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Cornell University
College of Architecture, Art, and Planning

April 10, 2012

Dear First-Year BArch students, Class of 2017:

Greetings from Ithaca! Congratulations on your acceptance to the Bachelor of Architecture program at Cornell! This introductory letter is to familiarize you with the Bachelor of Architecture curriculum and encourage you to begin thinking about your first year in the BArch program. This provides information about your academic program for the next five years, gives a general picture of requirements for your first year, identifies specific courses you will be pre-enrolled in for the fall 2012 semester, and makes suggestions for pre-enrolling in a first-year writing seminar and one physical education course for the coming semester.

The BArch degree program balances the intensity of a professional education with opportunities to use the resources of a world-class university. Although most courses will be directly concerned with architecture, you will take about one-quarter of the total program in other colleges at Cornell and in other departments within AAP. You will also have opportunities to study in Rome and New York City. Design studios at each level will immerse you in design culture, helping you develop the skills and intellectual tools to solve problems. Ten terms of design are required, and it is the focal point of every semester. Studio exercises vary significantly during the five years.

Please carefully consider Parts I – IV of this letter.

Part I. Your Academic Program – General

1. I am the director of the BArch program in the Department of Architecture and am always available to meet with you regarding program related concerns. However you will be assigned an academic faculty advisor upon your enrollment and I encourage you to meet with your advisor within the first few weeks of the fall semester. Anytime after your first year you may change advisors by securing the signature of a new faculty advisor on a change of advisor form.

2. You must take a minimum number of 12 credit hours during each semester to be considered a “full-time” student at the University.

3. To graduate with the Bachelor of Architecture (BArch) degree, you will need a minimum of 176 academic credits. In the first semester of the program, you will enroll in 18 academic credits. During each subsequent semester you should carry an academic load of approximately 18 credit hours. It is not important that you carry exactly 18 credit hours in any particular semester, but you will need to maintain a semester average of approximately 18 credit hours per semester to graduate in five years.

4. The faculty of the department of architecture has designed the BArch curriculum to provide the opportunity for you to develop an understanding of architectural practice as a critical act. It is a highly structured and intensive curriculum, one that emphasizes design, as well as theory, history, representation, technology, and structures. Basic conceptual skills are emphasized early on, along with introducing the fundamental skills of architecture. You will learn to communicate ideas through models and graphics. During the first six semesters all students follow a common core curriculum designed to lay the foundation for the rest of your architectural education, and beyond. The third year includes a required semester in Rome. For the final four semesters students are encouraged to work across disciplines focusing on an intellectually rigorous and speculative course of study. This includes the final semester that is focused on the development of an independent architectural thesis.

5. **Fall semester 2012** of your first year you are required to take the following five courses:

- ARCH 1101 - Design I
- ARCH 1501 - Representation I: Freehand Architectural Drawing
- ARCH 1611 - Environmental Systems I
- ARCH 1801 - History of Architecture I
- Out-of-department elective (first-year writing seminar recommended)

6. **Spring semester 2013** of your first year you are required to take the following five courses:

- ARCH 1102 - Design II
- ARCH 1502 - Representation II: Media of Representation
- ARCH 1612 - Structural Concepts
- ARCH 1802 - History of Architecture II
- Free out-of-department elective

7. The following is the recommended sequence for completing all course requirements for the BArch degree. During the fall or spring of the 3rd year you will study abroad in the Cornell in Rome program. In your 4th or 5th year you may choose a semester of study at the AAP/NYC Program in New York City. Please note that in the semester plans below, elective courses may be switched between different semesters, as long as total distribution requirements are met (except that the First-Year Writing Seminar should be taken in the first year).

2nd year, you will take the following courses:

Fall 2013 Semester

- ARCH 2101 - Design III
- ARCH 2301 - Architectural Analysis I: Buildings, Drawings, and Texts
- ARCH 2613 - Structural Systems
- ARCH 2614 - Building Technology I: Materials and Methods
- Free out-of-department elective (3 credits)

Spring 2014 Semester

- ARCH 2102 - Design IV
- ARCH 2615 - Building Technology II: Structural Elements
- ARCH 2616 - Environmental Systems II
- Out-of-department elective (MQR) (3 credits)
- Free out-of-department elective (3 credits)

3rd year, you will take the following courses:

Rome: Fall 2014 or Spring 2015 Semester

- ARCH 3101 - Design V
- ARCH 3301 - Architectural Analysis II: Architecture, the City, and Landscape
- Out-of-department elective (Art)
- Departmental elective (History)

Ithaca: Fall 2014 or Spring 2015 Semester

- ARCH 3102 - Design VI
- ARCH 5201 - Professional Practice
- Free departmental elective* (3 credits)
- Free departmental elective* (3 credits)
- Free out-of-department elective* (3 credits)

4th year, you will take the following courses:

Fall 2015 Semester

- ARCH 4101 - Design VII
- Departmental elective (History)
- Departmental elective (Theory)
- Out-of-department elective (MQR, PBS)
- Free out-of-department elective

Spring 2016 Semester

- ARCH 4102 - Design VIII
- Departmental elective (architecture, culture, society)
- Out-of-department elective (Art)
- Free out-of-department elective
- Free departmental elective

5th year, you will take the following courses:

Fall 2016 Semester

- ARCH 5101 - Design IX
- ARCH 5110 - Thesis Proseminar
- Out-of-department elective (Humanities)
- Free departmental elective
- Free out-of-department elective

Spring 2017 Semester

- ARCH 5902 - Design X Thesis
- Free departmental elective
- Free out-of-department elective
- Free out-of-department elective

Part II. Your Fall Semester 2012 Courses

1. For the fall 2012 semester you are pre-enrolled in 4 required BArch courses:

- ARCH 1101 - Design I
- ARCH 1501 - Representation I: Freehand Architectural Drawing
- ARCH 1611 - Environmental Systems I
- ARCH 1801 - History of Architecture I

2. All BArch students must complete one First-Year Writing Seminar. It is suggested that you take the First Year Writing Seminar during this fall semester. Each First-Year Writing Seminar is a 3 credit hour course. Cornell offers a huge array of First-Year Writing Seminars in many different departments. You have a great deal of latitude in choosing which writing seminars to take. You should identify potential seminars **that do not conflict with class times of the architectures courses in which you are enrolled**.

3. Your enrollment in these 5 classes (ARCH 1101, 1501, 1611, 1801, and FWS) will give you 18 credit hours for the fall 2012 semester. It is recommended you enroll in one of two required physical education classes for which you will receive no academic credit.

Part III. Course Enrollment Procedures

Required architecture courses: The AAP Registrar will enroll all BArch students in required architecture courses (ARCH 1101, 1501, 1611, and 1801) by July 2. After July 2, students can confirm their enrollment at Student Center.

Out-of-Department Elective (FWS recommended): BArch. students are required to complete one FWS in the first year of study, and it is suggested that this requirement be completed in the first semester. Students will ballot for a FWS from Wednesday, July 11 through Friday, July 20, using the FWS ballot page. Additional information is available at the Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines. Be sure to ballot for a FWS that does not conflict with required architecture or PE courses.

Physical Education: B.Arch. students will enroll in a PE class using Student Center from Wednesday, July 11 through Friday, July 20. A complete listing of PE classes is available at the university Fall Course Roster page. Enrollment instructions for first-year courses are available online. Be sure to enroll in a PE class that does not conflict with required architecture courses or FWS.

Part IV. Frequently Asked Questions

Cornell in Rome Program:

Cornell in Rome has been an integral part of architectural study at Cornell for nearly three decades. Rome, with its complex layers, presents the challenge of visualizing architecture in a city where the intensity of history pervades. Complete immersion in this distinctive milieu presents students with new problems of challenging complexity; through analysis and understanding of historic examples, experience and insight is gained for future design challenges. Design studios — augmented by fieldtrips — focus on design projects in historically charged sites and conditions, while history courses and theory seminars encourage students to engage in analytical thinking, direct study, and cultural interpretation. Italian and European architects and educators join Cornell faculty in teaching the studios, and assist in formulating and contributing to a rich variety of programming. All students enroll in design studio and architectural theory, and choose amongst courses in architectural history, photography, drawing, Italian language and urban studies.

AAP/NYC Program:

AAP NYC provides the opportunity for 4th and 5th year architecture students to study, work, and live in NYC. The program allows students to build on the core curricular foundations in an urban context. Students have the option of taking advantage of the wealth of architectural practices in NYC by working two days per week in selected offices while pursuing their studies (it is recommended that students seeking professional placement should plan for a 12-credit semester load while in New York City - placements are non-credit). AAP NYC serves as a bridge from school to the profession — one that allows students to consider their own future trajectories and the possible paths toward achieving them.

Undergraduate Concentrations:

It is often advantageous for students to concentrate in specific sub-disciplines of architecture, especially if you anticipate application to specialized graduate programs. Concentrations in architecture are offered in Architecture, Culture, and Society, Architectural Science and Technology, History of Architecture, Architectural Theory and Visual Representation.

Advanced Placement Credit:

Advanced placement credit is generally applied as non-required elective credit toward the 176 needed to complete the Bachelor of Architecture degree and graduate from Cornell. Advanced placement credit can be applied toward the out-of-department elective requirement.

I am delighted you have chosen Cornell and look forward to meeting you in August. In the meantime, additional orientation information is available online at http://newstudentprograms.cornell.edu/orientation/. For questions regarding academic support services, resources, and programming, students should email aap-advising@cornell.edu using their Cornell netID. For questions regarding advanced placement credit, transfer credit, and degree requirements, students should email aap_registrar@cornell.edu.

Sincerely yours,

Andrea Simitch
Director of BArch Program