside the classroom in a personal, applied manner, where collaboration is essential.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Explore professional design projects and reflect on how design practitioners use design as a tool for positive social change and public good.
- Develop the ability to identify ethical dilemmas in spatial practice through observation of five spatial lenses: **health and human comfort, environmental systems, open space, built form, and social and cultural well-being.**
- Observe how designers prioritize the health, safety, and welfare of the public while aligning with professional standards and client needs.

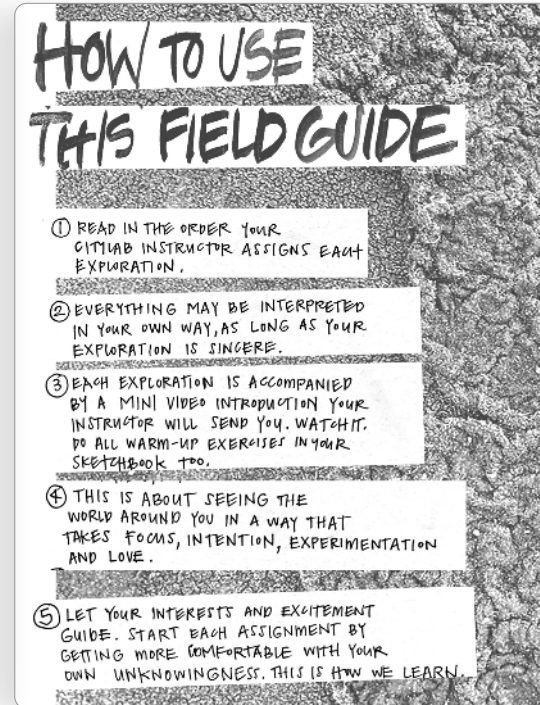
Project Title: "Practice Component" student work

Month/Year Completed: ongoing

Role of Nominee (in the project): Director of Collaborative Practice, Ashley Tannebaum develops course framework, hires and trains faculty, and teaches students

Collaborators & Funding Sources Expenses: East Boston Social Center, Cube3, Climate Ready Boston team at City of Boston

Student Compensation: 2 credit-hour intensive course



Community Practice FND2007 core course

AN OUTWARD-ORIENTED, VALUES-DRIVEN, AND IMMERSIVE PROFESSIONAL DESIGN COMMUNICATIONS COURSE

In this course, students investigate the expanded role of design in the public realm. They consider how, as designers, they can work within communities and use design thinking as a tool for social change. Students learn by doing, collaborating in small teams to engage with and design for their communities. Teams explore how to orally and visually communicate complex information to each other and the public, how creative individuals can collaborate to pursue shared goals, and how the multiple meanings of community can be addressed in the design process.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Define and articulate the meaning(s) of community and your role as a design professional with and in communities.
- Communicate with diverse audiences to convey a clear and cohesive central message using bias-free, concise, and imaginative language.
- Collaborate in design teams and within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic aim.
- Engage design team and community members by constructively building upon or synthesizing the contributions of others, as well as noticing when someone is not participating and inviting them to engage.
- Use supporting materials to understand and address critical design issues related to social equity, social and cultural inclusion, climate/environment, and ethical frameworks in design processes.
- Think reflectively about your own work, both in the context of this course and in your future professional goals.



Project Title: "Practice Component" student work
Month/Year Completed: ongoing
Role of Nominee (in the project): Director of Collaborative Practice, Ashley Tannebaum develops course framework, hires and trains faculty, and teaches students
Collaborators & Funding Sources Expenses: Boston Building Resources Reuse Center, Gateway Office BAC
Student Compensation: 3 credit-hour course

IN THE COMMUNITY TYPICALLY THIRD SEMESTER +

Gateway Office (GO) BAC

AN INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY-BASED DESIGN (un)CENTER FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP, ENVIRONMENT, + DESIGN

Gateway Office is an innovative community-based design uncenter that serves as a hybrid “mixed reality” in-person and online gateway to social entrepreneurship, environment, and design through civic engagement on real-world projects with community partners. GO’s “uncentered” approach to community engagement brings together students in close proximity to Boston and online students from around the world, expanding inclusiveness and diversity within architectural education and the design profession. Gateway Office BAC projects involve:

- Place-making Strategies
- Collaborative Outreach with Local Schools and Organizations
- Pop-up Installations and Events
- Digital Media and Virtual Reality Storytelling
- Transit-Oriented Development Ideas
- Artistic & Interactive Installations
- Historic Preservation & Adaptive Reuse
- Prototyping, Fabrication & Design Build
- Material Selection and Ethical Sourcing
- Decarbonizing Design Strategies

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

GO Roxbury Boston, MA (Here)

- Boston Building Resources Reuse
- HigherGround Boston
- YouthBuild Boston
- Higginson-Lewis 3-8 Grade School
- Boston Society for Architectue

GO Lawrence, MA (There)

- Lawrence CommunityWorks
- Essex Art Center
- Elevated Thought
- YDO (Youth Development Org.)

GO Online (Anywhere)

- West Nepal Humanitarian Shelter Kits “How-To” Guides
- xSpaces Metaverse platform

Project Title: “Practice Component” initiatives

Month/Year Completed: Ongoing

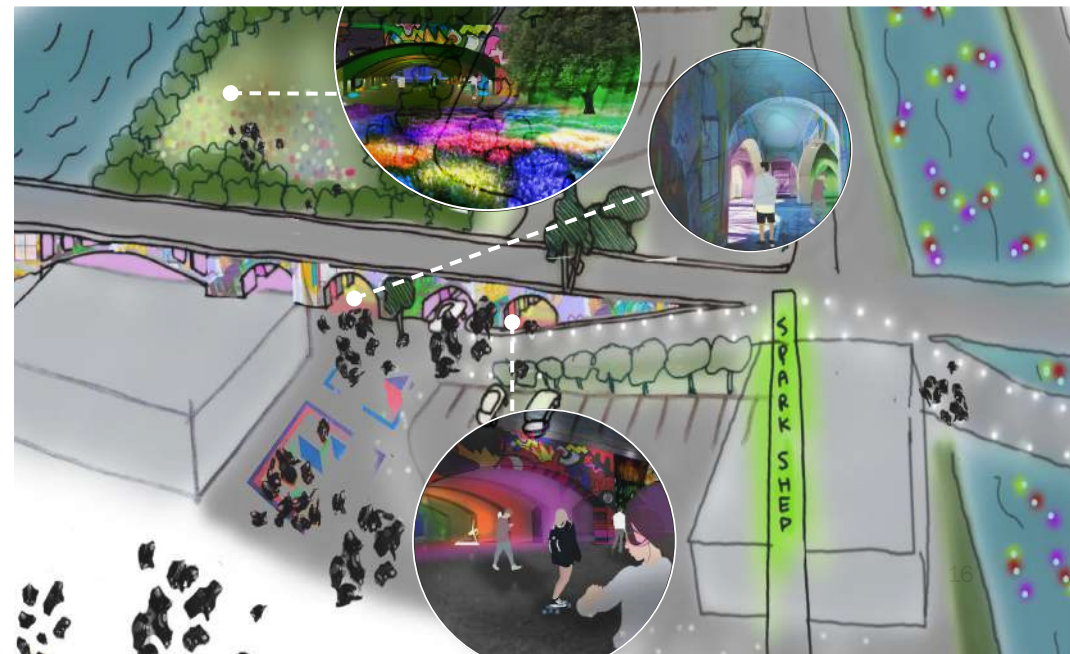
Role of Nominee (in the project): Dean of Practice, Beth Lundell Garver, develops and directs GO BAC.

Collaborators & Funding Sources Expenses: Collaborators listed. Funded by The BAC, a Cummings Foundation grant (\$30,000/year for 10 years), and a Mass Cultural Council grant (\$3,000)

Student Compensation: Students do not pay tuition to participate. They receive Practice Hours credit.



GO:Fellows work with youth arts organization Elevated Thought in Lawrence, MA



IN THE COMMUNITY TYPICALLY THIRD SEMESTER +

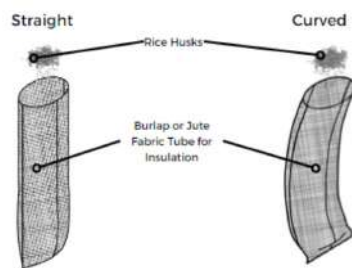
GO Fellowship

STUDENT FELLOWSHIP FOR ENGAGING COMMUNITY THROUGH DESIGN

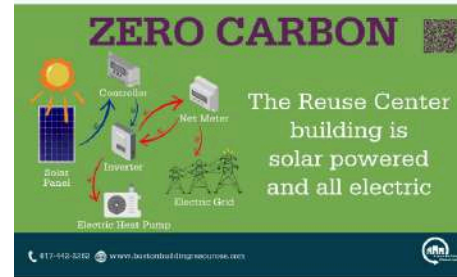
As vital partners co-creating the Gateway Office, students apply to be GO Fellows—civic-minded design leaders who build trust, engagement, and collaboration with fellow students, knowledge experts, professional partners, and diverse communities.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Welcome and grow relationships with diverse people, communities, and cultures that influence and adjust your own attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs.
- Communicate to create a compelling and clear message that demonstrates how listening, reflecting, and adapting to others has informed your design choices and their impact on society.
- Evaluate your design decisions, actions, and work to understand their consequences for environmental resources across local and global scales.
- Act on the urgent need to keep the planet and its ecosystems working, healthy, and habitable.
- Apply your knowledge and experience with interconnected economic, environmental, and social factors to ensure your design practice nurtures and protects future generations of life on Earth.



Working graphics from Disaster Shelter Insulation Kit booklets designed by Spring 2024 GO Fellows,



^ Graphic design and content for banners communicating the breadth and depth of BBR's work



HLS alums, GO Fellows, and HigherGround youth recreate HLS Reception & Family rooms

Project Title: "Practice Component" initiatives

Month/Year Completed: Ongoing

Role of Nominee (in the project): Dean of Practice, Beth Lundell Garver, develops and directs GO BAC.

Collaborators & Funding Sources Expenses: Collaborators listed. Faculty guides are funded by The BAC, a Cummings Foundation grant (\$30,000/year for 10 years) and a Mass Cultural Council grant (\$3,000)

Student Compensation: Three Senior GO Fellows are paid \$1000 (\$17/hour). All GO Fellows receive Practice Hours credit and a fellowship award of \$200.

Firms as Learning Partners

PRACTITIONERS ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR LEARNING-BY-DOING ETHOS: WHERE DESIGN MEETS COMMUNITY IMPACT AND CAREER SUCCESS.

Hiring a BAC student is an investment in their future and a commitment to shaping the next generation of leaders. **The “Practice Component” program recognizes the 500+ organizations that employ BAC students as true partners in their education.** Each student seeks out a professional mentor or supervisor to review their Practice Hours and competencies and to support them as they balance work, academic studies, and personal commitments.

By employing BAC students, organizations actively contribute to their professional growth, helping them gain practical experience while advancing in their careers. The “Practice Component” reflective assessment process provides a framework to ensure that what students learn on the job **directly supports their path to becoming leaders and agents of change in the field.**



Each semester, BAC students work for +200 design firms and organizations around the world.

CITYX NETWORKING FIRM PARTNERS

Every semester, the Practice team organizes CityX Networking Night as part of the CityX class for first-semester bachelor’s and master’s students. The intent of this session is to provide these students with the opportunity to meet practicing professionals from the various design fields taught at the BAC and to ask questions about professional development. This is a representative list, showcasing the broad range of firm partners.

- Silverman Trykowski Associates
- HGA
- Build Health International
- TRIA
- SMMA
- Sasaki
- Radner Design Associates
- Isgenuity
- JGE Architecture + Design
- NELSON Worldwide
- Ellenzweig
- Reed Hilderbrand
- Weston & Sampson
- AnaVera Design
- Shepley Bulfinch
- City of Newton Parks & Recreation
- Prellwitz Chilinski Associates (PCA)
- The Architecture Lobby

PORTFOLIO REVIEW PARTNERS

Every semester, the Practice team hosts a Portfolio Review Workshop where students practice their presentation and visualization skills with design professionals in a pin-up session, both in-person and online. This is a representative list, showcasing the broad range of firm partners.

- Lemon Brooke
- Perkins & Will
- TRIA
- AECOM
- Dream Collaborative
- BIA.studio
- DCAMM
- A. Glen Kewley Design
- 2dplanning
- Touloukian Touloukian
- Traverse Architects
- The Architectural Team
- A SQUARE DESIGN
- U.S. Army Combat Capabilities & Development Command
- TriVek Architects

Project Title: “Practice Component” initiatives

Month/Year Completed: ongoing

Role of Nominee (in the project): Director of Career Services, Maria Sardinas, directs and coordinates Career Development sessions and workshops.

Collaborators & Funding Sources Expenses: Collaborators listed. Funded by the BAC.

Student Compensation: Students receive Practice Hours credit for attending all career development workshops, trainings, events, etc.

IN THE WORKPLACE EVERY SEMESTER

Practice ConnEx Externship + New Student Firm Visits

DESIGNING CAREERS WITH PURPOSE, CREATING IMPACT FROM THE START.

PRACTICE CONNEX EXTERNSHIP

Practice ConnEx is a 5-day immersive experience where students job shadow architects and designers, engage with active projects, visit construction sites, and receive personalized feedback on their job search materials. Open to all BAC students, both online and in-person, participants commit to learning, reflecting, and presenting their experiences in a final showcase. Students and firms attend an orientation to review expectations and the BAC-ConnEx blog assignments, which document their weeklong reflections.

FIRM VISITS DURING NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

The week before classes begin, incoming students visit local Boston design firms to get a firsthand look at their chosen career. They meet with professionals, explore various departments, and receive an office tour and company overview. This is a representative list, showcasing the broad range of firm partners.

FIRM PARTNERS FOR EXTERNSHIP (♥) + NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION (◆)

- AECOM ◆♥
- Artists for Humanity ◆♥
- Bergmeyer ◆
- Bruner Cott Architects ◆
- CambridgeSeven ◆
- DiMella Shaffer Architects ◆♥
- Gannett Fleming ♥
- Goody Clancy ◆
- HMFH Architects ◆
- ICON Architects ◆♥
- Metropolitan Museum of Art ♥
- Moody Nolan ◆
- NBBJ ◆♥
- New England Design & Construct. ◆
- Prellwitz Chilinski Associates (PCA) ◆♥
- Perkins + Will ◆♥
- Simpson Gumpertz & Heger (SGH) ♥
- Safdie Architects ♥
- STA Design ◆
- MA Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance ◆♥
- Rafael Vinoly Architects ♥
- RODE Architects ◆♥
- Weston & Sampson ◆
- Wilson Butler Architects ◆
- William Rawn & Associates ◆♥
- Winn Companies ◆♥
- YouthBuild Boston ◆♥



“I’ve decided to commit to being a reliable mentor within my professional and academic communities this year. I’ve chosen this... because I recognize the value of the guidance and support I’ve received during my externship at SGH, particularly from my mentors. Their attentiveness and thoughtful[ness] made a significant impact on my growth. I’m ready to pay it forward by offering the same level of support to others.” — ConnEx Student Reflection, 2024

* During Practice ConnEx, students are assigned readings from the **AIA Guides for Equitable Practice** on intercultural competence, workplace culture, and mentorship and sponsorship. They then reflect on these topics in their blog posts.

Project Title: “Practice Component” initiatives

Month/Year Completed: January and August each year, ongoing

Role of Nominee (in the project): Director of Career Services, Maria Sardinias, directs and coordinates the entire Practice ConnEx; and Dean of Practice, Beth Lundell Garver, builds new partnerships and provides strategic direction and support.

Collaborators & Funding Sources Expenses: Collaborators listed. Funded by the BAC, with growing firm sponsorship. Students self-fund their travel to the firm office location each day.

Student Compensation: Students are not paid for job shadowing and receive 50 Practice Hours of credit. One firm hired two students to work at a rate of \$18/hour for the 5 days.

Measuring Impact

98%

Employed on Graduation Day



Most BAC students meet with Career Services in their **First Year.**

Compared to national trends showing the majority of college students meet with Career Services in their last year (NACE).

Salaries at Graduation

\$68,000 = Median BAC M.Arch

\$61,050 = Median Recent College Graduate in New England (AIA Compensation Survey Salary Calculator)

\$56,200 = Median masters degree graduates in architecture (NACE First-Destination Survey)

**BUILDING CAREERS.
TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES.
DESIGNING FUTURES.**

46%

of BAC graduates hold jobs where they are managing others on Graduation Day.

The Class of 2023 gained paid experience in

+250

firms and organizations totaling an aggregate of

426,742

Practice Hours of credit.

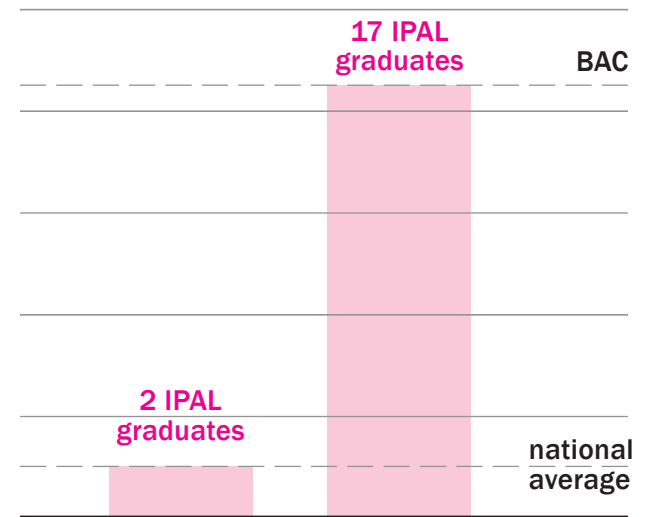


30%

of all NCARB Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure (IPAL) graduates are BAC graduates.

The BAC is one of the **Top 10** schools producing new architects.

– 2023 NCARB By the Numbers



The BAC has more than **8x** the national average of students successfully completing the NCARB Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure program.