

NOMA RECEIVED PRESIDENTIAL CITATION FOR PROJECT PIPELINE

The Louisiana chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) has received the Presidential Citation from the American Institute of Architects Louisiana affiliate. The award was given at the AIA Louisiana annual Design Conference Luncheon on September 11 in Baton Rouge for its Project Pipeline Workshop Program.



The program is in its second year of elevating architecture awareness among elementary to high school students. Six New Orleans high schools participated in the year-long workshop series, with an engaging curriculum and guide for teachers, professional assistance, and one-on-one mentorship with Pipeline Program architect mentors.

Students are asked to produce two small individual design projects, one group project and a process book. At the end of the semester, students participate in a competition showcase, presenting narratives of their projects and discussing the social impact of their solutions.

Some of the projects by students in 2014 include restorative justice centers in schools, solar panels on library roofs, community kitchens in food deserts. Bryan C. Lee Jr., president of the Louisiana branch of NOMA, said, "Although the workshops are about bringing more students into the design profession, we are equally interested in creating students who are socially conscious users of the built environment. Whether a student ultimately becomes a doctor, lawyer, or chef, they will have agency in the spaces they inherit or potentially build. Having a sense of community obligation creates better space for all of us."

"The award was given in recognition of their advocacy of diversity in the architecture profession, while connecting communities to design," according to AIA LA President Lisa H. Nice, AIA. It included educational programs for high school students, diverse dialogue and socially responsible initiatives regardless of race, gender or sociocultural status.

Connie Harlan, Head of the Louisa S. McGehee Middle School, noted, "McGehee's experience with Project Pipeline was nothing short of remarkable. We found their curriculum, commitment to our needs and dedication to the students memorable and noteworthy."

Jim Kline, Dean of Social studies and Foreign Language at Sci Academy, said, through their participation in Project Pipeline, "My students went from being apathetic participants in our local community to being critical citizens, questioning the design of our city and proposing more user-friendly designs to improve our neighborhoods. Mentors spent countless hours with my students. In total, my students grew in so many academic and non-cognitive domains: mathematical measurement and computation, research and citations, sketching and design, presentation and delivery, as well as critical reflection."