



Society of Architectural Historians Launches Surveys for Study on Architectural History in Higher Education

CHICAGO (February 21, 2020) — The Society of Architectural Historians has launched three surveys to collect information from academics for its two-year study on the status of the field of architectural history in higher education in the United States, the [SAH Data Project](#). The surveys are intended for chairs and administrators, faculty, and students and represent the most public phase of the project’s data collection to date. The aim of the SAH Data Project is to determine where and in what ways the field of architectural history is expanding, receding, or holding steady, and to consider the structural or cultural factors behind such trends.

The SAH Data Project team is using these surveys to gather some of the necessary quantitative data such as course enrollments over time, tenure-stream versus contingent faculty, faculty and student demographics. The surveys also collect crucial qualitative data about aspects of the field that may have long-lasting impacts,

such as the effect of the 2008 economic downturn on architectural history programs and the extent to which students have demonstrated interest in social justice- or climate crisis-related architectural themes.

THE SAH DATA PROJECT

“The project team is eager to give as many people as possible a chance to share their experiences studying and/or teaching architectural history,” said Sarah M. Dreller, SAH postdoctoral researcher in the humanities. “The project defines ‘architectural history’ as the history of the built environment, which not only includes buildings but also interiors, landscapes, structures, cities, etc. Likewise, a student only must have completed one college architectural history class to be eligible to contribute. ”

“In other words, the project would benefit from hearing from anyone regardless of their major or where they’re studying,” Dreller said, “including community college students, people in professional design programs, and so on. This emphasis on both breadth and depth is a key aspect of our data humanism approach and will ultimately help make the data analysis phase more genuinely reflective of the field as a whole.”

The three surveys for academics will remain open through May 15, 2020. SAH will invite architectural historians working outside the academy to share their perspectives and contribute to the project later this spring. This includes architectural historians employed by government agencies, nonprofit organizations,

museums, design education organizations, preservation organizations and architectural publications, to name a few.

In addition to online surveying, the project methodology also encompasses a variety of other kinds of quantitative and qualitative data-gathering tasks such as conducting in-depth group conversations with project constituents and analyzing existing publication lists for thematic trends over time.

“The SAH Data Project is very important to our organization because the conclusions we draw from it will shape both our priorities and allocations of resources for years to come,” said Pauline Saliga, SAH executive director.”

The SAH Data Project is funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. More information and links to the surveys are available at sah.org/data-project.

About the Society of Architectural Historians

Founded in 1940, the Society of Architectural Historians is an international nonprofit membership organization that promotes the study, interpretation and conservation of architecture, design, landscapes and urbanism worldwide. SAH serves a network of local, national and international institutions and individuals who, by profession or interest, focus on the built environment and its role in shaping contemporary life. SAH promotes meaningful public engagement with the history of the built environment through advocacy efforts, print and online publications, and local, national and international programs.

###

Media Contact

Helena Dean, SAH Director of Communications, hdean@sah.org, 312.573.1365