Address Title: Building Educational Partnerships for Excellence and Diversity

Good Evening. Let me begin with a Thank you to Randy Steiner and the CCCAP Board for inviting me to speak tonight. Over the past 9 months I have had the honor of serving as the Chair of ACSA’s Education Committee, newly reconceived following the organization’s 2014-15 governance review. Growing from this review, a structure of three primary committees augments the efforts of the Board of Directors in order to help ACSA be more nimble in its ability to address emerging issues, become more effective in carrying out initiatives by sustaining them, and more fully engage with the fundamental mission and purposes of the organization.

From here on tonight, I’ll focus on the Education Committee because it’s work has the greatest potential overlap with CCCAP’s aims, but if anyone is interested, seek me out tomorrow and I’d be happy to provide more detail on the work of the other two committees and ACSA more generally.

The Education Committee is charged with leading ACSA’s efforts to improve the effectiveness of architectural education through best practices, and to oversee and recommend actions to cultivate and disseminate these best practices aligned with the fundamental mission and purposes of the organization. The areas of Education Committee focus include best practices in teaching, curriculum development and educational assessment. The committee is also charged with addressing student success and access to higher education; the role and place of architectural education in higher education more broadly; and education-to-practice transitions. Under this larger umbrella the inaugural charges to the committee for this past year focus in two specific areas: Diversity and Equity; and Community College Relations. Over the past 9 months this committee has explored these two focus areas, with me as chair and ACSA
Director of Research & Information, Kendall Nicholson, as staff support, along with 8 other members, including your own Randy Steiner, Derek Ham from NC-State, Rachel Law – the National AIAS Vice President, Francis Lyn of Florida Atlantic University, Rashida Ng from Temple University, Michaele Pride from University of New Mexico, Carmina Sanchez of Hampton University, and Patrick Tripeny from the University of Utah.

Tonight, I am going to speak about our work addressing community college relations over the past year. ACSA as an organization, and increasingly its 134 accredited member programs in the US and Canada, understand that community colleges provide an important entry point for post-secondary education both in general and as a foundation for professional education. For post-secondary architectural education, community college architecture programs offer a pool of student who are well prepared to become an integral part of architecture and its allied professions either through direct entry into the workforce or by continuing in a BARCH, or a BSAS + MARCH program for additional professional preparation. At the University of Illinois where I teach, we have strong relationships with a number community college programs. Each fall, I regularly teach Junior design studio and am always excited to see student in my section who are coming from community college architecture programs, for example, from College of DuPage and Illinois Central College. In my personal experience, I have found these students to be among the most well prepared for Junior studio. They often become the leaders in my studios, as they are among the most skilled, focused and mature, and those with the strongest work ethic.

ACSA is committed to developing meaningful and mutually beneficial collaborations between ACSA and CCCAP and to providing resources and support for cooperative efforts
between member programs across the organizations that will strengthen opportunities for educational advancement of diverse student populations.

ACSA recognizes that such collaborations between the two organizations, and more locally among member programs of the two organizations, are an essential way to support the success of diverse students for whom a five or four-plus-two-year program of architectural education may not be the most appropriate place to begin for a host of reasons. Further we understand that those reasons vary from context to context and student to student. Over this past year, my committee came to understand community college architecture programs as a key component addressing our other charge focused on equity and diversity. Developing strong relationships between individual CCAPs and accredited architecture programs is an essential means to increase diversity of the student body within accredited programs and ultimately in the architectural profession which continues to struggle to develop a profile reflective of the populations it serves.

Students’ experiences within community college architecture programs provide a robust foundation often demonstrating early accomplishments that increase the likelihood of success in accredited programs and ultimately in their lives as professionals. Beginning architectural education in the community college context enables these students to overcome challenges like family obligations, educational costs, or uneven preparation, that might otherwise derail their education in the environment of larger programs where excellence in teaching and individual attention often goes unrewarded.
Let’s face it – those of you who teach in community college architecture programs frequently provide better early architectural education than accredited programs! My personal experience with this concerns the current reconfiguration of our U of I architecture curriculum in the first two years so that it looks more like what College of DuPage students receive. And after speaking with our partners Jane Ostergaard and Mark Pearson from COD last night, I am hopeful that we can develop greater collaborations to enrich the student experiences in these first two years in both places because of our U of I curricular changes.

Through its investigations this past year, the ACSA Education Committee learned that these strong program-to-program level collaborations can be a key to smooth transitions for students as they progress from one institution and program to the other.

So, you might ask, what is the Education Committee recommending to ACSA to further these strong program-to-program level collaborations? I’ve organized our recommendations in three theme areas that will become part of the Chapter on Community College Relations in the soon to be published, but ever a work in progress, “Resource Guide to Enhance Support for Success Among Diverse Students in ACSA Member Programs.”

The three chapter themes are: Outreach and Communications, Collaborative Practices, and Transfer Relationships. Before I go on, I want to acknowledge the work of Francis Lyn, Randi Steiner, Andrew Chin from Florida A&M and Charles Setterfield from Sinclair Community College in drafting this material following the ACSA Annual Meeting in Detroit in March of 2017.

**Theme 1: OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION**

Our committee believes ACSA outreach and communication efforts should seek to:
Dr. Lynne M. Dearborn, AIA: CCCAP Keynote – Friday June 9, Austin TX
Texas Society of Architects Headquarters

- Improve accessibility of information and develop better ways to share information among ACSA member programs with respect to efficacious program-level practices, policies, tools and materials that support meaningful relationships and successful student transitions between CCAPs and accredited architecture programs.

- ACSA should work with CCCAP to develop mechanism to support improved communication between ACSA member programs and Community College programs

- ACSA should also work with CCCAP and AIAS to support improved communication between students enrolled in ACSA member programs and Community College programs

Success in these efforts can be measured through collection and dissemination of resources and data, and development of relevant information databases. Evaluating increases in the number of ACSA programs engaged in formal relationships with Community College programs and increases in the number of AIAS chapters at Community Colleges also provide measures of progress in these efforts.

An important first step, and one where all of you can be helpful to these efforts, is to recommend examples of successful relationships between Community College programs and ACSA programs. So, if you are engaged in one or more successful relationships, please let me know. We’d like to highlight these in the future.

**Theme 2: COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES**

Regarding Collaborative Practices between ACSA member programs and CCAPs, our committee believes that ACSA and CCCAP should encourage exploration of opportunities to
collaborate on grant applications, such as workforce and curriculum grants, and to collaborate on appropriately targeted design competitions. Collaboration might happen at the program level, the state level, or even the national level.

At the program-to-program level, the committee believes ACSA can support meaningful relationships by encouraging its member programs to:

- Invite Community College faculty and students to lectures and juries
- Invite Community College faculty to team rooms following NAAB accreditation visits
- Invite Community College faculty and students to use physical resources of the program, for example jury rooms and galleries spaces as appropriate and available.
- Encourage development of joint activities with local CCAPs such as charrettes, lectures, and field trips
- And encourage discussions of curriculum, pedagogical goals, needs with local CCAPs

If we jointly track these efforts, for example number of grant applications, or joint events, we can begin to assess the potential of these efforts to create smooth and beneficial conduits for students to move between programs.

**Theme 3: TRANSFER RELATIONSHIPS**

To increase student success and completion rates in accredited architecture programs, the Education Committee encourages ACSA to support an environment where the number of articulation agreements will increase. ACSA can assist by helping to provide models that clarify how transfer credits are evaluated and assist with transparency in this process. We support the
idea of future working groups across ACSA and CCCAP addressing development of transfer guidelines to address critical thinking, design, and representational skills. We believe that such efforts will support improved guidance counseling for students before, during, and following transfers between programs.

We look forward to measuring progress in transfer relationships through:

– Increasing numbers of articulation agreements

– Increased clarity in how transfer credits are evaluated

– Improved student completion rates among students who transfer between CCAPs and accredited programs.

– And through development of transfer guidelines jointly supported by ACSA and CCCAP.

Obviously, there is much work to be done in this area. Collection and analysis of existing articulation agreements is a first step for future committees. We also see the need to document the way various programs evaluate transfer equivalencies. Could there be a systematic and consistent process for evaluating transfer courses? For example, might core requirements regarding critical thinking, design, and representational skills be an initial first step? Would this better enable coordinated counseling for students between Community Colleges and accredited architecture programs?

After a year of working in the area, the Education Committee understands that the geography between ACSA member accredited programs and CCAPs is uneven. It varies from state to state, at least in part because of state-level policies that may influence relationships between these two categories of architectural education. Some things can be addressed at the
largest scale of national efforts by ACSA collaborating with CCCAP. Other issues and process are by nature very local. This year, we learned for example, that Florida and Texas have some unique state-level policies that help ease student transitions between CCAPs and accredited architectural education programs.

Clearly in some areas, simply increasing productive communication that enhances understanding between CCAPs and accredited architectural education programs is the first step toward tackling what stands in the way of smooth, efficacious, and successful student transitions between programs. While in some areas, programs have developed effective communications and may even be engaged in collaborative endeavors and have relationships that benefit students and faculty among both program types.

I’d like to leave you with a short list of actions for your consideration as things that you might do to further strengthen your relationships with ACSA member programs:

**In the Immediate-term:**

- *Share course content with your partners in accredited programs and ask that they do the same*
- *Communicate the benefits of collaborative efforts, as you see them, with your partners in accredited programs*
- *Collaborate with ACSA member programs where you are already engaged. Bring together teams of administrators and faculty to identify the successful and unsuccessful aspects of your relationship. Jointly develop a plan for addressing the least successful areas of the relationship.*
– Help ACSA and CCCAP identify, document and disseminate success stories

– Document existing Articulation Agreements and provide those to CCCAP for sharing in a data base for members of both organizations.

– Identify accredited programs that you want to engage and where you would like your students to continue their educations.

– Seek invitations for Community College faculty and students to attend lectures and juries at your partner accredited programs.

In the Short-term:

– Identify your strongest potential new partners among NAAB-accredited architecture programs

– Reach out to individual faculty in these programs to identify potential partners for collaborative endeavors.

– Develop joint activities such as charrettes, lectures, and field trips

– Discuss curriculum, pedagogical goals, and needs with administrators and faculty in these programs

– Explore opportunities to collaborate on grant applications and/or design competitions

In the Longer-term:

– The Education Committee hopes to see increased numbers of students who successfully transfer from your programs into ACSA member programs.

– We anticipate a host of joint activities developed between partner programs across the two organizations.
− We encourage groups of programs to identify collaborative research projects related to curriculum, pedagogy, and workforce development where the results might benefit both CCCAP members and ACSA members.

If each of you here tonight pick just one or two of these for your program to tackle and if you can identify willing partners in ACSA member programs, the students in both programs will be the first to benefit. However, in the longer term, all educational programs and ultimately the profession of architecture will benefit through a stronger, better prepared, more fulfilled, and more diverse work force.

Thank you.