

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON ARCHITECTURAL COMMISSION

Monday, September 8th, 2025 Meeting Minutes
Online Meeting

Architectural Commission

X	Ken Yocom, Chair	Associate Professor, College of Architecture	Voting
X	Gundula Proksch, Vice Chair	Faculty Council on Campus Planning and Stewardship	Voting
X	John Syvertsen	Professional Member	Voting
X	Edwin Harris	Professional Member	Voting
X	Marlon Blackwell	Professional Member	Voting
X	Julie Snow	Professional Member	Voting
X	Valerie Lange	Student Member	Voting
X	Jonathan Bechtol	Student Member	Voting
X	Rod Worden	Interim Vice President, UW Facilities	Ex Officio
X	Steve Tatge	Associate Vice President of Asset Management, UW Facilities	Ex Officio
X	Kristine Kenney	Executive Director of Campus Architecture & Planning, UWF	Ex Officio

Minutes by Laura Salish, Executive Assistant to the Executive Director of Campus Architecture & Planning

Call to Order

The new Chair of the Architectural Commission Ken Yocom, called the meeting to order. The Commission members introduced themselves. Gundula noted this was her final meeting as a member of UWAC due to the conclusion of her term as the Co-Chair of the Faculty Council on Campus Planning & Stewardship and was thanked for her contributions.

Approval of Past Minutes and Current Agenda

The June 9th, 2025 meeting minutes and current agenda were approved. John Syvertsen moved to approve; Julie Snow seconded.

UW Updates

- The University welcomed our **new President**, Dr. Robert Jones in August. Asks great questions but is very busy with many departments. Pres Jones wants to ensure that UWAC is aligned with UW values.
- The **Welcome Center** project is working on project definition to finalize the program and target values for each discipline. One issue we're working on separately from the project is resolving the displaced parking situation due to the placement of the WC within the existing parking lot footprint. Both the Burke Museum and Welcome Center will require immediate access to parking to serve the intended clientele. We're anticipating progress on this project to be presented at our November UWAC meeting.
- We're finalizing the formation of a new **UW Tacoma Student Housing** project, which will serve as the first project developed under the recently completed Campus Master Plan, charting the precedent for new development as campus grows up hill. The project will be going to Board of Regents for approval in November and is proposed as a developer lead project. A significant part of the project is to build a campus-wide dining hall for access by all students, faculty, and staff. It also includes the renovation and management of an existing on-campus apartment complex known as Court 17. We're also working with the City of Tacoma to vacate the alleyway between the two sites

identified for the project, as well as a block of an adjacent street. We're working on the language for the RFP to ensure clarity around the design intent for this project given it will become the heart of campus. We'll schedule a site visit to the Tacoma campus as part of our November meeting to familiarize the Commission members with the campus and local campus partners.

Chemical Sciences Building Review

Review of the project definition phase progress, noting the project has not yet entered into design.

Presenters:

UW Project Manager: Lara Sirois

Design Team: Design Builder (Skanska): Margot VanSwearingen; Architect (Payette): Peter Viera, Jeff DeGregorio; Landscape Architect (GGN): Jennifer Guthrie, Kara Weaver

Client Representation: Diane Harris, Munira Khalil, Paul Miller, Mindy Norris, Dan Pollack

Program

- New building will replace outdated Bagley facilities, shifting Bagley to teaching and services.
- Program includes high-performance labs, wet labs, collaboration and write-up spaces, plus a large active classroom.
- Proposed new building to be 100,000-110,000 GSF.

Site & Design Constraints

- 15 ft grade change across site; adjacency to forested "wilds" vs. developed upper campus is important.
- Utility tunnels require setbacks; site inflects façades into folded forms on east, west, and south.
- Preference for 5–6 story building with smaller footprint to balance scale and breathing space along south side of the building.

Site Planning

- Service access is likely along Okanagan instead of new dock.
- Gathering spaces planned at pathways, plazas, and decks (east, west, south).
- Woodland walk along south side to ensure ADA access doesn't rely on through-building access.

Massing & Expression

- Building envisioned as emerging from the forest, with "formal" and "wild" sides.
- North/south lab bar simple and possibly windowless; south "living room" most transparent.
- Exterior concept: taller upper volume with repetitive cadence of transparency and opacity atop lower, recessed base aligning with cedar tree canopy.

Major Feedback Themes

Identity & Vision

- Need to define *the identity* for the department, not just solve functional problems.
- Building should be a bold, singular statement integrated with the landscape, not only a program-driven form.

Campus & Landscape Integration

- Stronger activation and connection to Okanagan Lane needed—currently feels "back of house."
- Outdoor terraces, plazas, and sectional design could better connect research, teaching, and student life.

- Lobby and entry should be more visible, welcoming, and oriented to pedestrian flows (north/fountain side).

Scale & Massing Concerns

- Risk that 6-story version could read as a wall; needs balance with landscape and breathing space.
- Explore alternatives to rigid footprint and typical lab stacking; avoid deterministic design.

Functionality & Operations

- Circulation of chemicals and service access remain key planning issues.
- Cost pressures are significant; taller building could add expense but offers flexibility (add/remove floors).
- Need strategic placement of mechanical systems to minimize costs.

Overall Takeaway: The design should move beyond fitting labs into site constraints and aim for a visionary, identity-defining building. Priorities are creating welcoming connections to campus, integrating with the landscape, ensuring functional efficiency, and delivering a bold architectural presence that supports both research and teaching.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM.

The next meeting will be held in-person on November 10th, 2025.