

# Pacific Academy of Building Design Launches First-of-its-Kind Virtual Design School in Hawaii

*PABD was created to offer a more accessible path to becoming a credentialed, professional architect or interior designer without a four-year college degree.*

HONOLULU, HI, UNITED STATES, October 1, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Pacific Academy of Building Design](#) ("PABD") is excited to be launching an innovative educational program that offers a more affordable and accessible path to becoming a credentialed, professional architect or interior designer. Over two years in the making, founders [Liza Song Lockard, M.Arch, PhD](#), and [Aaron Shimizu, AIA](#), have put together a curriculum and team to provide a much-needed alternative to a four-year college degree. As educators and professional



Liza Song Lockard, M.Arch, PhD, Co-Founder, PABD

designers with decades of experience, their goal is to rigorously prepare students for the rapidly changing demands of the design profession by providing an adaptive learning experience that is more responsive to students' needs today. Their mission is to help their students gain practical and invaluable experience in the field as an integral part of their professional education.

"Many design firms have a preference for hiring competent local candidates, but often cannot find enough qualified applicants," said Lockard. "We believe PABD will be able to fill that void by supplementing education with hands-on professional training through our program. Although PABD is based in Hawaii, our virtual courses can be taken anywhere. We have several partnerships with design firms in place here for our students' field experience, and hope to form partnerships around the country for students on the U.S. mainland, as well."

Lockard added that, after surveying colleagues in the industry, when given a choice between hiring someone with a bachelor's degree or someone who can demonstrate proficiency in technical skills and knowledge through practical experience, the latter won overwhelmingly. The difference lies between professional and academic educational approaches.

"We found over the years that academic programs do not adequately prepare their graduates for professional practice," stated Shimizu, who is, himself, a testament to this kind of program. "On the one hand, there are trade schools which focus on technical vocational training, and on the other hand, universities that focus on conceptual/theoretical design thinking, but neither addresses the niche professional skill sets that are required for actual practice. PABD has been created to fill that gap."



Aaron Shimizu, AIA, Co-Founder, PABD

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PhD, Co-founder, PABD*

According to Lockard, “We recognize the wide diversity of students and their various needs. The model we've developed appeals to all kinds of students—high school graduates looking for alternatives to college, second-career seekers, military personnel and spouses, real estate agents who want to hone their knowledge, and others with an interest in architecture or interior design. If they are motivated to learn and put in the work, PABD can help them realize their dreams!”

Through a combination of interactive video lessons, live sessions with mentors, and hands-on engagement with real projects, PABD's curriculum starts with learning the

foundational skills, then moves on to interdisciplinary, project-based coursework. Each level culminates with paid, on-the-job work experience, with roles expanding after each level as the student's proficiency develops.

There are three pillars that distinguish PABD from the traditional collegiate model:

## Flexibility

We know that many students have to work, take care of family members at home, or have other personal obligations that they need to work around. And many who live in remote or rural areas may have limited options for career advancement. We have developed a user-friendly multi-modal format where students can start and complete courses at any time according to their own schedules, and do the coursework whenever they

want—as well as at their own pace. There is no need to commute to campus, attend an early morning class, reschedule appointments, or worry about handing in an assignment late! You can progress through the program in the way that best suits you.

## Affordability

In order to make a professional design career more attainable, we focus on providing the essentials for a high-quality education and dispensing with many of the overhead expenses which tend to bloat tuition costs at a typical university. In fact, students will have opportunities to actually earn income from professional internships during their studies. PABD will also provide resources for students to apply for scholarships and financial aid.

## Professionally-focused Curriculum

PABD's project-based curriculum is centered on praxis, which emphasizes more in-depth practical experience across building design-related disciplines (interior design, architecture, and construction) than the typical college academic curriculum. To ensure well-roundedness and more meaningful learning, our curriculum also integrates multidisciplinary themes within the context of the courses, rather than requiring separate general education courses like most college majors do; moreover, it covers the kind of knowledge needed to qualify for, and pass, the professional credentialing exams. With our focus on hands-on vocational training at all levels of the curriculum—and working alongside seasoned practitioners—students will be better prepared for a successful career in the design field.

PABD has created free sample modules on YouTube (@PABD\_HI) for anyone interested in learning more about how the program works. After introducing and explaining a topic in our instructional videos, students then engage in numerous interactive exercises that help to demonstrate and deepen their understanding. These exercises 'gamify' the learning process, which not only keeps students engaged, but also helps retention of relevant information.

## Grand Opening Special



Paid on-the-job experience is one of the three pillars that distinguish PABD from the traditional collegiate model.

PABD is offering 10% off tuition (on any course or bundle) through October 31, 2024, to celebrate their launch. The code will be available when registering on our website at [pabd.us](http://pabd.us)

### About PABD

The Pacific Academy of Building Design offers a more attainable and accessible path— as an alternative to a four-year college degree—for becoming a credentialed, professional architect or interior designer. Our goal is to better prepare students for the rapidly changing demands of the design profession by providing practical learning experience that is more responsive to students' needs today. For more information, please go to [pabd.us](http://pabd.us), email [info@pabd.us](mailto:info@pabd.us), or call 808-381-0045. We are ready to support you in your new design career!

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