

**NOMAS**  
The National Organization of Minority Architecture Students

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

Introduction .....	3
History .....	3
Mission .....	4
Aims & Objectives .....	4
Chapter Essentials .....	5
The First Steps .....	7
Getting To Conference .....	7
Structuring the Chapter .....	8
Who To Contact .....	10
Conclusion .....	11

# INTRODUCTION

---

The National Organization of Minority Architects would like to thank you for your interest in our organization. The organization is bipartisan in nature, it consists of both professional chapters, these are designated as NOMA chapters, and student chapters, designated as NOMAS chapters (National Organization of Minority Architecture Students). Both sectors of the organization, however, are unified under the umbrella of NOMA. If you are seeking to found a new student chapter this is the resource to guide you through that process.

The expansion of NOMA, and the realization of its goals, is largely due to the enthusiastic pursuits of individuals such as yourself. Starting a chapter is a laudable endeavor which should be undertaken with care and hopefully with a cheerful disposition. The journey towards becoming chartered will undoubtedly benefit all those parties involved including the aspiring founder, the university as a whole, and NOMAS.

A frequently asked question is, "How long does it take to start a chapter?" The answer is, "It depends." The speed of the process is contingent upon the dedication of the founders, the rapidity of other involved parties, their response times, as well as the thoroughness and care with which these initial steps are executed. The good news is this process, outlined herein, is not a solo mission. You will be made aware of all the resources and contacts you have at your disposal in the Who to Contact section of this guide. If at any point you hit an obstacle, please do not hesitate to use these resources to facilitate the completion of the procedure.

Suggestions to improve the content and presentation of this material are welcome and should be directed to the Student Representatives of NOMA. NOMA maintains all contact information on the website including the definition of regions, a color-coded map and the most current version of this document. The URL of the website is [www.noma.net](http://www.noma.net).

# HISTORY

---



Twelve African-American architects from different parts of the country met, some for the first time, during the AIA National Convention in Detroit in 1971. What these professionals recognized was the desperate need for an organization dedicated to the development and advancement of minority architects.

Present at the creation were William Brown, Leroy Campbell, Wendell Campbell, John S. Chase, D. Dodd, Kenneth B. Groggs, Nelson Harris, Jeh Johnson, E.H. McDowell, Robert J. Nash, Harold Williams, and Robert Wilson. These African American architects wanted minority design professionals to work together to fight discriminatory policies that limit or bar minority architects from participating in design and construction programs.



That was the beginning of the National Organization of Minority Architects, an increasing influential voice, promoting the quality and excellence of minority design professionals. There are NOMA Chapters in all parts of the country, increasing recognition on colleges and university campuses and providing greater access to government policy makers.

## MISSION

---

NOMA, which thrives only when voluntary members contribute their time and resources, has as its mission the building of a strong national organization, strong chapters and strong members for the purpose of minimizing the effect of racism in our profession.

Strength in NOMA is built through unity in the cause that created the organization. Our impact is felt when our organization wrestles with the dilemmas that face this nation, particularly as they affect our profession. There is strength in numbers. By increasing the number of people in this organization, we add strength to the voice with which we can speak against apathy, bigotry, intolerance and ignorance; against abuse of the natural environment; and for the un-empowered, the marginalized and the disenfranchised.

By building a strong organization, we develop a showcase for the excellence and creativity which have been ignored for so long. Through our publications and conferences, we are able to inform the world that minority professionals have the talent and capabilities to perform in design and construction with any other group.

By building strong chapters of design professionals whose sensibilities and interests include promotion of urban communities, we are able to respond to the concerns that affect marginalized communities and people. Our goals are to increase the level of participation in the social, political and economic benefits afforded the citizens of this nation and to tear down the barriers that make full participation unattainable. Chapters give members a base from which to be involved in politics, to visit schools and reach out to children, to conduct community and civic forums and to responsibly practice in our professional capacities.

## AIMS & OBJECTIVES

---

The National Organization of Minority Architects has been organized to:

- Foster communications and fellowship among minority architects.
- Form a federation of existing and proposed local minority architectural groups.
- Fight Discrimination and other selection policies being used by public and private sector clients to unfairly restrict minority architects' participation in design and construction.
- Act as a clearing house for information and maintain a roster on practitioners.
- Promote the design and development of living, working, and recreational environments of the highest quality.
- Create and maintain relationships with other professionals and technicians whose work affects the physical and social environment.
- Encourage the establishment of coalitions of member firms and individuals to form associate and joint venture relationships.
- Speak with a common voice on public policy.
- Work with local, state, and national governments on issues affecting the physical development of neighborhoods and communities.
- Be an effective source of motivation and inspiration for minority youth.

## CHAPTER ESSENTIALS

---



### Get to know NOMA

Start to familiarize yourself with the way the organization operates and the goals and objectives it has set for itself. An acute understanding of this will help align the upcoming chapter with the stance of the organization as a whole.



### Understand Requirements

Start becoming familiar with the requirements set forth by both your university and NOMA towards establishing a new student organization and getting recognized.



### Get Acquainted

Reach out to the appropriate contacts addressed in the Who to Contact and get acquainted. It would also be wise to introduce yourself to those who coordinate student affairs as well as any sort of multicultural events occurring on campus.



### Become a Member

Becoming a member of NOMAS is as simple as it gets. You can simply fill out the online application at <http://www.noma.net/> and pay your national dues. Typically, the chapter treasurer would take care of the monetary issues and the chapter would have to decide whether or not chapter/local dues will be required of new members.



### Get Others Involved

There is strength in numbers! The more people you get involved in the initiative to found a new chapter, the better. Having enough manpower to handle the many responsibilities and tasks involved with founding and maintaining a chapter will greatly accelerate the process.



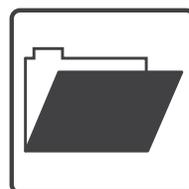
### Get an Advisor

Seek out a faculty member who you feel would be well-suited to fulfill this role and approach him/her with a letter presenting the initiative, its intentions, and the hope of his/her involvement. These individuals will prove invaluable in serving as liaisons between the chapter and university officials.



### Writing Bylaws

The bylaws of the chapter are the set of rules and regulations which all members must adhere to. Please complete the bylaws template included in this package and submit it to your respective liaison or student representative. Ensure to enclose a list of your board members as a part of the chartering process.



### Get Organized

Once the initial steps of starting-up a chapter is underway it would be wise to begin composing the structure of the chapter -in terms of its governing body, campus activity, and conference agendas. Suggestions for accomplishing this are provided herein.



### **Get Recognized**

In order to be recognized as an official chapter, the bylaws and chapter report must be completed and submitted to the University Liaison. Another milestone achievement is gaining recognition for the chapter at the school. This can be achieved by getting the Student Affairs office on your campus involved in the process early.



### **Get Cash**

As with any organization, the accrual of funding is a central concern to facilitate the activeness and growth of the chapter. Identifying sources of sponsorship and donation is critical in gaining the necessary funds to establish, maintain, and market your chapter.

## THE FIRST STEPS

---

Drawing from the tasks outlined in the Chapter Essentials, after familiarizing yourself with the parties and requirements involved, it is time to take the first steps. Start looking for a faculty member at your University that would be willing to accept the position of Faculty Advisor to the NOMAS chapter. This individual, as mentioned earlier, would help the chapter interface with other university faculty members and can help in many of the bureaucratic issues that may arise. The Faculty Advisor may also be helpful in attempting to secure an office space and mailbox for the chapter at the university.

You should approach the individual you feel is best-suited and most willing to accept the position with a letter formally asking for his participation. The letter should outline the organizations goals as well as outline what you hope to gain from this individual's participation. What is expected of a Faculty Advisor and why you feel this person is best suited for the position should be a central topic of discussion within the letter. For assistance in composing such a letter it is recommended that you contact a neighboring chapter member or contact one of the Student Representatives. This will not only help you accomplish the specified task, it will begin to get you acquainted with your fellow NOMAS members.

Upon acquiring a Faculty Advisor, or as the process is underway, you should open a line of communication between yourself and the Student Affairs Office. This is the facet of your university that you will have to interact with in order to ultimately become a recognized chapter on your campus. That being said, it would be a good idea to inform the office of your intentions to found a new chapter at your university and gain feedback as to what their protocol for accomplishing this may be.

While these tasks are in motion, it is critical to begin raising awareness of the initiative to begin a new chapter. Market the Chapter! Get as many individuals involved with the start-up as possible. Reach out to friends, put flyers around campus, and get the word out. The viability of founding a chapter is largely dependent upon the student interest at your campus. So the more people involved, the more intense the student interest is at your campus, the easier it will be to get this new chapter up and running.

## GETTING TO CONFERENCE

---

On a similar note, the chapter as a whole would be remiss to not attend the National NOMA Conference held in October every year. The National Conference is a chance to get to know the many people involved in the organization from every corner of the country. While it is a lot of fun it also comes with a lot of work. Immediately upon initiating a chapter efforts should be made to plan out how the chapter will get to the conference. Some chapters choose to begin a committee especially to serve that purpose.

Getting to the conference, and reserving a hotel room for the group will require a significant source of funding, which means fundraising efforts, sponsors, and donations should be accrued In order to collect enough income to do so. The student chapters (NOMAS) are also highly encouraged to participate in the Design Competition -this is an annual competition held between student chapters across the country. This even allows for the exercising of the students architectural skills while manufacturing a platform for discussion between students chapters and between students and professionals.

# STRUCTURING THE CHAPTER

---

With these preliminary measures accomplished, structuring and organizing the chapter is the next imperative arena of discourse to be addressed. Prior to brainstorming the manner in which this upcoming chapter is best-suited to operate, it is necessary to understand the precedent that exists for the structuring and organization of such an enterprise. Become familiar with the Roberts Rules of Order, this is the handbook to parliamentary procedure and it is the standard adopted by NOMA. An online version can be found at <http://www.rulesonline.com/index.html> and the official website can be found at <http://www.robertsrules.com/>.

With this background knowledge absorbed, the best way for the new chapter to operate on your campus can be decided upon, hopefully amongst a group of core members who have displayed a commitment to the chapter's growth and success. The governing body of the organization can follow a particular parliamentary model or it may adopt a modification of one such model, under the mandate that the 'basic requirements' are continually maintained.

The chapter may choose to operate under the designation of an executive board containing several elected officers, it may choose to operate using a 'Committee-Based' model in which the delegation of tasks is distributed amongst committees rather than officers, or it may choose to innovate a new means of governance that best serves the particular needs of the chapter and the campus. Committees may include Social Media, Architectural Experience Program (AXP), Community Service, etc. Again, it is highly encouraged that you contact other chapter presidents and the Student Representatives to discuss which method may be most appropriate for the upcoming chapter.

Below you will find some general guidelines you may choose to fall back on and modify to help boost the efforts to structure the new chapter and call to your attention the many subject areas that a NOMAS chapter is expected to address:



## Basic Requirements

- Minimum of 4 Members (3 Officers)
- Membership Applications & Dues
- By-laws for the Chapter
- Establish Officers & Roster



## Officers

- President (*1 year term*)
- Vice-president
- Treasurer
- Secretary



## Meetings

- General Mass Meeting: *All Members*
- Executive Board Meeting: *Officers only*
- Meeting Place: *Make it an easy place to find*



## Dues Structure

- National NOMAS
- Local Chapter Dues



## Financial

- Income & Expenses Monitoring
- Social Fund-raisers
- Contributions
- Dues
- Sponsorships
- Holiday Parties
- Summer Picnic
- Networking Social



## Committees

- Finance/Fund Raising
- Membership
- Professional Development
- Education & Research
- Public Relations & Social



## Professional Development

- Speakers at Meetings
- Lobbying Issues
- Hosting Prominent Persons, Politicians, etc., At Events
- Product and Service Presentations
- Tour Trips



## Marketing | Growth | Public Relations

- NOMAS Fair Exhibit & Parades
- Awards Program/ Banquet
- Contests/Competition
- Issue Lobbying
- Collaboration with other student groups



## Educational

- Speakers at Schools
- Tour Trip Construction Tour
- Design Charrette: *Get the chapter to the National Conference!*
- Historical Exhibit
- Education Exhibit Sponsorship



## Issues

- Addressing the Concerns of Members



## Membership

- Roster: *Keep updated record of all chapter's members (See Figure 1.o)*
- Membership Packages
- Retention & Recruitment: *How to increase membership?*
- Newsletter: *Publicize the chapter's success*
- Chapter Magazine
- Mailing Address: *Secure with direction from Faculty Advisor*
- Office: *Secure with direction from Faculty Advisor*
- NOMAS Logo, Stationary, etc: *Use official NOMAS logo*

## FORMAT FOR NOMAS CHAPTER INFORMATION

(SCHOOL NAME)

NOMAS Student Chapter Member Listing Information

FACULTY ADVISORS	NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	#	EMAIL

OFFICERS	NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE #	EMAIL	GRADUATION DATE
PRESIDENT					
VICE PRESIDENT					
SECRETARY					
TREASURER					

MEMBERS	NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE #	EMAIL	GRADUATION DATE

## WHO TO CONTACT

---

As you seek to establish a new NOMAS chapter at your university it would be of great benefit to take full advantage of all the resources you have available to you. The experience and helpfulness of the many contacts you have at your disposal will certainly expedite the process which lies ahead.

To best utilize these resources a brief aside, addressing the structuring of the organization is appropriate. The governing body of NOMA contains two subsets -The Officers and The Board of Directors. Inquiry regarding the establishment of a chapter is most appropriately directed towards members of The Board of Directors. Each region of the country is assigned a University Liaison to facilitate communication between their respective student chapters and NOMA while the Student Representatives serve as useful contacts for any student chapter concerning any NOMAS issue that may arise. The incumbent Student Representatives are more than willing to help guide you through any aspect of this process and should be contacted without hesitation.

That being said, the contact information for these various individuals can be found below:

**Midwest University Liaison**  
[midwestliaison@noma.net](mailto:midwestliaison@noma.net)

**South University Liaison**  
[southliaison@noma.net](mailto:southliaison@noma.net)

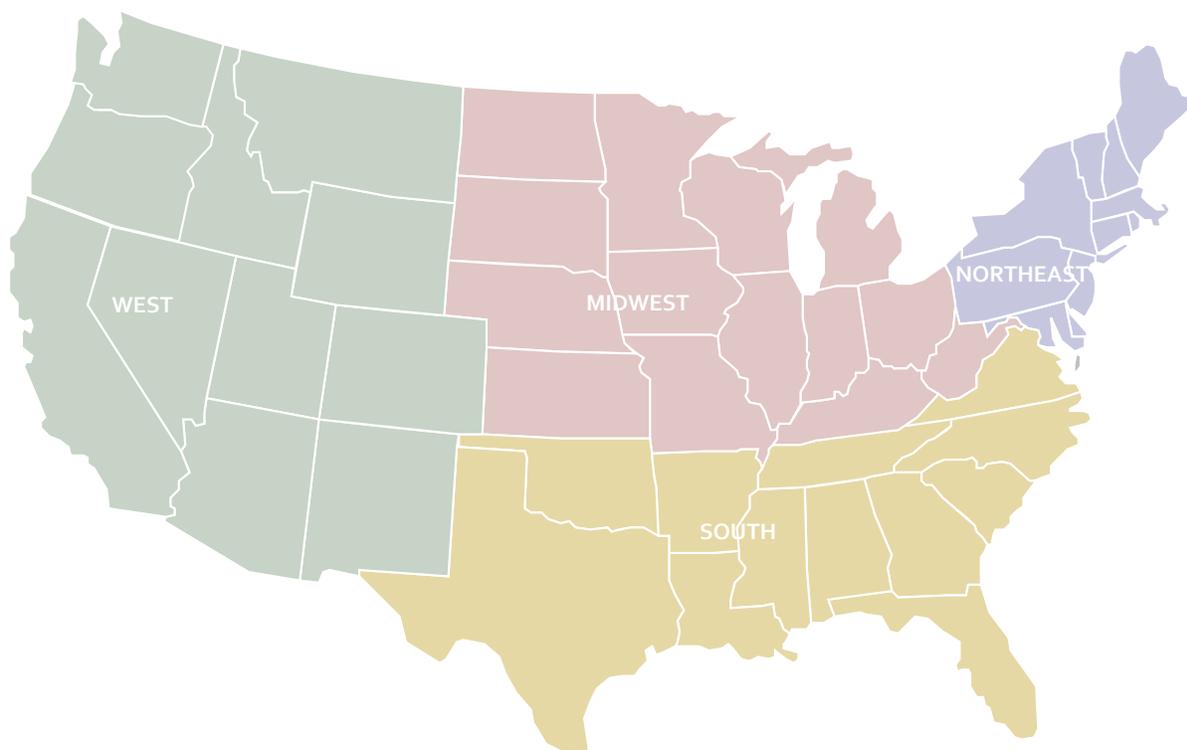
**Northeast University Liaison**  
[northeastliaison@noma.net](mailto:northeastliaison@noma.net)

**West University Liaison**  
[westliaison@noma.net](mailto:westliaison@noma.net)

**Student Representatives**  
[nomas@noma.net](mailto:nomas@noma.net)

Also, it is worthwhile to keep in mind that many of the student chapter presidents have had to deal with many of the issues you will likely encounter. Therefore, contacting these individuals would also be a wise course of action. Once you join NOMA as a national member, you will have access to the member directory. Until then, ask your liaison to connect you with a local student chapter president that you can rely on as a reference.

Your questions and concerns are always welcome and encouraged! Also, follow us at;



## CONCLUSION

---

Starting a chapter is a commendable undertaking and as previously mentioned it is one which serves the best interests of all constituents involved. It is for this reason that NOMA and its resources enthusiastically support your efforts and hope to provide you with all the tools you may need to successfully expand the reach of the organization.

Founding a chapter requires outreach which is highly encouraged by NOMAS. This is precisely the reason that elaborate samples have not simply been inserted into the body of this "chapter start-up kit" -because a necessary component of starting a chapter is communicating with other members of the NOMAS family. Feeding off of their experience and acquiring samples from others personally will elevate your position as a chapter founder to that of a member of the NOMAS family. The organization is meant to operate collectively, coming to each other's aid and fueling the progression of the organization to become a better and stronger, unified entity.