10 July 2020

Dear Dean Patricia Belton Oliver and CoAD Community,

The senseless police murder of George Floyd has catalyzed protests in each state of our nation and countries across the world. At every scale, communities have come together to question and reassess their investment in racism and white supremacy, and to stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. We appreciate the statements made by the University of Houston and Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design, as well as the establishment of an Equity Task Force. However, we feel that as students of this institution, we are in a unique position to begin conversations that revalue and reinvest in Black lives in our CoAD community.

Below you will find a collection of demands. We have constructed these demands through outreach to fellow students, discussion and development among one another, and deep reflection on the actions of the College to date. We understand that every individual in our community has a role in working towards anti-racism. As such, these demands are not only of the College as an institution, but of ourselves and each other (inclusive of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and visitors). We intend them as an impetus for the creation of a space in which we as students define our own terms, and in which we are facilitators with our own seats at the table instead of merely survey respondents or case studies. In other words, we do not want another Task Force, we want real, genuine, and transparent engagement and collaboration between every level of the CoAD community, including accountability and assessment.

The statements released by Dean Oliver and others at the University level are a starting point. If the College truly serves to "support a racially and ethnically diverse community," then we trust that they will support our demands, and work tirelessly and transparently beside us to incorporate student voices into their decision making process in a way that is substantive and sustainable. We look forward to a long, productive, and open conversation accompanied by long lasting action on behalf of all parties.

In solidarity,
National Organization of Minority Architecture Students @ UH (NOMAS)
The Architecture Lobby @ UH (TAL @ UH)
Cleisthenes Chapter of Alpha Rho Chi   (APX Cleisthenes Chapter)
Student Industrial Designers Society of America (SIDSA)
CoAD Student Council (STUCO)
American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS)
Interior Architecture Student Association (IASA)
Future Women in Architecture UH (FWIA)
And the undersigned members of the CoAD community (Student Body @ UH)

Demands Short Term (Fall 2020) | Mid Term (Spring 2020) | Long Term (Fall 2021)

Employ a representative and accountable faculty

1. Diversify the faculty. Our faculty does not reflect the diversity of our student body. It is important that students see themselves represented by those educating and mentoring them, and that they can connect with and relate to their faculty on this level.

    a. *ACTION: At least 50% of the faculty candidates for any given position from this point forward will be BIPOC[1] professionals, at least 50% of which will be women.[2] Faculty search committees will be transparent to the student body from the beginning, consult the Equity Task Force, and engage the student body in selecting a preferred candidate.*

2. Give students power to hold faculty accountable. Our faculty currently hold the power to veto paths of study based on their personal discomfort surrounding issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, and so forth. It is critical that the College work to understand the impact this has already had on our community, as well as to establish systems beyond the sluggish, bureaucratic, University-level Title IX legislation that empower students in holding their faculty accountable for discriminatory treatment.

    a. *ACTION: By the end of the Fall 2020 semester, the CoAD will have conducted a widely publicized open survey of current students and alumni to determine the impacts of faculty discrimination on student success.*

    b. *ACTION: By the beginning of the Spring 2021 semester, students at the CoAD will have access to an internally managed system for reporting unmerited dismissal of student work on the basis of social biases by faculty members.[3]*

Foster a supportive and anti-racist culture

1. Uplift and support Black students. There is a major disparity between Black student representation at UH as a whole and within the CoAD. This disparity needs to be addressed in a holistic and productive way. The College must task themselves with answering the question, why is it so difficult for Black students to enroll in and graduate from our program?

    a. *ACTION: By the end of the Fall 2020 semester, the CoAD will complete an engagement process with current and former Black CoAD community members to determine challenges that have discouraged individuals from continuing in the program and/or led to drops.*

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[1] "The term BIPOC stands for 'Black, Indigenous, People of Color,' and it is meant to unite all people of color in the work for liberation while intentionally acknowledging that not all people of color face the same levels of injustice." -Sunrise Movement

[2] The numbers included here are a starting place to begin dialogue between students and faculty

[3] Give example of discriminatory treatment-- ID, define user group and develop project, professor says there's "just not a need"

2. Privilege mental health in academic advising. It is ludicrous to brand our high drop rate as evidence of a good program. Rather, it is evidence that our program is inaccessible to those who face structural inequity. If a professor feels that a student is not well equipped to continue in their program, it is inappropriate for that professor to personally antagonize that student until they drop. Establishing a supportive and standardized process through which students are suggested to leave their program will ensure that students are making a decision they are confident in as well as aiding the College in understanding what shortcomings have led to our high drop rate.

   a. *ACTION: By the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester, the CoAD will establish a supportive process through which professors are required to recommend students leave their program, involving the student services office and offering re-entry counselling if appropriate.*

3. Support and protect international students. Continue to show solidarity with and support for international students in light of the ICE order. Work directly with international students to develop new strategies for substantive support. Publicly and clearly advocate for the revocation of this ICE policy.

   a. *ACTION: In the coming weeks, the CoAD will hold a workshop with Trang and our international student community to brainstorm and find solutions to the current situation and find resources that will support international students in a worst case scenario (emergency online classes)*

   b. *ACTION: Advocate for the establishment of a collection of $1,000-per-year UH-provided scholarships solely available to international students to allow more students the opportunity to pay in-state tuition.*

Acknowledge the impact of structural inequity on student wealth

1. Improve and diversify networking opportunities. While some students in our community have the know-how and connections to make their own way in the design world, many are not so lucky. "How to format a resume" workshops are not sufficient career counselling, and a career fair full of large, corporate firms building hospitals is not sufficient networking.

   a. *ACTION: Through the development of creative outreach and financial incentives, the Spring 2021 career fair will bring at least ten industrial design companies, five landscape architecture firms, and five city planning or community development organizations; At least 20% of all firms present at the spring 2021 career fair will be BIPOC-owned, and fees for these firms will be waived.[4]*

   b. *ACTION: Throughout the Fall 2020 semester, the CoAD Connexion platform will be expanded to include one-on-one counseling options for Black, BIPOC, and low-income students respectively.*

2. Fund your students. The lack of needs-based funding offered by the College is undoubtedly a core reason for our lack of student retention. This absence disproportionately impacts Black and BIPOC students.

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[4] The numbers included here are a starting place to begin dialogue between students and faculty

a. *ACTION: By Spring 2021, scholarships and direct aid opportunities specifically targeting Black, BIPOC, and low-income (<u>respectively</u>) high school seniors, transfer students from area community colleges, and current CoAD students will be available and easily accessible through the UH CoAD website.*

b. *ACTION: Solicit donations to establish CoAD-funded scholarships and direct aid for Black, BIPOC, and low-income students.*

3. Provide the materials for student success. It is impossible to succeed in this program when you are forced to choose between groceries or a $70 plot, rent or the museum board for your final model, and dinner or rushing to finish a drawing in the last hour the computer lab is open. The CoAD should provide the materials and programs that are necessary for students to succeed when students have no financial means of securing those materials.

a. *ACTION: By Spring 2021, needs-based plotting, printing, and materials stipends will be available to address recurring financial barriers to student success.*

b. *ACTION: By Fall 2021, there will be a security system installed and running throughout the CoAD, allowing the computer lab to remain open 24/7, and provide needs-based licenses for programs such as the Adobe Suite and Rhinoceros.*

4. Fund NOMAS and other student-led BIPOC design initiatives. Increase financial and administrative support to NOMAS and develop strategies to encourage and support student-led BIPOC design initiatives such as through a small grants program

a. *ACTION: By Fall 2021, the CoAD will have developed a program to cover the cost of Student Organization dues for students who express financial need.*

b. *ACTION: Develop grant programs through which students can pursue extra-curricular projects based in anti-racist community development; Prioritize BIPOC students in application processes.*

Develop anti-racist programming

1. Build partnerships with Third Ward. Our relationship with Third Ward has not been positive, and we have an obligation to intentionally reinvest in our surrounding community at every opportunity.

a. *ACTION: By Fall 2021, the CoAD will have developed partnerships with schools and community organizations in Third Ward in order to promote professions in architecture and design, collaborate on classroom workshops, host open-house days at the College, and support any relevant community-driven initiatives. Throughout this process, the CoAD will consistently analyze its biases and respect the autonomy and expertise of community members. Throughout this process, the CoAD will consistently analyze its biases and respect the autonomy and expertise of community members.*

2. Outreach to high school students in BIPOC communities and rethink our admissions process.
Developing a more holistic and accessible application and admissions process, including interviews with

students interested in or applying to the College, can move our culture away from one of students as excess to students as valuable individuals. Outreaching to high schools in communities that are underrepresented in the College through the CoAD Ambassadors program is a step towards bringing these communities into the architecture and design fields.

   a. *ACTION: In selecting the 2025/2026 CoAD class, admissions officials will develop strategies to holistically evaluate promising students, lower the incoming class size, and consider each student admitted as a valuable investment in the community.[5]*

   b. *ACTION: Beginning Spring 2021, the CoAD Ambassadors will work with the Student Services Office to outreach to high schools in communities that are underrepresented within the College*

3. Establish a branch of NOMA Project Pipeline at UH. Summer programs for high schoolers can be one way of exposing students to design careers. Providing a summer program, such as Project Pipeline, at the University of Houston CoAD has the power to show students from surrounding communities that a career in design is accessible to them, and provides them with a design community.

   a. *ACTION: Beginning in Summer 2021, UH will host a segment of the Project Pipeline program in collaboration with Houston NOMA.*

4. Diversify the lecture series. Bring in BIPOC lecturers from a variety of backgrounds with whom students can connect and relate to; Field student suggestions on lecture topic or theme prior to establishing the annual lecture series; Consider more conscious themes such as 'Social Impact' and more diverse formats such as panels, small group seminars, etc. for lectures

   a. *ACTION: The next lecture series will reach out to <u>at least</u> 50% BIPOC guests, <u>at least</u> 50% of which will be BIPOC women, and focus around a socially conscious theme such as 'Social Impact.' The lecture series will incorporate opt-in small group seminars, panels, or discussion groups to deepen student connections to the material. The selection process for lecturers will be transparent and student-centered.[6]*

Extract white supremacy from the curriculum

1. Develop an anti-racist Architecture and Interior Architecture curriculum.[7] Stop teaching us to gentrify. Instead of prompting students to design museums, mediatheques, and makerspaces empty of cultural significance to be occupied by those with significantly more means than the majority of our city's population, assign students socially conscious projects that benefit Black and BIPOC communities. In line with these projects, incorporate discussions from history, theory, and criticism classes surrounding issues of racism in architecture and city planning into the studio classroom.

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[5] We are eager to continue discussions to reach a more specific and actionable plan on this item, informed by knowledge on UH admissions practices and in collaboration with the student services office
[6] The numbers included here are a starting place to begin dialogue between students and faculty
[7] This demand includes CoAD graduate programs

a. *ACTION: By Spring 2021, program coordinators will completely overhaul all studio projects through critical assessment of what each project stands for in the context of white supremacy. This process will be transparent and open to consistent student involvement.*

b. *ACTION: By Spring 2021, program coordinators will implement site analysis requirements that demand deeper learning and research about the sociopolitical and historical implications of design in the context of systemic racism.*

2. Develop an anti-racist Industrial Design curriculum. Currently, the ID curriculum often focuses on design for the top 10%. Instead, the curriculum should develop strategies to teach and promote empathy through an emphasis on social impact and humanitarian design. By placing a greater emphasis on the issues that exist within our communities, the ID curriculum can encourage more social relevancy and awareness.

a. *ACTION: By Fall 2021, second year ID students will team up with a BIPOC-owned company to learn about manufacturing and budgeting, third/fourth year ID students will initiate a project centered around BIPOC communities (identify and fulfill expressed needs rather than idealized needs), and program coordinators will implement a mandatory co-design/participatory design project at some point in the studio sequence to educate how design thinking can be misused as a tool that perpetuates racial biases and ignores marginalized voices.*

3. Develop an anti-racist history, theory, and criticism sequence. Existing History and Theory courses are already overburdened trying to teach us the entire western canon. Teach us the history of white supremacy in design, the architects and designers who challenged it, and what challenges remain to be overcome instead of just teaching us white supremacy.

a. *ACTION: By Spring 2021, program coordinators will develop a cohesive curriculum from an anti-racist, anti-colonialist perspective that prioritizes Black and BIPOC design history.[8]*

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[8] This process will be transparent, and will prioritize student engagement at all points

The undersigned members of the CoAD community stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and our BIPOC colleagues through affirmation of these demands, and commit to putting forth the time and effort necessary to create substantive change.

1. Kaede Polkinghorne (TAL @ UH)
2. Maria Noguera (APX Cleisthenes Chapter President)
3. Anne-Elisabeth Baker (SIDSA President)
4. Javier E Guerrero (NOMAS President)
5. Nicholas Jones (FWIA Vice Chair, TAL @ UH)
6. Sarah White (APX Cleisthenes Chapter, IASA)
7. Natalia Climaco (NOMAS Vice President)
8. Brenda Tijerina (TAL @ UH)
9. Drake Flood (TAL @ UH)
10. Eugenia Forgang (Student Body @ UH)
11. Cynthia Cruz (TAL @ UH)
12. Rami Namani (AIAS Publicist, NOMAS)
13. Liya Thomas (SIDSA Entrepreneur)
14. Evelyn Truong (NOMAS)
15. Kristen Diaz (NOMAS, AIAS)
16. Franco Denari (Student Body @ UH)
17. Allison Reyes (AIAS)
18. Jolene Limqueco (APX, FWIA, STUCO, TAL, Hines Digest)
19. Caitlyn Talton-Prater (IASA Vice President, APX Cleisthenes Chapter Vice President)
20. Zehra Shenwari (Student Body @ UH)
21. Natalie Costello (APX)
22. Brenda R Castillo (Student Body @ UH)
23. Abida Khan (Student Body @ UH)
24. Vivian Ung (student body @ uh)
25. Heriberto (Eddie) Saenz (student body @ UH)
26. Shatha Abushaikha (Student Body @ UH)
27. Aishwarya Ravat (student body @ UH)
28. Alyse Nason (student body @ UH)
29. Diana Arias (student body @ UH)
30. Ariana Flick (TAL @ UH)
31. Ferdous Kabir (student body @ UH)
32. Melina Torres

33. Christopher Kirch (Student Body @ UH)

34. Colin Tidwell (Student Body @ UH)

35. Vincent Taylor (Student Body @ UH)

36. Terry Chuong (Student Body @ UH)

37. Roberto Orozco (Student Body @ UH, SIDSA)

38. Sofia Sayeed (Student Body @ UH)

39. Davone Morgan (Student Body @ UH)

40. Trish Huynh (NOMAS, AIAS, FWIA, STUCO)

41. Usna Ghaffar (SIDSA Historian)

42. Austin Baldwin (NOMAS)

43. Triciajane Asuncion (Hines Digest Vice President)

44. Heba Nimer (student body @ UH, student ambassador)

45. Jakob Thomas (Student Body @UH, SIDSA)

46. Lindsey Weaver (Student Body @ UH)

47. Kadmiel Konan (APX Cleisthenes)

48. Alexa Baeza (SIDSA Secretary)

49. Maricela Tinajero (AIAS)

50. Anthony Lozano (Student Body @ UH)

51. James Cooper II (NOMAS Historian)

52. Benjamin Gonzalez (Student Body @ UH)

53. Sherry Stefanos (IASA President)

54. Joaquin Tinoco (SIDSA Vice President)

55. Pooja Desai (APX Publicist, AIAS Professional Coordinator)

56. Daniela Diaz (Student Body @ UH)

57. Mariam Moini (Student Body @ UH)

58. Khang Do (Student Body @ UH)

59. Quinn Edgecombe (COAD & UH & SIDSA ALUMNI)

60. Juan Barron (student body @uh)

61. Sharon Philip

62. Robert Glenn (Student Body @ UH)

63. Jayla Huseyn (NOMAS)

64. David V. Espinoza (AIAS)

65. Cesar Portillo (Alum Class of '18, APX Cleisthenes Alumni)

66. Amanda Whitley (TAL, FWIA)

67. Hannah Montalvo (FWIA, Student Body @ UH)

68. Esmeralda Pineda (IASA @ UH)

69. Imhotep Blot (Student Body @ UH)

70. Kat Healy (Student Body @ UH)

71. Sebastian Andrade (Student Body @ UH)

72. Maria Martinez (Alum Class of '19, APX Cleisthenes, AIAS Alumni)

73. Darian Jones (Alum Class of '17, APX Cleisthenes Alumni)

74. Aaron Michael Grant, AIA, NCARB (Alum class of '10, APX Cleisthenes Alumni)

75. Angela Tran (STUCO, FWiA)

76. Dana Truong (STUCO)

77. Angelica Lastra (Alum Class of 18')

78. Jose Mario Lopez (Alum Class of 18')

79. Camilo Reinales (Alum Class of 19')

80. Michael Chang (Alum Class of 18')

81. Camila Castro (Alum Class of 18')

82. Jorge Rebellon (Alum Class of 18')

83. Edward Hidrogo (Alum Class of 18')

84. Austine Yu (Alum Class of 18')

85. Silvia Martinez (Alum Class of '17, IASA Alumni)

86. Marcela Ramos

87. Francis Ramirez (Alum Class of '18)

88. Joshua Naputi (Alum Class '17, APX Cleisthenes Alumni)

89. Mustafa Tayyeb (Alum, Class of 2018)

90. Pooja Shetty (Alum Class of '18)

91. Carlyle Yarbough (Alum Class of '15, SIDSA Vice President 2015)

92. Stephanie Oropeza (Alum Class of 18')

93. Erin Lew (Alum Class of '17, SIDSA)

94. Ami Patel (Alum Class of '17)

95. Munjer Hashim (Alum Class of '16)

96. Alicia Lopez (Alum Class of '18)

97. Mariela Flores (Alum Class of '18)

98. Nadia Hassan (Alum Class of '19)

99. Sharon Lott (Student body @UHParimala Venkatesh (Alum Class of '19)

100. Minelya De Leon (Alum Class of '16)

101. Vivian Nguyen (Alum Class of '17)

102. Armando Diaz Espinal

103. Brian Thompson (Alum Class of '19)

104. Benny Zhuang (Alum Class of '15)

105. Cody King (Alum Class of '19)
106. Shoaib Mohammed Nizami (Alum Class of '19, WDA at a large language)
107. Isabella Pameira (Student Body @ UH)
108. Lamiya Merchant (Student Body @ UH)
109. Miguel Lopez
110. Daniela Olivera-Gomez (Alumn Class of '19)
111. Micaela Mendiola (Alumn Class of '19)
112. Emily Gonzales (Alumn Class of '19)
113. Thuy-Trung Pham (Alum Class of '19)
114. Katelyn Ehmry (student body, SIDSA)
115. Cristobal Pinon (Alum Class of '18)
116. Juan Melesio (Alum Class of '20)
117. Kellee Kimbro (Alum Class '12, SIDSA President 2012)
118. Rahma Hassan (Student Body @UH, NOMAS)
119. Filza Khan (Alum Class '17)
120. Blanca Soto (Alum Class '18)
121. Logan Scott (Alum Class of '17)
122. Maryam Ghanem (Alum Class of '20)
123. Rosa Tang (Alum Class of '16)
124. Brenda P Arguello McEuen (Alum Class '17, SIDSA Treasurer 2016)
125. Aaron Ross McEuen (Alum Class '16, Alum 19'
126. Dennis Mensah (NOMAS, StuCo)
127. Lauren Peters (Alum Class of '20, SIDSA President 2020)
128. Alejandro Reyes (Student Body @ UH)
129. Amanda Lopez
130. Enrique Lozano (TAL @ UH)
131. Rishma Bhatt (Alum Class of' 2020)
132. Catalina Valencia (Alum Class of 2018)
133. Wilson Nguyen (Alum Class of 2019)
134. Jerry Jacob (Student Body @ UH)
135. Sarah Sanchez (Alum Class of '18, APX Cleisthenes, IASA Alumni)
136. Estelle Lee (student body @ UH)
137. Lisa Evans (AIAS Member, AIAS President 2019-20)
138. Mayen Aguilera (Alum Class of '19, IASA Alumni)
139. Melvalean McLemore- Catina (Alum Class of 2009)
140. Ariana Cuvelier (Alum Class of '19 Alumni)

141.   Saul de La Mancha (Alum Class of '16)

142.   Clarize Smit (Alum class of '19, APX Cleisthenes Alumni)

143.   Ben Tonthat (Alum class of '19, APX Cleisthenes Alumni)

144.   Kendrick Perkins (Alum class of '18 Alumni)

145.   Marina Latto (SIDSA Community Outreach)

146.   Marcos A. Sepulveda (alum class 13' alumni)

147.   John Taylor (Alum class of '19)

148.   Gabriela Quezada (Alum class of '19)

149.   Candice Tape (Alum class of '09)

150.   Pascal Bakari (ID Sophomore, SIDSA Member)

151.   Jesus Garate (Alum Class of '16)

152.   Kimberly Saavedra (IASA Treasurer)

153.   Lauren Campbell (student body @ UH

154.   Jose Paul Molina (Alum class of '19, Student Council, AIA)

155.   Madonna Fanos (Alum class of '20, FWIA Alumni, TAL)

156.   Sara Garcia (student body @ UH, Student Ambassador)

157.   Ana C Sotelo (Alum Class of '15)

158.   Maricela Calderon (Alum Class of '16)

159.   Jenna Agatep (student body @ UH)

160.   Christopher Zhu (AIAS)

161.   Liana Brown (COaD Student Ambassador)

162.   Kimmie Wu

163.   Ebubechukcwu Oguchi (student body @UH)

164.   William White (Alum Class of '17)

165.   Claudia Morles (Alum Class of '19, Student Council)

166.   Sainath Krishnamurthy (student body @ UH)

167.   Vilma Umanzor (Alum Class of '18)

168.   Kenny Nguyen (NOMAS Ex-President @ UH)

169.   Irene Nguyen (Alum Class of '20, TAL @ UH)

170.   Bruno Xavier

171.   Nancy Rangel

172.   Alexander Salinas

173.   Kieran Renfrow (student body @ UH)

174.   Christian Pugh (student body @ UH)

175.   Ana Peralta (FWIA Creative Director @ UH)

176.   John Michael Raceles (Student Body @ UH)

177. Francis Legra (Student Body @ UH)

178. Rodolfo Arreguin (Student Body @UH)

179. Victoria Rivera (Student body @UH)

180. Nastassia Chua (Student Body @UH)

181. Nathan Bowman o.o

182. Nabihah Muhammedy (Alum, 2019)

183. Karina Ramos (Alum Class of '18)

184. Karina Bhattacharya (Student Body @ UH)

185. Roberto Bonilla (Student Body @ UH)

186. Eric Sloat (UH ID)

187. Danielle Martinez (Alum Class of '20, IASA Alumni)Jason Haro (Student Body @ UH)

188. Michael Agurcia (Alumni Class of '19

189. Andrew Gressett (Alum Class of '16)

190. Gabriela Espinosa (Alum Class of '18)

191. Jonathan Rodriguez (Alum Class of '20, FWIA Alumni)

192. Utopia LaStrap II (Student Body @ UH)

193. Diana Hernandez (Student Body @ UH)

194. Monserrat Garcia (Student Body @ UH, SIDSA)

195. Dennis Alvarez (Alum Class of '11)

196. Nancy Johnson (Alum Class of '09)

197. Ashel Jaimon (FWIA, Student Body @ UH)

198. Jamilah Preston (Alum Class of '20)

199. Reem Loubani

200. Michael Lindemann (APX Cleisthenes)

201. Adriana Ayala (Alum Class of '16)

202. Kevin Pratt (Student Body @ UH)

203. Jesus Garcia (Student Body @ UH, SIDSA)

204. Mariana Keymolen (SIDSA Treasurer)

205. Kiza Forgie, AIA (Alum 2010)

206. Arturo Barrera (Alum class of '16)

207. Peter Molick (Alum class of '06)

208. Dylan Bailey (Alum Class of '15)

209. Sharlene Mercado (Alum Class of '19, FWIA)

210. Gregorius Budhijanto (Alum class of '15

211. Harrinson Castillo (Alum Class of '19)

212. Ana Millan (Alum Class of '17)

213. Sara White (Student Body @ UH)
214. Princess Villalta (Alum Class of '18)
215. Camille Espinas (Alum Class of '18)