

Tulane School of Architecture's community design center nationally recognized for collaborative approach

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bbronst@tulane.edu
504-314-7444



The Small Center provided technical and design assistance for the Parisite Skatepark at Paris Avenue and I-610. (Photo by Emilie Taylor Welty)

The Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture named [Tulane University School of Architecture's Albert and Tina Small Center for Collaborative Design](#) one of only four recipients of its Collaborative Practice Award for the 2018-2019 academic year.

The award highlights the Small Center's 13 years of design-build projects and engagement programs, in particular the [Parisite Skatepark](#) project, a New Orleans park that officially opened in 2015 following years of efforts by local skaters to establish a recreation space. The Small Center provided various types of technical assistance, such as convening stakeholders and designing the park's masterplan. The project was designated as the city's first official skatepark thanks to the collaboration between a nonprofit of local skaters, city and state agencies, professional architects and Tulane students.

"This award is a recognition of the Tulane School of Architecture's leadership, through the Small Center, in architecture and social engagement. We are committed to supporting our community through high quality design and beauty, which are essential to develop pride and care for neighborhoods," said Iñaki Alday, dean of the Tulane School of Architecture and Koch Chair in Architecture. "Each project is also an innovative exploration, advancing the field of design and of community engagement processes through multidisciplinary modes, all in the real life."

The project shows that the design process can serve as a capacity and coalition builder, said Ann Yoachim, Small Center director and professor of practice at the Tulane School of Architecture. And the award is a reflection of the center's belief that engagement is a core part of any successful design effort, she said.

"Teaching students to recognize the value of partner expertise, the necessity of a multitude of voices to produce high-quality responsive design projects, and the power of design to address larger societal issues is at a core of the Center's mandate. We are honored to be recognized by our peers for this commitment," Yoachim said. "Together, we will continue to work to create a city that is shaped by all."

Since 1997, the ACSA's Collaborative Practice Award honors best practices in university-based and community-engaged programs. This award was proposed by Thomas Dutton and Anthony Schuman as a means to recognize ACSA's commitment to community partnerships in which faculty, students and neighborhood citizens are valued equally and that aim to address issues of social injustice through design.

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