

Women in Architecture club blueprints career success

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mcross3@tulane.edu



Second-year architecture students Keristen Edwards, left, and Hannah Kenyon co-founded the Tulane Women in Architecture organization in fall 2016. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

The Tulane Women in Architecture (TWIA) club is combating underrepresentation of women architects by creating a supportive network for students. Second-year architecture students Hannah Kenyon and Keristen Edwards co-founded the organization in hopes that the group will lay the groundwork for the university's female architecture students to build successful careers.

Kenyon and Edwards created the organization in fall 2016.

“We want to empower women as leaders within the field of architecture while encouraging a work-life balance,” said Kenyon.

“Mentorship, camaraderie and community are definitely the focus of the organization,” said club sponsor Tiffany Lin, an associate professor of architecture. “We often pool resources with other organizations as well.”

TWIA is a Newcomb College Institute–sponsored subgroup of a national association called Women in Architecture Students. Kenyon said the Tulane club was started after she noticed the disparity between the number of women who are currently studying architecture and the relatively smaller number of women who are actually employed within the industry.

“Most women pursuing architecture degrees earn them, but the discrepancy in male-to-female ratio in the architecture profession comes from more men entering the workforce, achieving licensure, and attaining higher positions and seniority,” said Kenyon.

“We have [in the Tulane School of Architecture] 13 tenured professors, and only four of them, including myself, are women,” said Lin. “Because our field is so competitive, we want, as women in the architecture profession, to be recognized for the excellence of our work.”

TWIA hosts special events open to the Tulane community, including movie nights featuring films that depict women architects as leaders in the field. Kenyon said a book club is being planned for next year.

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