

Architect shares real-world experience with students

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Allison Anderson, the Favrot Visiting Chair at the Tulane School of Architecture, is working with students to design a hypothetical consulate for Cuba located in New Orleans. (Photo by Richard Perkins)

As the Favrot Visiting Chair in Architecture at the Tulane School of Architecture this semester, Allison Anderson is sharing professional experience she gained from 20 years of successful practice on projects including sustainable civic structures, armored community shelters, green infrastructure and resilient urban planning for communities following hurricanes.

Anderson, a fellow of the American Institute of Architects, is teaching a design studio for graduate and advanced undergraduate students, focused on issues related to conflict in cities. The design project is a hypothetical consulate for Cuba located in New Orleans. Students will select sites, analyze city dynamics and tensions, and design to address local inequities.

“The skills we are teaching the students are skills they're going to need, no matter what career they pursue,” says Anderson, who with her husband, John Anderson, is principal of the Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, firm [unabridged Architecture](#), which focuses on research-based design.

Since Hurricane Katrina, Anderson says, their work has included designing a number of buildings armored for storm resistance.

“There is a need for very high-performance buildings, which continue operating in the face of natural and man-made disasters,” she says. “What we've learned is that armoring buildings for storm resistance is very similar to armoring them for blast and terrorism resistance. If we design buildings to meet 250 mph winds and debris impact, that is similar to resisting bullets and blasts.”

Anderson studied blast-resistant design for defensive structures with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The students in the design studio have met with Joseph Nieto, resident agent at the U.S. Department of State, and [Ana M. Lopez](#), director of the [Cuban and Caribbean Studies Institute](#) at Tulane.

Kenneth Schwartz, dean of the [School of Architecture](#), remarks, “Over the years, the Favrot Visiting Chair has brought an extraordinary group of architects to the school to enrich the students' experience through their contributions and the example they set for future architects.”