

ARCHAOS press release – ‘learning architecture’ forum November 05

The ninth ARCHAOS forum took place last Friday, 4th November at Oxford Brookes University, bringing together over 50 architecture students from 30 schools across the country to discuss the upcoming changes to the validation criteria for architectural education. A day of intense discussion led to the production of a fourteen point ‘Student Directive’ detailing student opinion on issues ranging from the role of practice in education to student funding to routes to qualification. Representatives from the RIBA, ARB and SCHOSA attended the forum, taking the opportunity to find out what students think on these issues.

Co-chair Bonnie Chu said, ‘the validation criteria review is incredibly relevant to us as architecture students and ARCHAOS wants to make sure that students have proper input into the review.’ Alison Killing added, ‘Achieving this consensus about what students want is incredibly important as it means that the RIBA and ARB are better able to take our views on board and work towards achieving some of these objectives’. The directive deals with several current student concerns, students’ views on the structure of their courses, links between students and also the role of practice.

- The directive highlights student concerns in education: meeting living costs; the necessity to work during term time (not necessarily in work related to architecture); and the currently confusing guidance on validation and the many ways in which aspiring architects may unwittingly fall out of the system.

- More positively, students want to maintain and improve the diversity that currently exists in UK architecture schools: the ability to change schools during their education; looking for ways in which students can interact with the real world beyond universities and also recognition of the importance of peer-group learning. Students would like to see more support for links between students both within schools, (for example through supporting architecture societies), and links between universities too, for example through student exchanges, joint projects, combined crits, student competitions or summer schools.

- The role of practice also came under scrutiny, with students asking that practices recognise the minimum conditions for the employment of students set out by ARCHAOS and the RIBA in 2003. Students also demanded that members of the profession should have a binding responsibility to assist in the education of architecture students, a move that would achieve parity with other professions and bring these disparate elements of the architecture community closer together.

ARCHAOS would like to thank SCHOSA, the RIBA, ARB and Oxford Brookes School of Architecture for their support.

Attendees:

SCHOSA – Chris Cross, Don Gray

RIBA – Chris Ellis, Syd Danks

ARB – John Levett, Elaine Stowell

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