School of Architecture

Development Priorities

Overview

At its core, philanthropy is about creating opportunities. On the individual level, it enables students – graduate and undergraduate – to be part of an extraordinary school and benefit from a unique and powerful educational experience; provides the means for faculty to explore, conduct research, and expand the body of knowledge about the built world; and creates physical environments that help foster community, creativity, and intellectual curiosity. At the collective level, it strengthens the school as a whole, and this drives everything from recruiting students and faculty, to career placement, to the school’s national and international reputation.

What follows are the A-School’s top fundraising priorities. There are many ways to support the School, so if these do not fit with your philanthropic goals we would value the opportunity to help find one that does.

Graduate Fellowships

Graduate students are critical to the intellectual and creative life of the A-School. They conduct research with faculty, teach, and serve as role models and mentors for undergraduates. Additionally, the School’s ranking and reputation are driven significantly by the graduate programs because the undergraduate architecture program is not pre-professional, and therefore not eligible for ranking, and the landscape architecture program offers only the graduate degree. The impact of enrolling just a handful of top-tier graduate students is enormous – they raise the bar for an entire program, push other students to achieve at higher levels, and make the school stronger as a whole.

Every year we lose students to well-funded competitors that can offer more substantial financial packages. Graduate fellowships will help narrow the funding gap and enable the school to be more competitive with our peer institutions.

Undergraduate Scholarships

A meritorious, academically and creatively gifted group of students is strengthened by the different backgrounds and experiences that have helped shape them. This is especially true in the design and planning fields, where different ways of seeing can lead to unique and elegant solutions that would not otherwise be revealed. Undergraduate scholarships will help the school recruit top-tier students from a spectrum of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.
Faculty Recruitment and Retention

Alumni of the A-School remember at least one, if not several, faculty who had an especially significant impact on them. This is true in part because of the school’s size and the way we teach our students. But it is much more than that. It is the quality of the faculty – their deep commitment to students, to being present and available in Campbell Hall, and to generating new insights about the world and ways of making – that makes them memorable. We have next generation faculty leaders in Campbell Hall today – people our current students will hold with the same reverence as alumni hold our veteran educators. This extraordinary group of early-career teachers and scholars, who have been with the school ten years or less, represents 50% of our faculty. The school needs the resources to keep them and to recruit more. Supporting the scholarship of young faculty in the form of travel, employing graduate research assistants, and bringing scholars to Charlottesville for lectures and symposia is a deeply meaningful way of showing that they are supported and that the school is invested in their growth and success.

Enhancing the Learning Environment

The third and fourth floor studios are the most important interior spaces for the majority of our students. They are at the heart of a design education, and there is increasing interest in studios from planners and students enrolled in the new design-thinking concentration. We are actively engaged in a “studio re-think”, which will include not only new furnishings and fittings, but also upgraded electrical systems and the redesign of two classrooms to meet the needs of a trans-disciplinary, multi-platform, digitally integrated, and highly collaborative 21st-century design education.