



**SCHOOL OF
ARCHITECTURE +
LANDSCAPE
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An update regarding SALA's Equity Diversity and Inclusion initiatives

23 July 2020

Dear SALA community,

In preparation for today's Town Hall, SALA's Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and academic leadership have prepared this document to update the community on SALA's responses to the issues raised in the 11 June letter from students and alumni. That letter enumerated 54 proposed actions in 6 categories. Many will involve engagement with the entire SALA community during the academic year. Others involve engagement or consultation with others on campus and beyond. However, some have been addressed in the 6 weeks since 11 June and SALA has already taken significant action in several areas and established direction for future actions in others. On the pages following, we have outlined a summary of these mirroring the framework of the 11 June letter, highlighting in each area those steps taken today and outlining the direction future actions will take.

We see many of these actions and directions as interconnected. For example, hiring BIPOC faculty will likely improve our ability to recruit BIPOC students, guests, lecturers, and additional BIPOC faculty. We believe it will take dedicated work on all fronts to begin to combat the problems of structural inequality and racism. We approach these tasks with openness to hear further critique, to engage in discussion, and to work together to make meaningful and lasting change. Of course, this is only the beginning, and moving forward will be a collaborative effort and effective, equitable consultation and discussion among SALA leadership, faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

Today, SALA's Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee and academic leadership will listen to feedback and discussion at the Town Hall to further guide this effort and priorities in the 2020 / 2021 academic year. We hope you are able to attend today and add your voice to the conversation.

Sincerely,

Ron Kellett, SALA Director
Sara Stevens, SALA EDI Committee Chair

SALA Equity Diversity and Inclusion actions taken since 11 June 2020

1. **Accountability/transparency** (includes SALA governance, student role in governance committees, EDI committee mandate)
 - 23 July Town Hall is set to discuss the school's response to the letter. Ron, the program chairs, the chairs of the EDI and Student Affairs committees, and the Student Services and Recruitment Manager will be panelists, as a demonstration of how important these issues are to the school and how seriously we are taking the letter.
 - A new EDI committee has been formed for 2020-2021 year, which includes members from FaFa and NOMAS (with plans to add alumni members), and sits at the school's highest level of governance in an ongoing capacity (i.e. it's not a temporary task force or ad-hoc committee).
 - SALA leadership has added student positions to all the governance committees of the school to increase transparency and elevate student voices in the school's governance and decision-making: Curriculum, Student Affairs, Outreach, Research, EDI, Academic Infrastructure. Student leadership developed protocols for selecting the students and made the appointments. Student membership on committees increased from one student position to two to four student positions.
 - Student leadership has made changes in the Student Executive Committee (SEC) to include FaFa and NOMAS in addition to program reps; we support this change. However, as the SEC has grown to over 45 members, we encourage the SEC to develop a more streamlined governance structure.
 - Through our EDI Committee, SALA will update progress made at the mid-point and end of the 2020 / 2021 academic year.

2. **Support diverse faculty contributions** (includes faculty hiring gaps and barriers, faculty research areas)
 - Tenure-track faculty hiring is embedded in an academic personnel process regulated by UBC. We already follow UBC and Applied Science's best practices for recruitment and hiring: having faculty go through EDI training that includes implicit bias training, and addressing the latest social science research on faculty hiring process in order to be in the best position to make offers to candidates that represent marginalized groups. At this time we have no open tenure track positions, however the school recognizes that BIPOC representation on the faculty is critical.
 - Much teaching in the school is by non-tenure-track instructors. With these often short-term hires we have more autonomy and we will improve our effort to recruit and retain high quality instructors from marginalized groups, especially BIPOC instructors. The program chairs commit to improving these practices,

with input from the EDI Committee with increased support from Applied Science Associate Dean of EDI, Sheryl Staub-French.

- SALA does not provide research funding to faculty. Likewise, SALA does not dictate research topics to its faculty. However, we can make efforts to incentivize such research through new initiatives, and commits to do so in the near future. This task will be delegated to the Research Committee, with support from the EDI Committee.

3. Curriculum (includes course content and student research support)

- SALA Curriculum Committee, working with the EDI Committee, will be tasked with addressing the inclusion of BIPOC histories and perspectives in program-specific curricula. We believe that this will require new expectations/recommendations in the history/theory courses, professional practice courses, research methods courses, and in general policies for all SALA courses (syllabi templates, community engagement policies, etc.).
- SALA's Indigenous Content Steering Committee with SALA faculty as well as Indigenous representatives from architecture and landscape architecture has spent the past year working on proposals to rethink how SALA addresses the National Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, in curriculum and research. Their draft proposal will be tabled for consideration by the school in the fall 2020 term.
- Dr. Patrick Stewart, an Indigenous architect, will be teaching a graduate architecture seminar this fall on Indigenous Research Methods.

4. Promote diversity in outreach, events, invited guests (includes funding to students for events/initiatives)

- A few years ago, SALA performed an internal audit of our guests (lecturers, critics, instructors) with the intention of increasing the diversity of who we put in front of students. The EDI Committee, working with the Outreach Committee and program chairs, will oversee continuing this work with an increased focus on BIPOC representation and on transparency of the process.
- The Outreach Committee, in planning the school lectures and lunch talks, has made concerted efforts in recent years to improve on the diversity of lecturers. We will make this a priority. For fall 2020, for example, we are developing a 'conversation' series that will shift the format from the usual 'sage on the stage' mode.
- The Student Affairs Committee issued a call for proposals to access Student Experience Funds in support of student initiatives, such as events that directly engage issues of justice, discrimination and equity. The deadline is 31 July. Funding will be available by the end of August.

5. **Combat structural gaps and barriers in professions** (includes student recruitment)
 - Methods to improve our school-wide student recruitment is a top priority for the Student Affairs Committee. We will prioritize addressing the obstacles to BIPOC applicants.
 - The Bachelor of Design program, as a 4-year undergraduate program, offers us an opportunity to engage with students at the high school level, and begin to extend our recruitment activities to increase the diversity of students and improve on the 'pipeline problem' in design professions.
 - The Bachelor of Design program has secured an AIBC funded scholarship for an Indigenous student.

6. **UBC & ApSci context & beyond** (ASCA, CCUSA)
 - We are seeking support and expertise beyond SALA for this work where needed. We continue to work with Associate Dean of EDI for Applied Science, Sheryl Staub-French to align the school with the best practices in this area, leverage resources in other units/areas at UBC, and pursue an EDI audit of the school as well as training and workshop options for faculty, staff, and students.
 - SALA is participating in discussions with peer institutions through national and international organizations such as the Canadian Council of University Schools of Architecture (CCUSA) and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA), and soon others, to share knowledge, approaches, and best practices.