What we’re talking about when we talk about a university architect.

Daniel S. Friedman, PhD, FAIA
Dean and Professor, School of Architecture, University of Hawai‘i at Manoa

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The primary responsibility of a university architect is to ensure the formal, functional, and aesthetic integrity of the physical environment of a campus. Like any urban composition, the integrity of a campus environment presupposes an intelligible relationship between part and whole. Architects are the only agents in the building industry who expressly account for this relationship. While the aesthetic and functional criteria for well-designed buildings and landscapes change with the times, one principle never changes: suitability to context.

An effective university architect must enjoy working command of the mission of higher education, especially the complex interdependency between academic and administrative operations. No less important is a working command of the financial and regulatory practices that define campus life, also the respect and cooperation of the professional community and building industry, including architects, landscape architects, planners, engineers, contractors, and lawmakers.

Architects are responsible for the safety, health, and well being of all people who inhabit buildings, but the kuleana of the university architect extends to the entire built and natural environment, since large campuses resemble small cities. Vivid, memorable, and well-composed places positively influence productivity, social exchange, salubrity, and the fulfillment of human potential. Such memorable places almost always embody an optimal ratio of poetic and technical quality.

Campus design is a primary factor in institutional identity, recruitment, and retention. Former UCSD university architect Boone Hellman argued that prospective students decide whether or not they like the physical environment of a university in the first five minutes of their visit. The design of buildings and the design of spaces between buildings therefore factor significantly in the character and quality of educational experience. Degraded design standards and trivial construction lower productivity, diminish pride, and erode institutional reputation.

An effective university architect routinely integrates and balances the needs and practices of diverse constituencies at all scales of intervention. Typically, the university architect oversees both the writing of requests for qualifications and proposals, and the selection of architects, landscape architects, and project teams. In executing these essential duties, the university architect researches and integrates the priorities and perspectives of multiple constituencies, including the university administration, faculty, students, staff, alumni, visitors, and trustees; operations personnel who maintain facilities; university staff and personnel who manage projects for both campus buildings and campus grounds; staff who program campus space; engineers who manage pedestrian and vehicular circulation and infrastructure, including all systems—energy, sanitation, security, water management, and ecosystem services.
The Office of the University Architect (OUA) is the university’s physical and capital planning office. It establishes an integrated vision of the physical campus landscape and facilities and articulates the associated capital plan and budget. Its staff of planners, designers, and policy analysts provide leadership, counsel, and oversight regarding campus planning, landscape and architectural design, strategic sustainability and energy planning, and space and capital resource planning for the university’s campus and associated properties. Oversight and integration of these various disciplines is managed by OUA staff who sit and advise on many campus committees, including the University Architectural Commission, the University Landscape Advisory Committee (ULAC), and the University Public Arts Commission.

OUA’s mission is to ensure continuity of the university’s commitment to design and planning excellence, and advise university leadership on how to accomplish and practice active, innovative stewardship and development of these campus environments. We assist the administration by developing and managing the university’s long range capital plan, capital budget, and space allocation process, among other key university physical development and program planning initiatives. In partnership with many university and community colleagues, we conceive, initiate, and guide architectural, landscape, campus, urban design, sustainability, and infrastructure projects supporting the unique qualities of each campus environment and its future use and development.

We care about the human experience of the whole university environment, from its historic and contemporary buildings, its academic, research and student life facilities, its open spaces, paths, plantings and public art. We attend to many of the details involved in planning the wise use of resources in shaping its functionality, sustainability, and internationally recognized visual beauty.
The university architect assists the senior leadership of the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa in developing and managing the university’s long range capital plan and capital budget; long range facilities, open space, infrastructure, and precinct plans; and other key university physical development and program planning initiatives. The university architect also assists senior leadership in the operation of the university space management system and provides space utilization and space planning analyses; and manages the development of the university geospatial data information system for facilities, open space, infrastructure, and environmental systems, among other data related to the built environment. The university architect provides leadership, counsel, and oversight to master, precinct, building, and infrastructure planning for the university to ensure continuity of the institution’s commitment to design and planning excellence.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the university architect include:

- Facilitating the development of effective master and precinct planning for University of Hawai‘i at Manoa campus. (15 percent)
- Creating physical development analyses of the built and undeveloped on-campus and near-campus environments and systems associated with proposed university uses and/or capital investments. (15 percent)
- Providing ongoing design review and assistance that will support the work of the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa Campus Facilities Planning Board and related commissions and committees. (15 percent)
- Facilitating discussion among university leaders, the University of Hawai‘i System, and all relevant facilities services personnel regarding strategic and long range planning objectives. (15 percent)
- Developing scope-of-work agreements and managing professional planning and design consulting services which support specific planning projects. (10 percent)
- Participating in University of Hawai‘i Board of Regents presentations; meetings with university faculty, staff, and students; and other public meetings or presentations; and serving as chair of the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa Campus Facilities Planning Board. (10 percent)
- Leadership and facilitation of a periodic professional development seminars for interested faculty, staff, students, and other persons with interests in emerging opportunities, challenges, information, and research outcomes related to climate change, energy conservation, ecosystem services, high performance buildings and products, detailed life cycle analyses,
sustainable site development case studies, and dialogue with national and global university peers. (10 percent)

Supervision of professional staff, student interns, and others in the day-to-day operations of campus facilities, campus design and planning, and related services. (5 percent)

Requirements

The position requires a professional undergraduate degree in architecture and a minimum of ten years experience in architecture and planning, and working in the major research university or similar complex institutional or corporate environment. The position also requires registration as an architect—with an ability to achieve registration in the State of Hawai‘i within one year of the starting date.

Desirable credentials and qualities

Advanced professional degree.

Demonstrated success in architectural design development, integrated and sustainable design processes, life-cycle cost analyses, management of historic and cultural resource assessments, and major capital project management including construction administration.

Excellent oral, written, and presentation communication skills.

LEED Accredited Professional certification or similar.

Strong competency in graphic skills applied to site planning, building massing, and conceptualization studies including sketching, drawing, diagramming, and digital visualization.

Strong design/planning solution management and process documentation skills.

Strong ability to establish and maintain productive relationships with a diverse range of people.

Strong ability to assess architectural program and design challenges, and develop innovative and cost-effective solutions working both individually and collaboratively in large work-group settings.

Strong commitment to mentoring and providing professional development support to staff.