

Department of Architecture and Urban Sustainability

CAUSES Faculty and Program Staff Profiles



Anna Franz, PhD, FAIA, NAC, LEED AP, is the Chair of the Department of Architecture and Urban Sustainability and Director of the University's Architecture and Community Planning Program. Before joining the faculty in 2020 as an Assistant Professor of Architecture, she served in executive leadership roles as Director, Planning and Project Management, Architect of the Capitol and Chief, Space and Facilities Division, Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. During her 30-year federal career, she held positions at the National Institutes of Health, Smithsonian Institution, Department of Justice, and Department of the Navy. Prior accomplishments include award-winning projects such as the U.S. Capitol Dome Skirt and Dome Restoration, Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture Building Renewal, and Robert F. Kennedy Main Justice Department Building Modernization.

Recognized as an eminent leader in the federal government and known for excellence in architecture/preservation, engineering, and construction, she served as chair of the Construction Industry Institute and represented the Architect of the Capitol on the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Dr. Franz was awarded the Architect's Citation in 2012 and elected to the American Institute of Architects' College of Fellows and the National Academy of Construction in 2018. Dr. Franz has published a number of scholarly papers on whole system design and planning in architecture and engineering journals. She taught Construction Design and Implementation at The Catholic University of America and served as a Doctoral Program Research Advisor for George Washington University. She is a registered architect in Virginia and the District of Columbia, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Accredited Professional, and a registered nurse. She has a bachelor's degree in nursing from Florida State University, a master's in nursing from Texas Woman's University, a master's in architecture/historic preservation from The University of Texas at Austin, and a doctorate in engineering management from George Washington University.



Golnar Ahmadi, Ph.D., is a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Urban Architecture and Community Planning with over 12 years of experience in practice in Iran, Germany, and the United States. She taught History and Theory in Architecture and Design Studio at Virginia Tech University and James Madison University. She received bachelor and master's degrees in Architecture from Tehran University, in her native country, and a master's degree with a focus on Sustainability and Energy Conservation from Frankfurt University, Germany. Most recently, she completed her Ph.D. at Virginia Tech University. Her research focuses on rhythm, harmony, and proportion in architecture and other arts, especially in music. She is also interested in how a 2D drawing can be visualized as a 3D perception by various scales and has done some research on "Gesamtkunstwerk" and "Gestalt" theory.

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Kathy Denise Dixon, AIA, NOMA, LEED AP BD+C, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Urban Architecture and Community Planning and a licensed architect with over 20 years of experience. During her career, Kathy has worked on a number of educational facilities in the Washington D.C. Metropolitan area. She spent several years working on national contracts with the Federal Aviation Administration including Potomac TRACON and several Air Traffic Control facilities. Prior to moving to government and institutional projects, she worked for four years with McDonald's Corporation developing new restaurants, site planning, designing commercial kitchens, and creating child-oriented play areas. Most recently, she has designed civic facilities and faith-based institutions including fire stations, churches, family life centers, and schools. Prof. Dixon holds a Master's degree in Urban Planning, with a focus on Housing and Community Development. She is certified by the USGBC's Leadership in Energy

and Environment Design Program the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, as well as CSI's Certified Documents Technologist program.



Khosro Movahed, an Associate Professor of Architecture, joined the faculty in 2023. Prior to this appointment, he served as an Associate Professor of Architecture at Shiraz Islamic Azad University in Iran. Throughout his 26 years of experience at the university, he held various leadership positions, including five years as Chair of the Department of Architecture and five years as Dean of the Faculty of Art and Architecture at Shiraz Islamic Azad University. Notably, he was honored with the International Prize for Environment Creation by the Japan Institute of Environmental Creation.

Dr. Mavahed has a strong research background, having published over 50 research papers with more than 100 citations. He has also contributed to the academic community as a Visiting Research Faculty member at esteemed universities such as Iowa State University in the US, Toyohashi University in Japan, and Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. His expertise in architecture and urban sustainability has been recognized through the receipt of numerous research grants.

Furthermore, Dr. Movahed has been an active consulting architect in Iran since 1996, working on a variety of architectural projects. He holds a Ph.D. and M.S. in Environmental Science from Hokkaido University in Japan, as well as a B.Sc. in Architecture from Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran, Iran.